

EFFECTS OF TASK-BASED STRATEGIES ON STUDENTS' WRITING SKILL AMONG TRANSLATION STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The present research investigated the role of task-based strategies on students' writing skill among translation students. The hypothesis was that the tasks of class discussion, oral summary, and mind mapping may develop EFL learners' writing of English as a foreign language whose access to the target language is limited. The focus of this study was to make treatment on the mechanics of writing, coherence, and cohesion. The design of the study was pre and post-test method. 90 translation students were selected out of 120 Translation students through a homogeneity grammar test (Richards et al, 2008) at Abadan University, Iran. Then they were randomly divided in to three (i.e., class discussion, oral summary, and mind mapping) equal groups received treatment on the three tasks in a-10 session period of treatment in writing courses. Data were collected through pre and post-test writing descriptive essays to find any progress the end of the treatment session. Data were analyzed through One-way ANOVA and Paired Samples t-tests. Findings revealed that the mind mapping and class discussion groups outperformed the oral summary group. However mind mapping group outperformed both groups. Implications for future English teaching and learning could be the use of mind mapping tasks which develops EFL learners' writing proficiency. Thus through analyzing the passages in the classroom, the learners were able to discover the passage structures and use this knowledge in their writing process.

Key words: Task-based strategies, writing skill, translation students

1. Introduction.

The idea of getting learners to acquire English through Task-Based Strategies, which refers to Task-Based Instruction (TBI), was developed in India by Prabhu in the 1980s. His approach was a reaction both against the traditional form of English as a foreign language (EFL) used in India and against the type of communicative language teaching which was practiced there (Jean & Hahn, 2004; Waguey & Hufanam, 2013). Prabhu's (1990) project, in India, is mostly calling attention to the cognitive processes entailed by tasks. He talks about tasks involving 'some processes of thought' (Prabhu, 1987, p.9). However, according to Nunan (1989, p.10), task-based instruction is a way of designing teaching syllabuses which consists of a set of communicative tasks, and a way to involve learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language. In Iran the idea of task-based syllabuses has not been widely discussed. Communicative activities, if at all, usually appear after learning linguistic rules with teacher-led instructions (Fatehi rad & Mohammad Jafari, 2013).

This study intended to investigate the possible effects of applying task-based syllabuses in the form of three task types in writing skills on the part of Iranian English learners majoring in Translation. For Prabhu (1987) tasks are classified based on the kind of cognitive activity involved. Accordingly, three main task-based strategies were used in the present research.

1.2. Statement of the problem

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in language teaching towards a Task-based approach to instruction (Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004; Prabhu, 1987; Skehan, 1996); Prabhu's approach still appeals to many researchers concerned with effective instructional activities. Ellis (2003) believes that Prabhu's classification of tasks is interesting because it rests on an account of the kind of cognitive operations that underlie the actual performance of different kinds of tasks. It is based on the premise that using language for reasoning fosters acquisition, a premise that is certainly intuitively appealing, but it is untested.

There are few, if not any, empirical researches to date to show that TBLT activities work better for writing activities. The situation becomes more exacerbating when it comes to the context of Iran. Unfortunately, no study has incorporated the efficacy of task- types in learning writing at the university level in Iran. Thus it seems that a study concerning task types might be an actual attempt through which the influence of task type can be examined on writing acquisition; it also allows to see which type of task can work best in the context of universities in Iran.

1.3. Research questions and the null hypothesis

Therefore, this study dealt with the following research questions:

RQ1. To what extent do class discussion tasks improve vocabulary acquisition of Iranian learners' writing skill of English among translation students?

RQ2. To what extent do oral summary tasks improve vocabulary acquisition of Iranian learners' writing skill of English among translation students?

RQ3. To what extent do mind mapping tasks improve vocabulary acquisition of Iranian learners' writing skill of English among translation students?

RQ4. What task type proves more successful with Iranian learners' writing skill of English among translation students?

Following the above research questions, the researcher proposed the null hypothesis of the study:

H0. The type of task does not have any significant influence on Iranian learners' writing skill of English among translation students?

