



The Differential Effects of Task Repetition and Task Familiarity on EFL Learners' Writing Performance in Weblog-Based Environment

Zari Sadat Seyyedrezaei¹, Aytai gharavi², Masumeh Sadat Seyyedrezaei³, Atefeh Zebarjadi⁴

¹Assistant Professor, Department of English Language Teaching, Aliabad Katoul Branch, Islamic Azad University, Aliabad Katoul, Iran.

E-Mail: zariseyyedrezaie89@gmail.com

²Department of English Language Teaching, Gonbad-e-kavoos Branch, Islamic Azad University, Gonbad-e -kavoos, Iran.

E-Mail: aytaigharavielt@yahoo.com

³Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics, Department of English Language & Literature, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran.

E-Mail: m.seyyedrezaei@fgn.ui.ac.ir

⁴Department of English Language Teaching, Islamic Azad University of Maragheh, Maragheh, Azarbayjan-e Sharqi, Iran.

E-Mail: Atefe.zebarjadi@gmail.com

Received: 10-10-2022, Accepted: 23-11-2022

ABSTRACT

This study explored the differential effects of task familiarity and task repetition on EFL learners' writing performance in weblog-based environment and face-to-face classroom. To this end, 87 Iranian intermediate EFL students from two branches of Islamic Azad University, Iran were volunteers for participating in this study. Subsequently, only 60 students out of these 87 students were chosen based on their preliminary English test scores, and were randomly assigned to two groups (30 students in weblog / 30 students in face-to-face). As well, each group was divided into two sub-groups: 15 students in task repetition group, and 15 students in task familiarity group. During the treatment, the task repetition group performed twelve tasks with the same procedure and exactly the same content. The students in the task familiarity group were provided with tasks on different topics for the subsequent sessions. Each session, one of these tasks was familiar (e.g., events in Iran) for the learners and the other one was unfamiliar (e.g., events in France). The results of the Two-way ANOVA revealed that there is no significant difference between the writing performance of Iranian EFL learners receiving task repetition compared to those receiving task familiarity. Besides, the results indicated that the writing scores of learners receiving task repetition through weblog-based environment were better than those in face-to-face classroom. Regarding task familiarity, the results of the Two-way ANOVA showed that there is no statistically significant difference between writing performance of learners who receive task familiarity through weblog-based environment in comparison to those in face-to-face classroom. The findings of this study may have implication for EFL teachers and material developers to pay attention to the contribution of blogging to writing achievement, and develop materials, techniques, and procedures that are suitable for blog oriented writing.

KEYWORDS: Task Familiarity; Task Repetition; Weblog Based Environment; Writing Performance.



INTRODUCTION

Writing is an important skill for language production. Since students have many challenges in writing, it is considered as a difficult skill, particularly in English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts. Different kinds of approaches have been made to develop the students' writing skill (Dehghan & Chalak, 2016). In recent years, tasks and task-based language teaching have played an important role in second language acquisition (SLA) research and language pedagogy and became one of the most important interest of many second language teachers and researchers (Mehrang & Rahimpour 2010; Rahimpour, 2008; Salimi & Dadashpour 2010; Salimi & Dadashpour, 2012). The use of different tasks, such as task familiarity and task repetition may affect students' writing performance.

In this regard, several studies about the effectiveness of task repetition and task familiarity on writing performance of EFL learners have been done by Bygate and Samuda (2005), Ahmadian (2011), and Salimi and Fatollahnejad (2012). Bygate and Samuda (2005) define task repetition as "repetition of the same or slightly altered tasks – whether whole task or parts of the task" (p.43). Bygate (2001) further identifies real task repetition as "the kind experienced by learners when they find themselves repeatedly in highly similar communication situations and with the opportunity to build on their previous knowledge at completing the task. In accordance with task-based language teaching (TBLT), task familiarity is also one of the factors that have been proposed in TBLT. Familiarity of the learners with the topics of the tasks which is the second independent variable of this study, as cited in Ellis (2003), impacts on the learners' propensity to negotiate meaning. Language users or language learners make use of their knowledge of the world to help them produce or comprehend the texts.

