



Beneficial Factors of Using Self-monitoring and Peer-monitoring Strategies in Writing

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Abstract

Writing is an important experience through which we are able to share ideas, arouse feelings, persuade and convince other people (white & Arndt, 1991). It is important to view writing not solely as the product of an individual, but as a cognitive, social and cultural act. Writing is an act that takes place within a context, that accomplishes a particular purpose and that is appropriately shaped for its intended audience (Hamplones & Condon, 1989). Here, the present research considers the significance effects of two important independent variables self-monitoring and peer-monitoring in writing activities on Iranian EFL learners. This study aimed to investigate new effects of two meta- cognitive strategies self-monitoring and peer-monitoring on 173 male and female learners' writing activities whose age ranged between the age 16-27, and they had a composing description writing paragraph as pre and posttest in the same conditions. In this study, self-monitoring helped learners to know more about their weaknesses and strengths for increasing a positive way of the quality and quantity in learning process for written task, and peer-monitoring occurred when learners achieved recognition level to evaluate their classmates' behavior, and it was obviously understood that it was essential to have more training time for achieving the level of recognition.

Keywords: self-monitoring, peer-monitoring, feedback, composing description

INTRODUCTION

To do this research we should firstly know why writing is necessary. What we mean by meta-cognitive? Then, clarifying the terms "peer-monitoring" and "self-monitoring" as the cores of this study.

Writing is an important skill for EFL learners, here in this study we mean the whole part on composing description paragraphs. Firstly, we define few lines about different kinds

of paragraphs, then defining some lines about a description paragraph. Arnaudet and Barret (1990) mentioned that writing is a skill that you can say your idea briefly, and brilliant without any fear from face to face conversation or worry to say something frankly. It's a process that helps you to sharp your thoughts for the exact purpose of your idea, and it gives you opportunity to repair damage, to share information, to acknowledge somebody, to change another idea about something, to provide a good state for your confidence to write clearly. Therefore, by composing some paragraphs and essays, you will achieve above goals by your writing. In this study, writing paragraphs are the salience part of research, so I take a look at different part of writing paragraphs (introduction- body- conclusion). In addition, I define some lines about paragraph; a paragraph is a group of sentences which develop one central idea and the central idea is usually stated in a topic sentence. If a paragraph announces its main idea in the topic sentence, and if all the supporting sentences contribute to the reader's understanding of the main idea, we say that a paragraph is unified or it has unity. In writing, you cannot make use of these auditory and visual aids, so you must think and plan carefully what you're going to write to ensure that your reader knows exactly what you mean. When the order in which things happen, or a time sequence, is used to develop a paragraph, this is called chronological order.

Brown (2001) identifies some important issues in the teaching of writing in second language contexts, these issues are: 1- composing vs. writing 2- Process vs. product 3- Contrastive rhetoric 4- Differences between L1 and L2 writing 5-Authenticity 6- The role of teacher. Here, principles for designing writing techniques: 1- Incorporate practices of "good" writers. 2- Balance process and product. 3- Account for cultural/literacy backgrounds. 4- Connect reading and writing. 5- Provide as much authentic writing as possible. 6- Frame your techniques in terms of prewriting, drafting and revising stages.

Meyers (2006) said that description plays an important role in many kinds of writing both in academic world and in everyday life. In a descriptive paragraph, the topic sentence should "overview" the scene or summarize the content of the paragraph. In doing so it should help establish the author's tone. The tone of a literary work is the writer's attitude toward his or her subject, characters, or audience. The tone is crucial in establishing a paragraph's mood. Your descriptive paragraph will have a greater impact if it evokes a particular mood rather than just describe details that aren't unified. Mood is the feeling created in the reader by a literary work or passage. Perhaps you want to inspire fear or horror, as Tolkien does. Maybe you intend to communicate a happy light-hearted feeling or a sad, nostalgic one.

When learners want to write at least they should write three paragraphs as bellow. Arnaudet and Barret (1990) defined terms of paragraphs:

a) Introduction

Your original topic sentence will become the controlling idea for your composition and will appear at the end of your introductory paragraph. This paragraph should begin

with a very general statement about your topic. It should have two or three more sentences which narrow the topic to the specific points you intend to discuss. In other words, your paragraph of introduction should move from general information about your topic to the specific aspects you will write about in this composition.

b) Body

You will want to devote one entire paragraph to each of the points you mentioned in your original paragraph. You will, of course, have to go into greater detail and provide more examples for each point than you did in your original paragraph. Remember to begin each paragraph of the body with a topic sentence that tells the reader which point you will be discussing.

c) Conclusion

You will have to add a paragraph of conclusion. In it, you should summarize, restate, or summarize the main ideas in your composition.