The need for learning English and being able to communicate through it, in situations such as our country, Iran, where there is lack of exposure to the native speakers of English as well as authentic materials, is something that both students and teachers agree on. Therefore, applying effective ways or techniques through which learners can better learn and better communicate seems an important enterprise.

In light of the growing recognition that the conventional method of direct instruction employing a dictionary alone is inadequate to satisfy the learners' needs, it is necessary to develop a new approach to learning writing skills which can reflect more authentic uses of language. In the area of learning writing skills, a few observational and experimental studies have been conducted to suggest what specific methods are the most effective for certain goals and particular type of learners (e.g., Kang, 1995). Thus, it is necessary to investigate the studies regarding how to enhance second language writing instruction.

Consequently, it is essential for syllabus designers and teachers to examine a variety of language learning techniques in writing to select the one which is more effective. It is hoped that a systematic analysis of the result of the present study may provide the syllabus designers an insight into more effective techniques in their materials that they design.

2.Review of Literature

2.1. Task-based approach and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Communicative language teaching (CLT) came up with a perception of language learning which regards language as 'more than simply a system of rules' (Nunan, 1989, p. 12). Brown (1994, p. 245) defines the principles of CLT as follows:

1. Classroom goals focus on all of the components of communicative competence and they are not restricted to grammatical or linguistic competence.
2. Language techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, and functional use of language for meaningful purposes. Organizational language forms are not the central focus but rather aspects of language that enable the learners to accomplish those purposes.
3. Fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques. At times fluency may have to take on more importance than accuracy in order to keep learners meaningfully engaged in language use.
4. In the communicative classroom, students ultimately have to use the language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed contexts.

Generally, the 1970s saw a world-wide shift towards teaching methods that emphasized communication as the fundamental reason for language teaching. Later on, communication came to be seen more in terms of processes that people use to carry out specific tasks (Waguey &, Hufanam, 2013). Willis (1996) believes that Task-based Instruction (TBI) is a logical development of Communicative Language Teaching and it grows out of more general notion of CLT. Thus, some syllabuses were designed around the processes or tasks that students use in the classroom. To start with, this style meant redefining what the student had to learn in terms of communicative competence rather than linguistic competence (Cook, 2001, p. 212).

2.2. Teaching grammatical patterns through Task-based Approach

One cannot learn a language without grammatical patterns (Krashen, 1989). Even though there are some language teachers who believe that vocabulary does not need to be actively taught, many studies support that the learning of new grammatical patterns requires tremendous effort (Nation, 1990). Nation also adds that language learners generally agree that many of their difficulties in both receptive and productive use arise from their inadequate grammatical patterns knowledge.

In the area of second language learning, in recent years researchers have been interested in promoting grammatical patterns learning, and they have suggested effective approaches to learn and recall these patterns effectively. Allen (1983, p. 17) makes some suggestions for effectiveness of learning grammatical patterns on the part of learners:

1. When we think about language learning in the classroom, it is useful to think also of ways in which people learn grammatical patterns outside of school.
2. Grammatical patterns are best learned when someone feels that a certain patterns is needed.
3. We can make the basic grammatical patterns in English necessary for communication. To do so, we engage students in activities that require those English grammatical patterns for the exchange of information or the expression of personal feelings.
4. The exchange of information by means of English grammatical patterns is possible even in classes for beginners.
5. In classrooms, it is better to spend time on the functional use of the grammatical patterns.
6. We can have simple communication experiences of written passages in the classroom by describing a task for small groups of students in the intermediate class.

2.3. Teaching writing in Iranian universities

As a matter of fact, English is a global language, and the number of people learning English through the world is expanding, especially in Asia (Richards & Rodgers, 2002, p. 3). They estimate that "some 60 percent of today's world population is multilingual. From both a contemporary and a historical perspective, bilingualism or multilingualism is the norm rather than the exception"; and they note today English is the world's most widely studied foreign language.

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.