On the other hand, the growing popularity of computers and the Internet contributes to the integrated teaching and learning environment of the Web 2.0 era. Through technology-mediated processes, students can now more easily engage in their learning, rather than being passive learners and this issue is fundamentally important for foreign language learners in Iran (Behjat, Yamini, & Bagheri, 2014). According to Wang and Vasquez (2012), this is because of the "paradigm shift: it is moving from a cognitive orientation to a social orientation, from classroom contexts to naturalistic setting, from an acquisition metaphor to a participation metaphor, and from L2 learning to L2 use" (p. 413). Because of these paradigm shifts to technology-mediated processes, over the past two decades, research on EFL writing through Web 2.0 tools has flourished. One of the online writing tools that have become widely used in EFL writing class is weblog. A weblog is constructed by people in order to share a mutual interest with a view to setting objectives, regulations, and formats collaboratively (Richardson, 2010). Blogs applications offer diverse opportunities for people to interplay within target language exposure and production, improve learning attitudes (e.g., motivation enhancement), and encourage learners to communicate in multiple and mutual ways especially in written form (Sun, 2010).

As a result, Blogs have fundamentally changed the way people use and interact on the Internet, by changing users from consumers to contributors and creators of information (Du & Wagner, 2007). As many modes of writing, blogging can be very significant in learning to write in L2; because blogging provides many benefits for developing writing skill: namely, providing learning opportunities in interactive environments, fostering language learners' written communication with authentic audiences (Chen & Brown, 2012), providing them with a number of authentic materials. Additionally, it encourages participants' autonomous monitoring of their own writing (Sun, 2010).

However, through investigating the existing literature, it is perceived that there is a highly disappointing shortage of studies concerning the reasonable effects of the task familiarity and task repetition on EFL learners' writing performance in weblog-based environment. This implies that there exists a gap in research on this controversial issue. This study attempted to fill part of this gap. Although there are some studies and research on task repetition and task familiarity concentrating on writing (Bayat, 2018; Indrarathne, 2013; Salimi & Fatollahnejad, 2012), but there are no studies in weblog-based environment. Therefore, because of the importance of writing and benefits of tasks, this study attempted to investigate whether task repetition and task familiarity in weblog-based environment and face-to-face classroom have any statistically significant difference in the writing performance of Iranian EFL learners, and whether there is any statistically significant difference between the writing performance of EFL learners who are exposed to weblog based environment compared to those in face to face classroom.



REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

WRITING AS A FOREIGN SKIL

Writing in a second or foreign language seems to be the most difficult language skill for language learners to acquire, because they do not have sufficient knowledge about how to generate ideas for writing (Negari, 2011). EFL students struggle with the writing process as a complicated task because it requires the simultaneous combination of several strategies and the application of various mental resources. To be successful, these writers need an understanding of the components of a text as well as knowledge of writing strategies which can be used to shape and organize the writing process (Mason, Harris, & Graham, 2011).

Writing skill demands much effort and practice in composing, organizing, and analyzing ideas. Students' writing in a foreign language will naturally face with cognitive problems related to language learning (Sturm & Rankin-Erickson, 2002). Graham and Harris (2000) suggest that teachers might try to model and explicitly teach the types of strategies used by more skillful writers, or might predict routines where writing processes such as planning and revising were expected and strengthened. In order to handle the difficulties that L2 students have in writing skill and remove some difficulties for them, new teaching methods should be implemented. The present study was intended to use task-based (i.e. task repetition and task familiarity) instructional approach in weblog-based environment to improve EFL learners' writing performance.

THE EFFECT OF COMPUTER – MEDIATED COMMUNICATION (CMC) ON WRITING PERFORMANCE

Research suggests that teachers today are frequently urged to make use of language learning technology and these days there is a wide range of Web 2.0 tools available for practitioners following the 'social software revolution' (Hourigan & Murray 2010, p. 209). Research on the role of computers in language teaching reflects a paradigm shift of computer-assisted language teaching from structural through cognitive to sociocultural approaches to language teaching.

Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) is being integrated into writing classes because of the interactive dynamic and collaborative learning opportunity it brings to the learning environment (Warschauer & Kern, 2000). As pointed earlier, writing is a process of discovery, focusing on not only final product but also the processes such as thinking, drafting and reviewing. As a result of latest developments in the technology that created an integration of writing into computers, this approach is reinforced by providing both collaborative writing opportunities and skill development using computer-based programs. Online collaborative writing can be defined as a pedagogical approach that is enhanced and supported by computer shared applications and is facilitated and prompted online by the synchronous and asynchronous Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) tools to enable a group of students from the same writing class, to work in teams in order to exchange ideas, feedback and resources (Warschauer & Kern, 2000). Online Collaborative Writing is an extension of face-to-face traditional collaborative writing. In this sense, Web 2.0 tools such as wikis, blogs and podcasts may bring learners great opportunities for collaborating each other during the writing process (Emrah & Selami, 2015).

TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING (TBLT)

During the past thirty years, there has been a growing interest on utilizing pedagogic tasks as a means for developing second language (L2) performance (e.g., Birjandi & Ahangari, 2008; Birjandi & Seifoori, 2009; Ellis, 2000; Maftoon, Birjandi & Pahlavani, 2014; Maftoon & Sharifi Haratmeh, 2012; Nunan, 2004; Robinson & Gilabert, 2007; Skehan & Foster, 1997; Van den Branden, 2006). Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) emphasizes the use of different types of communicative tasks in order to promote language learning.

Tasks can be performed and enacted in a variety of ways using a range of methodological options. Task repetition is a task-based pedagogical procedure which has attracted researchers over the past two decades (Ahmadian & Tavakoli, 2011). In this line of research, the question of whether or not repetition of the same written task, repeating



as a type of task planning, is pedagogically useful for second language (L2) learning is an intriguing one both for second language researchers and educators.

Bygate and Samuda (2005) assert that tasks have a primary focus on meaning, allow learners to rely on their linguistic and cognitive resources, and are outcome oriented. Thus, besides task repetition, in order to make a balance between focus on form and meaning in task-based approach to language instruction, the SLA researchers have suggested some proposals and one of them offers subject familiarity to ensure that learners concentrate on form and meaning at the same time. (e.g., Nazemi & Rezvani, 2019; Salimi & Fatollahnejad, 2012; Skehan & Foster, 1997). Task familiarity is also one of the factors proposed in TBLT. The learners' familiarity with the task topics effects on the propensity of learners to negotiate meaning. Language users or language learners make use of their knowledge of the world in order to help them create or understand texts (Ellis, 2003).

Qiu (2020) examined the influence of content familiarity and task repetition on EFL learners' speaking performance, in terms of complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF). Participants twice performed four monologic tasks, and received stimulated recall interviews. The findings of the study indicated that participants produced structurally more complex speech under familiar conditions, and increased their CAF in task repetition. Moreover, he found that content familiarity and task repetition may facilitate conceptualization. Task repetition may also direct participants' attention towards lexical choices and grammatical encoding. Furthermore, repeating unfamiliar topics effectively increased CAF.

In a similar study, Nazemi and Rezvani (2019) investigated the effects of content familiarity and task repetition on Iranian EFL learners' engagement in L2 oral performance. They selected 44 intermediate EFL learners through Oxford Placement Test (OPT). To collect the data, one familiar narrative task (events in Iran) and one unfamiliar task (events in China) were selected for the participants to narrate each one two times. Then they conducted a stimulated recall interview with all the selected participants to capture learners' inner thoughts about speech production and affective responses to content familiarity and task repetition. The results of their study revealed that there was a significant difference between the level of behavioral and cognitive engagement between the familiar and unfamiliar task and also between the first and the second performances of each. Moreover, they spotted potential interaction effect between content familiarity and task repetition.