Writing essay is so important for long time, all teachers and staffs care about writing skill, and to be a professional skillful writer academically and in occupational states, it is focused by many learners. Writing is an important task in school (Ballard & Glynn, 1975; Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997). Students write to communicate, demonstrate their knowledge of skills and the curriculum, as well as express their beliefs (Graham, 1982). Written Language enables children to communicate across both time and space (Swedlow, 1999). It is useful for studying and learning content material (Durst & Newell, 1989). Journal writing, poetry, stories and plays allow students to express their feelings and provide mechanisms for creative expression (Durst & Newell, 1989).

As Braddock et al. (1963) mentioned four aspects are important for written composition; first raters have important role in students' composition, In planning composition examinations for students from a wide range of backgrounds, it seems especially necessary to consider the students' variations in intellectual maturity, knowledge, and socioeconomic background.

Meyers (2006) indicates that description draws a picture of someone or something through words. Through strong details, precise word choice, and sound organization, you allow your readers to visualize the subject matter clearly. You don't merely tell them that something is remarkable, unusual, or pretty. You show them so they can see the uniqueness, rare qualities, or beauty for themselves. In fact, your description may also involve the sense of sound, touch, motion, and even smell in addition to the sense of sight. The most logical way to organize descriptive details is in spatial order that is arranged in space from top to bottom, left to right, nearest to furthest, or the like. Even a description that involves people or animals can establish the setting or full scene first and then present details in a spatial order.

As Money et al. (2011) states peer-monitoring will provide experiential learning, social support and self-empowerment for learners. This leads to the ability of a peer to share

first-hand knowledge of coping with the problems. If peers did not willingly share their own experiences with participants, through individual choice or program design, the peer-to-peer program would lack this experiential learning benefit. Participating in a peer-to-peer program broadens an individual's support network.⁶ Individuals may develop friendships with other participants that expand beyond the formal program. These relationships provide additional sources of support in times of need for physical assistance or emotional assistance.

Xiang (2004) has said the positive point by using self-monitoring strategy; he mentioned the technique of self-monitoring, by giving students control over the feedback they receive, enables teachers to provide effective feedback. Self-monitoring is an effective way for students to improve the organization of their compositions and especially helpful to higher proficiency learners. Charls (1990) proposed a self-monitoring technique, whereby students annotate their text with any doubts they have during the writing process, so that the teacher can give feedback not only on the finished draft, but also on the queries which emerged during the writing process. Charls (1992:292) claims that self-monitoring makes it easy for students to express uncertainty about any part of their text, and to receive direct answers to their queries, and encourages students to look critically and analytically at their writing and to place themselves in the position of the reader.

Cresswell (2000) describes another advantage of using self-monitoring technique; the student self-monitoring technique increases autonomy in the learning of writing by giving learners control over the initiation of feedback. In practical terms, this means that students write marginal annotations about problems in their evolving compositions, to which the teacher responds (also in writing).¹ Hence, like peer evaluation, self-monitoring is a way of making reviewing in composition interactive (Charles 1990: 202); also, again like peer evaluation, it encourages 'reader-based prose' (Chandrasegaran 1989). However, while peer evaluation has been extensively studied, self-monitoring has been almost wholly neglected. Yet in the current climate of increasing recognition of the value of learner autonomy, self-monitoring deserves attention because it provides 'self-direction', in Dickinson's (1987: 11) sense of learner choice of learning focus, and acceptance of responsibility.

Describing things effectively is an important way to directly involve your readers, the more convincing your descriptions, the more likely you are to draw your readers into your writing, it is important that you make your descriptions as clear as possible and you can do this by focusing on specific details of the person or place that you are describing.