Presently, the tendency to focus on accuracy is actually observed in Iranian universities. Fortunately, the idea that the first priority of the elementary and pre-intermediate levels for learners of English language should be teaching basic structures is not accepted in the educational community of Iran anymore; however, their preference is accuracy rather than fluency, and this attitude may relates to the educational policy of teaching at the elementary and pre-intermediate level of schools, and the text books at these levels are influenced by this idea.

To be honest, it is obvious that the present textbooks of writing pay more attention to accuracy than fluency the past decades, but why accuracy is considered so important perhaps relates to learners' and teachers' attitude: To obtain scores and pass the exams, although the assessment of learners preferences by teachers may be misunderstood.

In conclusion one can say that most of the learners in seem to favor a communicative approach to perfecting their language skills by working in pairs/groups, tending to be actively engaged in classroom discussions, and practicing their English through having interaction with other people (Waguey &, Hufanam, 2013). Thus there still needs to be a closer cooperation between teachers and students as to how language learning activities should be arranged and implemented in the writing classes.

3.Methodology

3.1. Participants

The participants were 90 male/female students who were selected among 120 second year learners through a homogeneity test of writing. The learners who got the scores one standard deviation above and below the mean were accepted as the participants of the study. They were in ranging the age of 23, studying Translation in Abadan Branch, Islamic Azad University. The participants were divided into three experimental groups; each group included 30 participants. Each group received instruction based on one of the writing tasks including discussion, oral summary, and mind mapping.

3.2. Instrumentation

In order to accomplish the objectives, different testing instruments were utilized in the process of the development of the present research. 50 items of the homogeneity test was used to homogenize the participants. It was developed by (Richards, Lesley, Hansen, Sandy, & Zukowski, 2008). The homogeneity test reliability was calculated through KR-21 formula as ($r=0.832$). The rationale behind adopting this test for the purpose of the study was that it is a suitable test for determining the pre-intermediate groups.

The second test was the pre-test of writing a 150-word descriptive essay to calculate the participants' writing proficiency level before the treatment period. It was administrated to the three groups in order to examine their language proficiency. It included three topics among which the learners could select one topic and write their essays in 25 minutes. The post-test of writing essays on descriptive topics was similar to the pre-test concerned with the topics. The length and the time of writing were the same for all groups in the pre and post-test exams.

The checklist for scoring the essays was used to check the grammatical, stylistic, and meaning mistakes the participants committed. The length and the number of words were also come into consideration of scoring. This checklist was developed by Hee-Jung Jung (2001) and includes four parts: grammar and mechanics of writing, style of writing lay out and organization, and development and support. The maximum score for the essay was 36 and the minimum was 0.

3.3. Materials

In the present study, the course book *College Writing* (Zemach & Rumisek, 2003) used. 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. Students' works were checked by the researcher, in addition to scoring, some points of this book were noted in their essays and

asked them to obey those writing rules in their next compositions. The first and the last composition written by the participants regarded as pre-test and post-test. That is, the learner of experimental groups first required to write one-paragraph descriptive essays during the first session considered as a pre-test. The last essay, the similar topics to the pre-test were assigned by the instructors, was treated as a post-test.

3.4. Procedure

Before instruction, the experimental groups were pre-tested in the classroom. They took the same pre-test that consisted of three topics. They wrote one-paragraph descriptive essays about topics given to them. The minimum and maximum essay length was specified (10 lines, about 150 words). The experimental groups wrote their compositions regarded as pre-test and post-test.

The procedure for the groups was followed a pre-test which is writing one-paragraph essays, 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 were not provided with the correct forms, but a general content comment based on course book used was presented to them in the point of their errors at the end of their essays and they were asked to look at content comments at home. So the groups received special instruction on discussion before writing in discussion group, oral summary on what they were going to write in oral summary group, and mind mapping activities in the mind mapping group. They just wrote a one-paragraph essay both for pre-test and post-test based on the three topics given to them.

