Task-Based Activities on EFL Learners Argumentative Writing with a Focus on Introvert vs. Extrovert Learners

Hanieh Davatgari Asl

Department of Foreign Languages, Islamic Azad University, Ahar Branch, Iran

Seyed Davoud Razavi

Department of English language, Tabriz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tabriz, Iran

Mitra Taghinezhad Vaskehmahaleh [*]

Young Researchers and Elite Club, Ahar Branch, Islamic Azad University, Ahar, Iran

Abstract

The present research is an attempt to find out the efficacy of Task-Based Activities on argumentative writing performance of Introvert vs. Extrovert Iranian EFL Learners. For this purpose, 100 female upper-intermediate Iranian EFL learners were chosen from a total number of 168 and assigned into three groups (2 experimental and 1 control groups) through their performance on a Nelson (Homogeneity Test). The target learners of this research are learners of Vaskeh Institutes, in Iran. Data were collected through pre and post-test. Data were analyzed through Paired Samples t-tests. The results of the statistical analysis demonstrated that the task-based activities has significant effect on experimental groups performances but it has more impact on extrovert than introvert learners.

Keywords: extrovert, introvert, personality type, task-based activities, writing

INTRODUCTION

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 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.

---

* Correspondence: Mitra Taghinezhad Vaskehmahaleh, Email: mitra_vaskeh@yahoo.com

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 (Ehrman, 1993). 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.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions have been addressed in this study:

1. Do Task-based activities have any effect on argumentative writing performance of Iranian EFL learners?
2. Do task-based activities have any effect on argumentative writing performance of introvert learners?
3. Do task-based activities have any effect on writing performance of extrovert learners?
4. If there is an effect, which of introvert vs. Extrovert learners benefit more?

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 15 to 29 at Vaskeh Language Institutes in Talesh, 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 120 students were assigned into three classes base on their personality: two experimental groups and one control groups.

Instruments

In this study four instruments were used:

- *Nelson Test (Homogeneity Test)*
- *Questionnaire of Extroverts vs. Introverts*
- *Writing pre-test and post-test*

Material

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 we mentioned before, 100 female upper-intermediate Iranian EFL learners were chosen from a total number of 168 and assigned into four groups (2 experimental and 1 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, 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	26	-.251	.464	-0.54	-.491	.902	-0.54
		Posttest	26	.033	.464	0.07	-1.026	.902	-1.14
	Introvert	Pretest	27	-.451	.464	-0.97	-.537	.902	-0.60
		Posttest	27	-.084	.464	-0.18	-.461	.902	-0.51
Control	Extrovert	Pretest	24	-.206	.464	-0.44	-1.297	.902	-1.44
		Posttest	24	-.132	.464	-0.28	-.704	.902	-0.78
	Introvert	Pretest	23	.050	.464	0.11	-.806	.902	-0.89
		Posttest	23	.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 Type*s*

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 5. Independent Sample t-test, Pre-test by Groups

	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	.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 5). 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. Task-based activities do not have any significant effect on Iranian learners' argumentative writing performance.

Table 6. 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 7. 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
Equal variances assumed	.214	.645	-11.032	75	.000	-3.63333	.32934	-4.28942	-2.97725

The results of the tables above (Tables 6 & 7) show that task-based activities have a significant effect on students' writing ability. Thus the first null hypothesis was rejected.

H02. Task-based activities do not have any significant effect on argumentative writing performance of Iranians introvert learners.

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics; Posttest of Writing by Groups by Personality Type*s*

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 9. 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 9 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. Task-based activities do not have any significant effect on argumentative 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 10) 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 10. 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 10 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. Task-based activities do not have any significantly different effect on argumentative writing performance of Iranian extrovert and introvert learners.

Table 11. 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 11 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 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 & Didari, 2012; Rezaei, 2014; Khodabakhshizadeh & Mousavi, 2012; Zohrabi & Abasvand, 2014) that found out learners gained advantages from task-based writing regarding writing.

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 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).

REFERENCES

Astika, G., Carrell, P., & Moneta, P. (1996). Personality types and language learning in an EFL context. *Language Learning, 46 (1), 75-99.*

Cheng, F.H. (2011). Effect of Post-task Activity on EFL writing performance. *Proceedings of the 16th Conference of Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics.*

Cook, V. (1996). *Second Language Learning* (2nd ed.). New York: Arnold

Gass, S. & Selinker, L. (1994). *Second language acquisition: An introductory course.* Hillsdale, NJ: Lawerance Erlbaum.

Ghavamnia, M, Tavakoli, M. & Esteki, M. (2013).The effect of Pre-Task and online planning conditions on complexity, accuracy, and fluency on EFL learners' written production. *Porta Linguarum Junio, 6*(2), 31-43.

Khodabakhshizadeh, H., & Mousavi, S. (2012). The effect of different types of repeated performance (Private vs. Public) as Post-Task Activities on the English students' accuracy and fluency in L2 oral production. *Modern Education and Computer Science, 5*, 53-62.

Kim, Y., & Kim, J. (2005). Teaching Korean university writing class: balancing the process and the genre approach. *Asian EFL Journal, 7*(2), 1-15.

Larsen-Freeman, D. (2000). *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Marashi, H. & Didari, L. (2012).The impact of using Task-based writing on EFL learners' writing performance and creativity. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 2* (12), 2500-2507.

Rahimpour, M., & Safarie, M. (2011).The Effects of on-line and Pre-task Planning on descriptive writing of Iranian EFL learners. *International Journal of English Linguistics, 11*(2), 274-280.

Rezaei, A. (2014). Writing in Task-based class for EFL learners. *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL), 2*(2), 47-65.

Samuda, V., & Bygate, M. (2008). *Tasks in second language learning.* Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan.

Vehar, M. A. (1968). Extraversion, introversion and reading ability. *The Reading Teacher, 21*, 357-360.

Wright, D. & Taylor, A. (1970). *Introducing psychology.* Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

Zemach, D. E., & Rumisek, L. A. (2003). *Academic Writing from paragraph to essay.* Macmillan.

Zohrabi, M., & Abasvand, Y. (2014). The effect of task repetition on improving Iranian learner's accuracy and complexity in writing proficiency, *International Journal of English and Education, 3*(2), 2278-4012.