The present research will discuss the theoretical rational aspects of academically effects of self-monitoring and peer-monitoring on learners especially in their writing activities. As regarding self-monitoring, and peer-monitoring; here we discuss about the matter that which one is more important than the other? According to many research, we will know that self-monitoring can help students to be independent and overcome their learning disabilities, beside of that peer-monitoring helps student in cooperative

learning and problem solving activities to monitor each other's behaviors, then they become provided to social life, and they will be able to evaluate each other's tasks. Such meta-cognitive strategies are both facilitate learning process, however; we want to know that which one is not really practical among students, and who is at disadvantage in this study? Or if it is practical, in what ways we can teach them such strategies to benefit the most useful in classroom, and which one of them is more helpful for given to students.

THIS STUDY

The purpose of the study is to determine how we can manipulate them in classroom, upon what states we can arrange the tasks toward this goal; whether peer-monitoring is better or self-monitoring?

The present research set out to find answers to the following research questions:

- 1-Are there any beneficial factors through using self- monitoring & peer- monitoring strategies?
- 2- Is there any correlation between type of monitoring and Iranian EFL learners' gender in their writing skill?

METHOD

Participants

A total number of 173 students including 41 male learners and 132 female learners in the age range of 15 to 27 at the intermediate level of Rashed Institute English language department of Mashhad districts of Khorasan Razavi will be asked to participate in this study. Subjects in classes will become homogenous in methodology used at school, type of school attended by each group, numbers of hours devoting to the teaching of English, level of language proficiency and their age.

Instruments

The following instruments are used for this study:

1. A General English Proficiency Test Nelson which determines the proficiency level of the subjects in English.
2. Composing a Description Paragraphs Test which determines the idea of study whether self-monitoring or peer-monitoring is good by following topics:
 - A-It's better to see a movie or read a book version of a film.
 - B-Which transportation do you prefer to travel and why? Traveling by plane, train or bus

Procedure

To achieve the objective of this study the following procedures will be taken by the researcher. First, a group of learners in English language department will randomly select, and then they will be given General Proficiency Test to determine their proficiency level. After that, two composing description topics will be given to them, after that they will write three paragraphs (introduction- body- conclusion) about 120-180 words in pre-test. After finishing writing, students evaluated their own writing by themselves, to monitor their own strengths, and weaknesses, find errors and mistakes, then peers evaluated each other's writing paper by different color, and monitored peers' strengths, and weaknesses. All writing papers will be also scored by the researcher, and another two raters, so each learner had 5scores for his or her pre-test papers out of 45 points.

After scoring papers they will be given treatment to those students who are not able to write a good paragraph, or they need their teacher's help to follow up a plan how to continue their writing, then the teacher will teach them to write well-organized paragraphs and tell them about their mistakes, grammatical points such as: tenses, passive & active sentences, punctuation, accurate use of expression, appropriate words, and everything related to a well-organized paragraph. In this study we will observe the learners how they will be cooperative, and how they follow the procedure exactly, and some of them will be very serious about this part, and they won't lose anything, they eagerly need their teacher help whether they will find the other classmates' mistakes or not. But the time for treatment won't be enough, and they will have basically problems with their selecting good expression, or appropriate words. Some of them will ask the teacher for more times. The researcher will note some points relating to learners' behaviors.

After the treatment a post-test will be given at the same condition of their pre-test, they will be given a writing composition description paper including two similar topics; they will have to choose one topic, and will write description paragraphs about 120-180 words; they will monitor themselves by blue pen to clarify their own strengths, and weaknesses, then peers will check each other's mistakes to monitor each other's strengths, and weaknesses by red pen. All post-test writing papers will be scored by present researcher, and another two raters of the same level, so all learners had 5scores for their post-test. The researcher will consider two independent variables self-monitoring, peer-monitoring for scoring their writing composing description. Totally, each learner will have 10 marks for both pre & posttest except language proficiency test. Both self and peers will give their classmates one mark for pre-test and one mark for classmates' posttest.

RESULTS

1-Are there any beneficial factors through using self- monitoring & peer- monitoring strategies?

Table 1. Comparison Means in an Independent Samples T-Test

		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
Post self	Equal variances assumed	.011	.915	3.975	61	.000	5.946	1.496	2.955	8.936
	Equal variances not assumed			3.877	44.927	.000	5.946	1.534	2.856	9.035
Post peer	Equal variances assumed	.291	.592	3.501	61	.001	5.346	1.527	2.293	8.399
	Equal variances not assumed			3.514	49.392	.001	5.346	1.521	2.289	8.403

As table 1 shows an independent sample T-test between post-test self-monitoring scores, and post-test peer-monitoring scores; Sig.(2-tailed) is lower than 5% it means that there is a significant difference between the mean of post-test self-monitoring scores & the mean of post-test peer-monitoring scores among weak learners. Statistically, they are not equal in 5% significant level confidence.