The procedure for the experimental groups was as following. First they were pre-tested in the classroom. After the pre-test, they had treatment on the three class activities. The experimental groups wrote one-paragraph essays during the instruction treatment. The topics were given to them one by one were those given to them in pre-test at once. They received feedback in the classroom. In addition to it, they did an activity considered as post-task after each writing task. Tasks were used to write description tasks. The duration of treatment in experimental group was 10 sessions. So, each session allocated to one topic or task and the first and the last session for pre-test and post-test. In a separate session at the end of the course, a same post-test administered for experimental group to measure the effect of post-task strategies in their writing accuracy and fluency. The post-test for experimental groups consisted of essays that the students practiced in the pre-test. So, the essay topic was concrete and within the students' background knowledge.

Feedback was provided on the presence and location of errors but no correct forms were provided to encourage self-editing. The researcher marked their errors by using underlining. Other errors represented to them in the form of some points based on course book used as material. For assessment, students in the groups were tested every session. Essays were always graded, returned to the students with comments on strengths and weaknesses.

The pre-test and post-test essays of both groups were holistically graded based on a general impression of layout/organization, development/support, style, and grammar/mechanics. All essays were read once and a quality rating of excellent, good, poor was given to each paper. Essays were then read by the second rater and each was assigned a grade. The researcher and the second rater followed the same scoring checklist.

The components of the writing program and the evaluation criteria were the following categories:

- A. Layout/Organization:
- B. Development/Support:
- C. Style:
- D. Grammar/Mechanics:

Scores for both the pre and post-tests were collected through estimating of the rates in the checklist. A correct answer was rated 1 for poor, 2 for good, and 3 for excellent. Finally, inter-rater reliability index was calculated to be sure on the reliability of scoring. The results are presented as follows:

The text produced by the subjects were scored by another rater and the inter rater reliability was computed through the correlation coefficient between the set of scores the two raters marked for the writings in the three groups. The recordings were evaluated through inter-rater correlation to arrive at the reliability value. The tests reliability coefficients are presented as follows:

Table 1:

Inter-rater reliability

Tests	N	Inter-Reliability Indexes
Pre-test (Discussion group)	30	.836
Pre-test (Oral summary group)	30	.854
Pre-test (Mind mapping group)	30	.782
Post-test (Discussion group)	30	.875
Post -test (Oral summary group)	30	.901
Post -test (Mind mapping group)	30	.811

Table 1 shows that the inter-rater reliability-calculated by Pearson Correlation Coefficient-are strongly correlated between the two raters. Thus the scores could be reliably used in the One-way ANOVA to estimate possible differences between the group performances in writing proficiency.

4. Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 17). In order to determine whether using task-based approach had any impact on Iranian advanced EFL learners' writing accuracy and fluency, once the scores of the pre-test and post-test were obtained, the mean and standard deviation of the scores of 90 participants were calculated. In this study data analyze by One-way ANOVA statistics to see if there is any significant difference between the experimental groups.

4.1. Results of Descriptive and One-way ANOVA

Descriptive statistics including minimums, maximums, means, and then standard deviations of pre-test and post-test were respectively computed. The results indicated partially equal performance on the pre-tests among experimental group, as they are presented in Table 2.

Table 2:

Descriptive Statistics (Pre-test)

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min.	Max.
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Discussion	30	12.5000	6.03296	1.10146	10.2473	14.7527	.00	33.00
Oral Summary	30	13.8333	8.13288	1.48485	10.7965	16.8702	.00	35.00
Mind mapping	30	14.0000	7.74151	1.41340	11.1093	16.8907	3.00	33.00
Total	90	13.4444	7.30724	.77025	11.9140	14.9749	.00	35.00

Table 2 shows the statistical analysis of data of pre-test and post-test in the three groups. It provides the descriptive statistics of the control and experimental groups in terms of the number of participants (N), maximum scores, minimum scores, means, and standard deviations (SD).

As shown in Table 2, 90 students participated in this research. The mean score for discussion group was (12.5000) in the pre-test. Their scores ranged from 0 to 33 out of 36. The mean score for Oral Summary group was (13.8333) in the pre-test. Their scores ranged from 0 to 35 out of 36. The mean score for Mind mapping group was (14.0000) in the pre-test. Their scores ranged from 3 to 33 out of 36. There was close means between three tests in the groups, so you can see the difference between the means is not significant. Since the descriptive statistics cannot show the significant difference between the three groups, One-way ANOVA was used to determine this difference in Table 3.