Kazemi and Zarei (2015) focused on one main factor that has been proposed in TBLT, i.e. topic familiarity to investigate the effect of topic familiarity on EFL oral presentations. The participants were 30 female intermediate participants ranged from 14 to 18-year-old studying at one English language institute in Shiraz, Iran. A sample model of Oxford Placement Test was used to determine the participants' level of English proficiency. Then, the participants were asked to give impromptu presentations about unfamiliar topics. Their oral presentations were evaluated as pre-tests. In order to administer post-tests, participants were asked to work on a new topic for the subsequent session. Their results indicated that there was significant difference between mean scores of pre-tests and post-tests. The findings of this study indicate that topic familiarity has an influence on learners' oral presentations.

TASK REPETITION

Task repetition has drawn much attention as an important aspect of TBLT since it is considered useful in making learners to alter their language production (Bygate, 2001; Bygate & Samuda, 2005). Bygate and Samuda (2005) define task repetition as “repetition of the same or slightly altered tasks – whether whole task or parts of the task” (p.43). Task repetition is regarded as a kind of task planning that “involving asking learners to repeat a task one or more times” (Ellis, 2015, p. 282). Bygate (2001) further identifies real task repetition as “the kind experienced by learners when they find themselves repeatedly in highly similar communication situations and with the opportunity to build on their previous attempt at completing the task” (p.29).

Jung (2013) maintains that studies of repetition of tasks have mainly focused on two questions: one focused on whether learners show better writing performance when performing the same writing task. A second time and the other question is about whether learners demonstrate better writing in a new task after participating in a task repetition. In addition, researchers in the traditional SLA (second language acquisition) literature have studied task repetition to understand how it can affect different dimensions (complexity, precision, and fluency) of L2 performance (Ahmadian, 2011; Bygate, 2001; Mojavezi, 2013; Saeedi & Rahimi Kazerooni, 2013).



TASK FAMILIARITY

Task familiarity is defined by Carrell's (1987 as cited Du & Wagner, 2007,) refers to knowledge, related to the domain of content that students bring to the reading and listening text or to the spoken and written discourse. Salimi and Fatollahnejad (2012) identify task familiarity as the topic familiarity or prior knowledge of EFL learners about the topics of the tasks. Long (1990) confirms that cognitive psychologists believe from a cognitive point of view that knowledge is organized in the form of schemes. Background knowledge or knowledge of the world is central to understanding the language.

STUDIES IN WEBLOG-BASED WRITING

Alsamadani (2018) investigated the effectiveness of online blogging on students' individual and group writing skills. The participants were divided into individual learners and group learners. They produced pre-writing and post-writing samples through blogging practices. The study conducted lasted for 14 weeks so that blogging could be optimized. The results of the study reveal that "unlike traditional ways of improving writing skills, blogging has revolutionized EFL pedagogy and methodology (learning and teaching)"(p.44). Alsamadani (2018) claims that blogging-based writing practice is more participatory and interactive in those learners can dramatically improve their writing skills in terms of content, word choice, style, language mechanics and the like. The learner-blogger becomes aware that the arbiter is no longer the classroom teacher, the audience or readership. Alsamadani (2018) recommends that blogging be part of writing classes and be incorporated into school curricula. This essentially requires pedagogical consideration of the design of blogging-based writing materials.

Azari (2017) investigated the effect of weblog use in a process-based writing course on the writing performance of students as well as on their level of learner autonomy. The participants were 43 English language learners who were doing their BA in the field of English Language Teaching. The control group (n = 19) went through in-class writing instruction and the experimental group (n = 24) used weblogs along with the traditional class-based instruction. The results revealed that using weblogs in line with the process-based instruction helped students in having a better writing performance than those who only received in-class instruction. Azari (2017) concludes that Weblog use also fostered a sense of autonomy among learners escalating their level in autonomous learning.