Again as you can see in table 2, in order to see that the degree of significance between two scores is higher than 5%, Sig.(2-tailed) is 0.192, and the difference is not significant, it means that strong learners are equal in post-test self-monitoring and post-test peer-monitoring scores.

Table 2. Comparison Means Postself & Postpeer in T-Test

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
				Lower	Upper				
Post self- Post peer	.708	2.579	.526		-.381	1.797	1.346	23	.192

2- There is a positive correlation between type of monitoring and Iranian EFL learners' gender in their writing skill.

Although both of them are useful for providing challengeable students, and become useful for prosocial life, but self-monitoring will help them more to become awareness of their weaknesses and strengths to increase positive way of the quality and quantity of

their learning in written task, and peer-monitoring occurs when the students have recognition to evaluate the other peers' behavior, and it is obviously understood that it needs more training to receive the level of recognition of each other's behavior. Self-monitoring has more effect than peer-monitoring on EFL Iranian learners in their writing activities.

2- Is there any correlation between type of monitoring and Iranian EFL learners' gender in their writing skill?

We acted as follow by applying regression it was indicated as table 3.

Table 3. Pearson Correlations Postself & Postpeer & Proficiency

		Postself	Postpeer	Proficiency
Postself	Pearson Correlation	1	.911**	.332**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	173	173	173
Postpeer	Pearson Correlation	.911**	1	.292**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	173	173	173
Proficiency	Pearson Correlation	.332**	.292**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	173	173	173

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

As you can see in table 3, Pearson correlation coefficient of writing skill in self-monitoring was higher than peer-monitoring, it indicated that peer-monitoring had less effect than self-monitoring, so the researcher hypothesis was rejected. Once, we considered dependent variable that was proficiency test, we considered predictors as post-test self-monitoring & post-test peer-monitoring as follow.

Table 4. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.333 ^a	.111	.100	3.081	.111	10.574	2	170	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Postpeer, Postself

Table 5. ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	200.771	2	100.385	10.574	.000 ^b
Residual	1613.934	170	9.494		
Total	1814.705	172			

a. Dependent Variable: Proficiency

b. Predictors: (Constant), Postpeer, Postself

Table 6. Coefficients a Postself & Postpeer

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	7.773	1.219	6.378	.000
	Postself	.203	.092	.387	.028
	Postpeer	-.031	.090	-.061	.727

a. Dependent Variable: Proficiency

DISCUSSION

In this study, self-monitoring had positive and important role to improve writing activities in English classroom, and it was dominated all the tasks that were covered by the teacher in class, and provided feedback for teachers to have benefit recognition of learners to make good lesson plan, and it facilitated learning writing tasks, how to be a professional writer. The role of goal setting and corrective feedback in writing activities were very important for learners who acted by self & peer-monitoring techniques. But, self-monitoring was much more considerable in this study than peer-monitoring, furthermore there was direct and positive relationship between these two techniques, whenever self- monitoring acted better, there was a good shape of peer-monitoring, and finally they could help learners to have wide view of developing good writers in learning English as a second language for foreigners. We also faced with some good attitudes of learners for providing good behaviors to inform them about their strengths and weaknesses in writing activities, especially in composing description paragraphs. Self-monitoring, and peer-monitoring techniques were facilitators' devices for learners which were emphasized in this study upon 173 EFL Iranian learners in Rashed English language Institute to show how much was important to be a good and skillful writer in English language both for teachers, and students. As you have seen before, there was no bias upon strong learners Patterns to use peer-monitoring, because the test could not change the result of pre and posttest. In this study, there was not so much significant difference among strong learners in their posttest. But their self-monitoring technique was increased that was related to their motivation through using this strategy. Goal setting was another important issue which helped learners during their writing tasks to follow in positive and direct relation by using self & peer-monitoring strategies.

During observation, the learners were sensitive to their errors, and they received feedback from teacher, and the teacher sometimes helped them to monitor in right position, of course, few learners were worried about their mistakes and errors to detect by another classmate, they did not want to cooperate with another, but some of them were very active in cooperative tasks, so they eagerly asked for result of their writing by another peers.