Table 3:

One-way ANOVA (Pre-test)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	40.556	2	20.278	.374	.689
Within Groups	4711.667	87	54.157		
Total	4752.222	89			

Table 3 shows that the observed F (0.374) is less than the critical F (3.11) with $df=2/87$ which is not significant at ($p<0.05$). Therefore, the difference between the groups at the beginning of the treatment period was not significant. After the treatment period, the post-test on writing essays was administered and the data were analyzed to find possible changes compared with the pre-test stage. The results of descriptive statistics are presented in Table 4.

Table 4:*Descriptive Statistics (Post-test)*

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min.	Max.
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Discussion	30	26.8333	7.32536	1.33742	24.0980	29.5687	8.00	36.00
Oral Summary	30	18.8667	6.79114	1.23989	16.3308	21.4025	9.00	36.00
Mind mapping	30	23.6000	7.82392	1.42845	20.6785	26.5215	4.00	36.00
Total	90	23.1000	7.95500	.83853	21.4339	24.7661	4.00	36.00

As shown in Table 4, 90 students participated in the post-test. The mean score for discussion group was (26.8333) in the post -test. Their scores ranged from 8 to 36 out of 36. The mean score for Oral Summary group was (18.8667) in the post-test. Their scores ranged from 9 to 36 out of 36. The mean score for Mind mapping group was (23.6000) in the post -test. Their scores ranged from 4 to 36 out of 36. Since descriptive statistics could not offer the researcher valid information to reject or sustain the null hypothesis, One-way ANOVA was used to determine this difference in Table 5.

Table 5:*One-way ANOVA (Post-test)*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	963.267	2	481.633	8.975	.000
Within Groups	4668.833	87	53.665		
Total	5632.100	89			

Table 5 shows that the observed F (8.975) is greater than the critical F (3.11) with $df=2/87$ which is significant at ($p<0.05$). Therefore, the difference between the groups at the end of the treatment period was significant. The mean exact differences were followed by the post-hoc Scheffe test in Table 6.

Table 6:

Post-hoc Scheffe Test (Post-test)

(I) VAR00001	(J) VAR00001	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Discussion	Oral Summary	7.96667*	1.89147	.000	3.2560	12.6774
	Mind mapping	3.23333	1.89147	.238	-1.4774	7.9440
Oral Summary	Discussion	-7.96667*	1.89147	.000	-12.6774	-3.2560
	Mind mapping	-4.73333*	1.89147	.049	-9.4440	-.0226
Mind mapping	Discussion	-3.23333	1.89147	.238	-7.9440	1.4774
	Oral Summary	4.73333*	1.89147	.049	.0226	9.4440

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 6 shows that the discussion group is significantly different with the other two groups. The results of comparison groups are presented in Table 7.

Table 7:

Means for Groups in Homogeneous Subsets

VAR00001	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Oral Summary	30	18.8667	
Mind mapping	30		23.6000
Discussion	30		26.8333
Sig.		1.000	.238

The results of Table 7 show that the discussion group outperformed the other two experimental groups in terms of writing on-descriptive paragraph essays. The means of the groups show that the discussion task group gained first, mind mapping task group the second and the oral summary task group the third level of writing accuracy and fluency achievement. The results are clearly shown in Figure 1.