Lastly, Yunus, Tuan, and Salehi (2009) in their study, provided details of the motivational factors for using blogs as an essential tool to promote students' writing skills in ESL classrooms. To achieve the aim of the study, a semi-structured interview protocol was used to collect the required qualitative data. All the interviewed lecturers agreed that blog is a very useful tool for promoting writing skills among the ESL learners. The findings of the study revealed that ESL learners can be motivated to improve their writing skills through using blogs. Yunus et al. (2009) reminded that the blogs which have been clearly underlined in the curriculum should be re-orchestrated more effectively again by the teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL).

The above-mentioned studies are significant, but they suffer from some limitations and gaps. The point at issue with some studies is that they just sufficed with limited tasks; and as well the positive effects of tasks in weblog based writing performance have not been explored until recently. Several empirical studies on oral task familiarity and task repetition have given positive evidence of increased fluency, accuracy and complexity of these tasks. However, there has been limited research on the impact of task familiarity and task repetition on written language production. Therefore, this study aimed to bridge the existing gaps found in previous studies through the following questions:

1. Is there any statistically significant difference between the writing performance of Iranian EFL learners who are exposed to weblog- based environment compared to face to face classroom?
2. Is there any statistically significant difference between the writing performance of Iranian EFL learners who receive task repetition compared to those who receive task familiarity in both main groups (weblog-based /face-to-face)?
3. Is there any statistically significant difference between the writing performance of Iranian EFL learners who receive task repetition through weblog-based environment compared to those in face-to-face classroom?



4. Is there any statistically significant difference between the writing performance of Iranian EFL learners who receive task familiarity through weblog-based environment compared to those in face-to-face classroom?

METHODOLOGY

PARTICIPANTS

The participants of the study were 60 Iranian undergraduate male (32) and female (28) EFL students. Their age ranged from 19 to 27, and they were chosen out of 87 students who were volunteers for participating in this course from two branches of Islamic Azad University, including Gonbad and Gorgan branches. They were selected through convenience sampling. They were all intermediate students. They were chosen based on their preliminary English test scores, and were randomly assigned to two groups (weblog-based/face to face). Each group was divided into two subgroups: 15 students in task repetition group, and 15 students in task familiarity group. Their first language was Farsi. To reduce learners' anxiety and maximize learning, one face-to-face classroom was conducted for the online learners before the first session.

INSTRUMENTS

The study used multiple instruments at different phases as follows:

PRELIMINARY ENGLISH TEST (PET)

In order to select a homogeneous sample of population, they were given the *Preliminary English test*. It consisted of 67-item standard PET test, released by Cambridge ESOL exam (copy right 2004) nature. The proficiency test PET (Preliminary English test, 2004), is a second level Cambridge ESOL exam for the intermediate level learners. The test includes three sections (writing, reading, & listening) because the researcher could not conduct the speaking section due to the practicality issue.

IELTS WRITING TESTS AS THE PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST OF THE STUDY

A piloted sample IELTS writing test, only its second task revolved around the topics “computers” and “cars”, was administered to the participants as a pretest to evaluate the level of EFL learners' writing performance before the treatment. And at the end of the treatment phase, another sample IELTS test, revolved around the topics “studying English” and “changes in 21st century”, was used as a post-test to assess the writing performance of the participants.

WEIR'S RATING SCALE

In order to evaluate the writing performance of the participants, Weir's Analytical Rating Scale (1990, cited in Seyyedrezaie, Ghonsooly, Shahriari, & Hosseini Fatemi, 2016), was used in this study. This included seven aspects of writing including, relevance and adequacy of content, cohesion, compositional organization, adequacy of vocabulary for purpose, grammar and mechanical accuracy, (regarding punctuation and spelling) was used for the purpose of rating the participants' performance on their drafts of essay-writing tasks. In each section of this scale, the band score is from 0 to 3. To evaluate the writing performance of students based on the Weir' rating scale, two raters who were both experienced teachers were chosen. For evaluating the inter-rater reliability, 20% of the student writing articles (IELTS writing as a pre-test) were randomly selected and were given to them separately; the result showed that it had a reliability of .85.



DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

In order to answer the research questions, the following procedure was pursued. Firstly, in order to check the reliability of the writing tests, it was piloted with 30 participants having similar characteristics to the target participants of the study. The result indicated that it had a reliability of 0.87 which was an appropriate index (Peterson, 1994).

Then in order to have a homogenous group of participants, the Preliminary English Test was administered to 87 students who had passed writing courses 1 and 2, and also advanced writing at two branches of Islamic Azad Universities, including Gonbad and Gorgan branches. Therefore 60 EFL students who scored one standard deviation above and below the mean were considered for the study. They were randomly assigned to two groups (Weblog-based writing instruction / face-to-face writing instruction). Each group was divided into two subgroups, 15 students in task repetition group and 15 students in task familiarity group.

During the treatment (16 sessions), the students in both groups were taught how to write a formal five – paragraph essay. Both groups were required to write twelve essays at home before attending the class on different topics that were chosen by the researcher. It should be noted that if the participants in the face-to-face group and Weblog-based group needed to know the information related to the vocabularies, the teacher provided them with the sufficient information. Yet the students exposed to Weblog-based writing instruction were also supported through teacher Weblog in which they were directed to relevant websites to do additional study on the topics and language structures. Throughout treatment, the task repetition group performed twelve tasks with the same procedure and the exact same content. Each session, the task repetition group composed essays and then they wrote about these topics again in next session. The participants in the task repetition group did not know that they would have the same topics on any future session. The students in the task familiarity group were provided with tasks on different topics for the subsequent sessions. Each session, one of these tasks was familiar (e.g., events in Iran) for the learners and the other one was unfamiliar (e.g., events in France). The participants were asked to get sufficient information about the topic through the Internet, books, etc. Therefore, they got familiar with the new topics.

At the last phase of the study, the students were given another sample IELTS writing test as a post-test. In order to assess the students' writing performance, two raters who were both experienced teachers were chosen. After evaluating the inter-rater reliability, the result of the test showed that it had a reliability of .85. Finally, the scores of the two groups (i.e., face-to-face and weblog-based) were analyzed by statistical analysis to investigate the research questions.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The participants of the present study were selected through convenience sampling. This quasi-experimental study employed a pretest-posttest design in order to compare the two tasks in relation to writing performance. The participants were divided randomly into two groups (Weblog-based writing instruction/ face-to-face writing instruction). The type of instruction (Weblog-based writing instruction/ face-to-face writing instruction) was one independent variable. Also the type of task (task repetition/ task familiarity) was another independent variable of the study; the writing performance was the dependent variable.



RESULTS

In order to have a homogeneous group of participants, a piloted version of IELTS writing test was administered to all the 30 students.

Table 1.

Descriptive statistics of the piloting of the test.

Mean	Variance	Std.Deviation	N of items
13.75	4.519	2.126	7

As table 1 indicates the mean and standard deviation turned out to be 13.75 and 2.126, respectively. The index for the K-R21 reliability obtained for the administration of the test used for piloting with 30 participants turned out to be .87.

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of PET used for homogenization.

Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics of PET Used for Homogenization.

N	Minimum	Maximum	Men	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	Error of Skewness	Kurtosis	Error of Kurtosis	
PET	60	59	77	67.63	3.242	9.507	.122	.309	.375	.608

As indicated in Table 2, the mean and standard deviation turned out to be $M = 67.63$ and $SD = 3.242$ respectively. According to the above table, the division of the statistic of skewness (.122) by standard error of skewness (.309) came out to be .39 and kurtosis ratio appears to be .61. Since this figure fell within -1.96 and +1.96, the distribution can be considered to be normal.

In addition, a one-sample Kolmogorov- Smirnov test was run in order to check the normality assumption of the distributed scores in weblog-based and face-to-face groups (Table 3).



Table 3.

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test.