In this study as we calculated, although both techniques had beneficial result on learners writing activities, we understood that peer-monitoring among strong learners did not have any changes in their writing activities, with or without treatment it was

something unnecessary to do, they needed some circumstances to know what exactly to do, and how they could use it in system of learning. Such techniques needed a lot time and energy to know more about the learners to direct them according to their needs respectively in academic and social situation.

Self & peer-monitoring strategies are beneficial techniques in writing process on EFL Iranian learners who are going to learn English language as a second language. By applying these two techniques in class activities, teachers can help them by receiving feedback from learners; different kinds of feedback will be provided to improve the writing process in systematic way. Goal setting is another important issue to follow up the exact procedure for the writing activities. Goal setting will help to find out learners' real needs to give them appropriate tasks. By conducting this research, we understood there was positive and direct relationship between self& peer-monitoring and they were complementary strategies which could be used at the same time in class writing activities.

Menzies et al. (2009) said goal setting involves students setting a behavioral target (e.g., writing an essay). This goal is used to structure the students' effort, give information on how the student is progressing toward the goal, and motivate the student to complete the goal (Schunk, 2001). Smith, Nelson, Young, and West (1992) used goal setting in conjunction with self-evaluation to support eight students with either behavior disorders or learning disabilities. Results of a multiple-baseline across-settings design revealed (a) decreases in off task behavior and (b) increases in the quantity and quality of academic work produced in the special education setting.

It is highly profitable for teachers to make students aware of writing techniques through the use of direct instruction. Methods of direct instruction that may particularly assist EFL learners can be through the use of self-monitoring and cooperation techniques (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Charles (1990), for the first time, proposed self-monitoring as a writing technique. For her, this technique motivates students to be responsible for what they write, and for their writing skill improvement. It encourages them to think critically and analytically about their writing and enables the teacher and students to engage in a dialogue over the text even in circumstances where individual face to face discussions are not possible.

CONCLUSION

One of the pedagogical implications is that when we teach subjects or students meta-cognitive strategies such as self-monitoring, and peer-monitoring during their learning task; we ask them to be able to evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses or be able to watch the other peers' behaviors, and evaluate the others. Both strategies are fine for prosocial life which they want to exist in an environment in learning second language like English that is more important for them in any field such as their jobs or education nowadays.

We answered the questions of the study by analyzing data which are collected from further research by two options that one of them is required cooperative activity, and the other one is required self-evaluation to monitor learners' own behavior.

Finally, we can conclude that self-monitoring is a strategy that is related to oneself, and they acquire some knowledge through recognition of themselves, much more reading tasks will help them to improve their writing, to write a good description paragraph, and to be a skillful person in this field. Both self & peer monitoring are important and significant strategies for learners in writing

domain, It was discovered that to arrive at level of recognition is very considerable to give them written tasks, because they should gather more information about themselves, and know each other to give a hand for their strengths and remove their weaknesses. Such implications need to set the goals for learners, how and why we need to set the goals for writing activities. It's important to give them awareness about the target of writing task, so learners can achieve a better understanding toward the goal and manage their behavior according to achieve the goal, and result is acceptable. There is also significant and positive relationship between two Meta cognitive strategies self & peer monitoring that shows they are useful methods for improving writing skill in any situation. The current research hopes that the result of this study will open new window for teachers, learners, and all staffs who are involved in teaching English as a second language to cover academic and social needs of learners and to answer how to be a good writer.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It is critical for programs to collect data on the effectiveness of the program and the peer supporter. If neither is performing effectively, it is necessary to determine if the cause is systemic or related to the individual peer supporter. We also understand that direct monitoring is a very useful control mechanism that helps them to know how the learners perform and behave. On the other hand, indirect peer monitoring is not a good control mechanism because it is not always in the interest of the organization. One obvious problem is that it does not account for the fact that some groups are generally more cooperative than others. Thus, in some groups there may be more need to monitor than in others. Another limitation of this study is the time of preparing learners for self & peer monitoring, and the time is not enough to show the real similarities, and differences between two important strategies. The last limitation is teacher feedback, which is very important for learners who need teacher feedback on their writing task, effectiveness of two strategies self & peer- monitoring depends on teacher's feedback that support them during writing activities to follow up a real situation according to their needs.

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