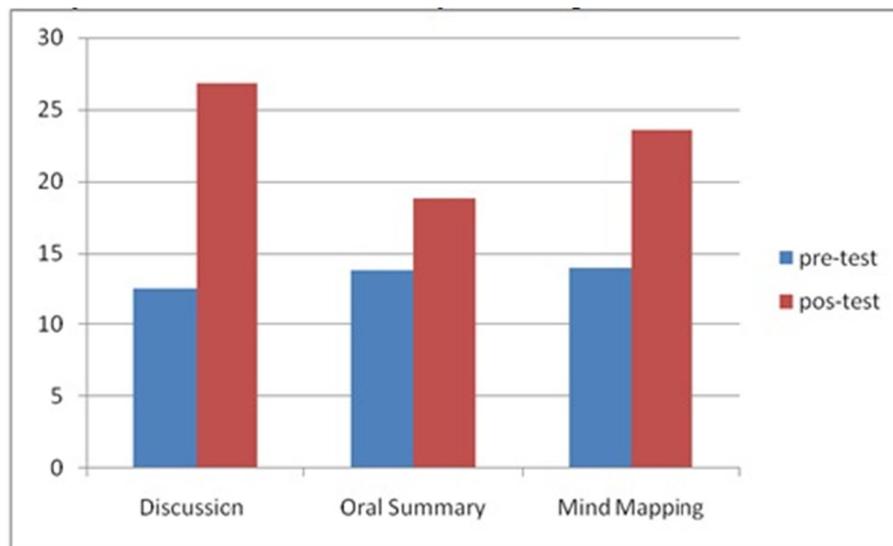


Figure 1. Writing achievement (Pre and post-tests)

As can be seen in Figure 1, the Discussion task group has a better performance than the other groups. So it can be concluded that the discussion tasks a pre-tasks in writing essays can be helpful to make the learners knowledgeable on what they are going to write.

5. Discussion

The present study investigated the role of post-task approaches in teaching writing accuracy and fluency among pre-intermediate EFL learners majoring in Translation. In this part, the null hypotheses and research questions are brought up and a discussion of the findings based on the results presented. Therefore, the results to reject or confirm the research hypotheses will be offered in the following section.

Results of the pre-test and post-test stages in the discussion group showed a significant improvement in the learners' overall writing skill through pre-task strategies used by the researcher. By looking at this group's means in Table 2 to 4.5, the first null hypothesis was rejected because we can see progress in the groups' means in the post-test of writing skill. Moreover, by comparing the results of pre-test and post-test of each group, one can simply notice the usefulness of discussion task. Since learners who were dealing with tasks with appropriate feedback in a face to face discussion could practice better during instruction and finally in the post-test examination. So this task was helpful in improving their scores. By considering these results, we may conclude that the discussion task has a positive effect on the level of ability in writing accuracy and fluency among the translation students.

A comparison between the post-test scores of the experimental groups also showed significant difference in relation to their writing skill. Since the level of significance between participants of the experimental groups was set at .05, therefore the second null hypothesis is also rejected. The hypothesis of study was tested through One-way ANOVA to arrive at the significant difference between the pre and post-tests of the oral summary group developing EFL learners in writing accuracy and fluency. The results are shown in Table 6. Mean differences indicated that oral summary group gained the minimum mean score among the other groups. The scores obtained by participants of the oral summary groups on the post-test were lower than those groups. It means that students who use oral summary of what they are going to write in individual performance cannot gather their ideas in writing tasks appropriately. Thus these students had problems in essay writing and needed some helps during writing exams.

Therefore, the second research hypothesis with regard to the similar performance of the both groups was not rejected compared with other tasks. In other words, oral summary group was less effective than other groups due to the data analysis. The results of mean differences between the experimental groups are presented in Table 6. It can be found that the oral summary group did not gain enough feedback received from the classmates as well as the teacher. Thus they became less proficient, and made many errors. In spite of the fact that that teacher feedback had an effect on students' writing ability in the other groups, but again they made several errors and had a few writing problems in the post-test.

In general, the writing essay based on mind mapping tasks is more fruitful than the oral summary tasks; however, it is weaker than using the discussion tasks for writing descriptive essays. It indicated that the above mentioned strategy is effective in improving EFL writing of students at the pre-intermediate level of English. There was not a significant difference between the discussion and the mind mapping tasks groups while there was a significant difference between these groups and the oral summary group. In other words, the oral summary tasks gained fewer score in the post-tests. This may be due to the lack of class activities in team work and the lack of peer and teacher feedback in this task. The results showed that using post-task mind mapping and discussion tasks have more significant effect on students writing accuracy and fluency. One reason for the better performance of experimental groups in using these tasks might be due to the fact that they are motivating the teachers and learners to work together in a cooperative way.