	Test score (weblog-based group)	Test score (face-to-face group)
N	30	30
Normal Parameters Mean	67.63	67.70
Std. Deviation	3.045	3.019
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	.539	.502
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.901	.963

As Table 3 reveals, given the sig level value (sig =.901) for weblog-based, and sig =.963 for face-to-face; since $p > .05$, it can be stated that the two groups were normally distributed.

Table 4 indicates the mean scores of blog-based group (M=41.00, SD=1.597) and face-to-face group (M=14.23, SD=1.524) on writing pretest.

Table 4.

Descriptive Statistics of Each Group's Performance on Writing Pretest.

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre -Test	30	14.00	1.597	.292
Blog-based	30	14.23	1.524	.278



Table 5.

An Independent Sample T-test of the Writing Pretest Scores of Two 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
Pretest	Equal variances assumed	.005	.944	-.579	58	.565	-.233	.403	-1.040	.574
	Equal variances not assumed			-.579	57.873	.565	-.233	.403	-1.040	.574

As indicated in Table 5, there is no significant difference in the writing pretest scores of blog-based group and face-to-face group; $t(58) = -.579$, $p = .56$. Since Sig. value was bigger than .05, there was no significant difference between pretest scores of the two groups.



ANALYSIS OF THE NULL HYPOTHESES

To test the first research question comparing the differential effects of weblog- based environment and face to face classroom on EFL learners’ writing performance, a Two-Way ANOVA was conducted (Table 6). The following table shows the results:

Table 6.

Descriptive Statistics of Writing Posttest Scores of the Two Groups.

Groups	Task Types	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
weblog-based	task repetition	19.33	1.543	15
	task familiarity	18.67	1.291	15
	Total	19.00	1.438	30
face-to-face	task repetition	16.67	2.380	15
	task familiarity	17.20	2.077	15
	Total	16.93	2.212	30
Total	task repetition	18.00	2.393	30
	task familiarity	17.93	1.856	30
	Total	17.97	2.123	60

Table 6 represents the means of weblog-based ($M = 19.00$, $SD = 1.43$) and face-to-face ($M = 16.93$, $SD = 2.12$). In order to test whether there is a difference between the writing means scores of the two groups, a Two Way ANOVA was performed (Table 7).

**Table 7.**

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Writing Performance Scores of the Two Groups.

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	69.533a	3	23.178	6.609	.001
Intercept	19368.067	1	19368.067	5522.463	.000
Groups	64.067	1	64.067	18.267	.000
Task Types	.067	1	.067	.019	.891
Groups*Task	5.400	1	5.400	1.540	.220
Types	196.400	56	3.507		
Error	19634.000	60			
Total	265.933	59			
Corrected Total					

Dependent Variable: writing performance

a. R Squared = .261 (Adjusted R Squared = .222)

The results of a Two-way ANOVA which was conducted (Table 7) revealed there is a significant difference between the writing performance of the two groups, $F(1, 56) = 18.267, P = .000 < .05$. Considering the mean scores of writing performance (Table 6), it is revealed that the students in weblog-based environment outperformed those in face-to-face classroom. Consequently, the first null hypothesis was rejected. The second research question examined whether task repetition and task familiarity have any differentially significant effects on EFL learners' writing performance. As indicated in Table 7, there is no significant difference between the writing performance of EFL learners receiving task repetition ($M = 18.00$) compared to those receiving task familiarity ($M = 17.93$), since $F(1, 56) = .019, P = .891 > .05$. It can be concluded that task repetition and task familiarity do not have any differentially significant effects on EFL learners' writing performance. Therefore, the second null hypothesis was confirmed.

