The Effect of Using Task-Based Activities on Narrative Writing Performance of EFL Learners with Different Personality Types

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Abstract

The present research is an attempt to provide new evidence for the efficacy of Task-Based Activities on narrative 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 (two experimental and two controls) through their performance on a sample pre-test of Nelson. The target learners of this research were learners of Shokouh foreign languages institute in Tabriz, 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 experimental groups outperformed control groups while the more impact was 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, personality type, introvert, extrovert, narrative writing

INTRODUCTION

According to Kies (1995), narrative writing is a difficult skills for EFL learners in EFL classrooms, and also notes that EFL learners don't know where to begin, how to organize the materials and put things in unsuitable places, so, it makes their products meaningless, it can be said that there is a need to find some new activities in order to increase the learners performances in this crucial skill.

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

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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.

Most of the learners mentioned that the writing is the most complex and hard to learn 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 writing proficiency of EFL learners. Moreover, most of the teachers didn't pay much attention to personality types of learners in learning process. 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 personality differences. 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 narrative writing performance of Iranian EFL learners?

RQ2. Does using task-based activity have any effect on narrative writing performance of introvert learners?

RQ3. Does using task-based activity have any effect on narrative 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' narrative writing ability.

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

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

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

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 Shokouh Language Institute in Tabriz, 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 classes' 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 (Zemach & Rumisek, 2003) 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 it is 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 Assumption Descriptive 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 Narrative 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 Narrative 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 Narrative 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' narrative writing ability.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics; Posttest of Narrative 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						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the 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' narrative writing ability. Thus the first null hypothesis was rejected.

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

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics; Posttest of Narrative 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 8, 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						
	F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
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 narrative 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 narrative 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 7, it can be concluded that the experimental extrovert learners had a higher mean (M = 1692, SD = 1.34) on the posttest of narrative writing than control extrovert (M = 14.48, SD = 1.38).

The results of independent-samples t-test indicated that the experimental extrovert learners had a significantly higher mean on the posttest of narrative 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						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the 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 narrative 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 narrative 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						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the 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 12 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 12. 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 AND CONCLUSION

To summarize the major findings of this study and by looking at the 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 narrative 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.

In this study, it was demonstrated that experimental groups outperformed control groups while the experimental extrovert EFL learners were significantly better at narrative 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).

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