The task-based strategy provides learners with interesting challenges and is clearly related to their language needs (Fatehi rad & Mohammad Jafari, 2013).. Pre-task phase provides a chance for students to predict the performance of the task. These activities have also proved interesting. By using it students' writing accuracy will improve in a number of ways specially by focusing their attention to the main task again. Skehan and Foster (1997) made the prediction that accuracy, selectively, would be advantaged in the task condition. In their studies, they predicted that a task effect upon writing accuracy was confirmed. According to Garcia and Arias (2000), using cooperative tasks in a classroom has the following advantages: Increased motivation of the students, individualization of learning process, immediate feedback, non-linear access to the information, and the introduction of new exercise types in the classroom.

To observe the mean differences between the experimental groups concerned with level of ability in written performance, the descriptive and One-way ANOVA were conducted. The level of significant was $p < .05$. The results in Tables 5 and 6 showed that observed F in the post-tests was greater than the critical F . In other words, there was a significant difference among the groups. Discussion group and mind mapping group were significantly different with the oral summary group. It shows that two groups were homogenous to some extent. But the oral summary group could not gain enough scores to reject the null hypothesis. In this group the observed F was significantly less than the critical F .

The results of the present study revealed that though three groups had progress in writing comparing the pre and the post-tests, the students in the discussion task group yielded a better performance. The results showed that this group received feedback via class activities and did some activities considered as task got better marks and their performance was better than the other groups who did not receive such a task. This result might be due to the fact that in the discussion and mind mapping groups, students might have motivation while in the oral summary group, they are not more motivated as they have less time to think with some pressure or stress, they cannot profit from teacher and peer feedback.

The findings of this study are against with those of Braine (1997) indicating that the traditional setting promotes more improvement in writing than using other task-based strategies. Also, the results of this study

do not agree with. He observed the impact of traditional class instruction on the acquisition of parts of speech by two groups of Taiwanese EFL learners. After a 16-hour instruction, both groups were asked to produce a written narrative. Overall, there was no statistical difference between the control and the experimental groups. In spite of some disagreement mentioned above, the results of this study are in line with Gorjian (2009) who found that the experimental group taught via discussion through computer had a better performance than the control group taught in the traditional method. He investigated the role of computer in instructing writing skills in L2 acquisition. To discover the significant difference between learners' acquiring writing proficiency with or without using personal computers, he collected one experimental and one control group of 40 intermediate L2 learners and asked them to write 480 one-paragraph essays in 12 sessions. After analyzing the result he found out that the experimental group which received teacher feedback via e-mailing outperformed control group which was given instruction through pen and paper procedures.

The results of the study confirmed that writing accuracy and fluency could be improved through using discussion and mind mapping tasks in writing descriptive essays (Waguey &, Hufanam, 2013). It indicates that instruction of applying these tasks strategies for pre-intermediate EFL learners was pedagogically effective as both discussion and mind mapping groups in this study performed better than the oral summary group on the post-test regarding writing accuracy and fluency.

6. Conclusion

Having analyzed and discussed the results, the researcher now turns to the conclusion she has come up with, and considers what EFL teachers should actually do to facilitate their learners' writing skill. Writing is an aspect that needs special attention and instruction. In order to provide effective instruction, it is necessary for teachers of EFL to carefully examine the factors, conditions, and components that underlie writing effectiveness. One of these factors is using specific strategies and using different kinds of tasks to increase students' motivation.

The purpose of this study was investigating the extent that task-based strategies like discussion, oral summary, and mind mapping affect EFL learners' writing accuracy and fluency among Iranian advanced students. Overall, the results of this study suggest that the discussion tasks helped the Translation students outperformed the other groups in writing skill. Moreover, by comparing the results of pre-test and post-test of each group, one can simply notice the usefulness of discussion and mind mapping tasks. Statistics showed that there was slight difference between both discussion and mind mapping tasks since there was not a significant difference between them. Moreover, these tasks provide a chance for students to repeat performance of the task. By using it students' writing accuracy and fluency will improve in a number of ways by focusing their attention to the main task again. We observed that peer and teacher feedback had an effect on students' ability in writing, but the effect of this feedback via these tasks was most influential.

6.1. Implications for Teaching

On the basis of the findings of this research, the following implications are recommended. This study could be a starting point in investigation of the role of discussion and mind mapping tasks in writing accuracy and fluency. Language studies in the domain of language learning and discussion and mind mapping tasks specifically in writing skill are well advised to consider the implications presented in this study (Fatehi rad & Mohammad Jafari, 2013).

A lot of research has been done recently (Gorjian, 2009), to find new ways to help learners' writing skill. One of the serious problems we are facing in college English teaching in Iran is that many students have difficulty in their writing skill. In these situations, discussion and mind mapping tasks can be one of the ways to develop students' writing skill.

The application of discussion and mind mapping tasks in teaching writing resulted in successful learning among language learners. It is worth mentioning that applying this approach is fruitful for both teachers and learners. It will help both groups to be successful in their jobs. With this program students' learning history is recorded and their development is easily checked. Also, even less proficient students can find something interesting in it.

It became clear that foreign language learners are different in language learning, their learning style, motivation, attitude, etc. Teachers should 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 (Waguey &, Hufanam, 2013). Many language teachers in EFL contexts treat writing skill in a traditional way ignoring the discussion and mind mapping tasks in writing instruction. They usually overlook the fact that many language learners have difficulty in this skill. Language teachers should find out the value of writing instruction based on discussion and mind mapping tasks because they can create the motivation and enthusiasm in learners. In language classrooms, it is recommended that language teachers also familiarize their language learners with the importance of utilizing discussion and mind mapping tasks to make them interested so as to improve their writing skill.

Traditional approaches for teaching writing skills are limited in nature in comparison to the approach used in this study. As a result discussion and mind mapping tasks was created to compensate for these shortcomings. This also saves instructors' time and energy, because the only thing which remains for the instructors to do is to guide individuals from time to time and provide feedback for them without getting bored (Gorjian, 2009).

A task-based approach is motivating for teachers and learners. It provides learners with interesting challenges and is clearly related to their language needs. It is obvious to the learners that their classroom work will help them to operate effectively in English. The primary unit for both designing a language program and individual lessons should be a task because it creates opportunities for communication and noticing form/meaning/function relationships, which are the conditions essential for the development of communicative competence in an L2 (Willis & Willis, 2007). The discussion and mind mapping tasks could help shy students to participate through sending messages via email to teachers. These tasks could be a useful tool in EFL in teaching the writing skill.

6.2. Suggestions for Further Research

Writing accuracy and fluency are a difficulty that exists in the mother tongue and in a foreign language as well. A research in this field seems to be necessary. The results of this study can lead the future researchers to investigate other related areas. In this regard, the following potential suggestions and insights can be useful for more research.

1. As this study was only conducted at one university, more research is needed in similar situations to support the findings and to find more about writing via discussion and mind mapping tasks at advanced EFL students in Iran. Therefore, we can do the present study between university students from different areas.

2. By considering the subjects that take part in this study, we can conclude that most of them were girls, but we can compare or we can study the effect of discussion and mind mapping tasks between two different sexes, boys, and girls.
3. In this study, participants were students of General English. Research on ESP courses is strongly encouraged.
4. In this study only one skill investigated (writing accuracy and fluency) and other language skills (reading, speaking, and listening) did not consider, so we can compare two different skills and the effect of discussion and mind mapping tasks on them.
5. This study investigated the role of discussion, oral summary, and mind mapping tasks only and their effects on writing accuracy and does not consider the other activities (pre-task or the task itself) to see whether they are helpful to improve writing skill, but we also can study these activities and their effects on different English skills
6. This study was conducted at the pre-intermediate level, but it can also be applied to language learners at different proficiency levels (intermediate, upper-intermediate, etc) to find out what the results will be. Research on various proficiency levels is strongly encouraged.

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