The third null hypothesis stated that there is no statistically significant difference between writing performance of learners who receive task repetition through weblog-based environment in comparison to those in face-to-face classroom. In order to probe the third null hypothesis, the results of the Two-Way ANOVA were considered (Table 7). Table 6 indicated that the writing scores of learners receiving task repetition through weblog-based environment ($M = 19.33, SD = 1.54$) was larger than those in face-to-face classroom ($M = 16.67, SD = 2.38$). In order to find out whether there is a significant difference, the results of the Two-way ANOVA represented the Sig. value (.220) for interaction between groups and task types, turned out to be larger than .05, $F(1, 56) = 18.267, P = .220$. So, it could be concluded that there is no statistically significant difference between the writing performance of learners receiving task repetition in weblog-based environment and those in face-to-face classroom. Accordingly, the third null hypothesis was confirmed. The fourth research question asked if there is any statistically significant difference between writing performance of learners who receive task familiarity through weblog-based environment in comparison to those in face-to-face classroom. Table 6 represented that in the weblog-based group, the mean score for the writing performance of learners receiving task familiarity ($M = 18.67, SD = 1.29$) was larger than those in face-to-face group ($M = 17.20, SD = 2.07$). However, the results of the Two-way ANOVA (Table 7) showed that there is no statistically significant difference between writing performance of learners who receive task familiarity through weblog-based environment in comparison to those in face-to-face classroom ($P = .220$). As a result, the fourth null hypothesis was confirmed.



DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the comparative effects of two types of tasks (i.e. task repetition and task familiarity) on EFL learners' writing performance in weblog based environment and face-to-face classroom. With respect to the first research question, the result of the Two-way ANOVA (Table 7) indicated that the students in weblog- based environment ($M = 19.00$, $SD = 1.438$) outperformed those in face to face classroom ($M = 16.93$, $SD = 2.212$); consequently, the first null hypothesis was rejected. The findings of this study suggested that Weblogs can provide learning motivation and opportunities for authorship and leadership, as well as the development of writing skills in learners. Besides it was observed that blogging enhanced the students' eagerness to write and fostered the autonomous writing. Moreover, the findings revealed that writing for an audience and peer review contributed to the development of the collaborative learning environment and this was conducive to developing writing skills. The results of this part of the study are consistent with these previous studies of Alsamadani (2018), Azari (2017), Akdag (2017), Foroutan et al. (2013), Fageeh (2011), As well Yunus et al. (2009); in which using weblog-based instruction helped students in having a better writing performance than those who only received in-class instruction. However, this finding does not concur with the results of Emrah and Selami's (2015) study, in which blogging itself does not provide a better performance in terms of writing achievement, while the process-based writing instruction positively affects learner's achievement in both traditional and blog environments.

Regarding the second research question, the results of the Two-way ANOVA revealed that there is no significant difference between the writing performances of EFL learners, receiving task repetition ($M = 18.00$, $SD = 2.393$) compared to those receiving task familiarity ($M = 17.93$, $SD = 1.856$). It can be concluded that task repetition and task familiarity do not have any differentially significant effects on EFL learners' writing performance. Therefore, the second null hypothesis was confirmed. Additionally, these findings proved that both task repetition and task familiarity had beneficial effects on EFL learners' writing performance. According to Ellis (2009), the task repetition could increase accuracy, fluency and complexity of written language production to more. And as Indrarathne (2013) states, it is believed that learners are able to store information related to conceptualization, formulation and articulation when a task is performed for the first time and this information can be utilized productively when the same task is performed for the second time. According to the schema theory (Bartlet, 1932, as cited in Du & Wagner, 2007), the background knowledge is represented in a way that facilitates the use of the knowledge in particular ways. The familiar topics are kept in background knowledge. Also, Carrell (1987, as cited Du & Wagner, 2007) concluded that when one needs to produce language on a topic, the kept knowledge in schema interfere with the interpretation of new information, and the production becomes easier. Therefore, it can be concluded that when the content of a writing task is familiar for the learners, they can use more words, and elaborate more in a shorter time and make less errors to use self-repairs than in unfamiliar task. In addition, based on the findings and observations, it can be suggested that teachers might base repetition decisions partially on learners' familiarity with the topic. The results from the second research question are parallel to study conducted by Xuyan (2019) in which he investigated the influence of content familiarity and task repetition on sixty English as a foreign language learners' speaking performance. The findings of his study indicated that participants produced structurally more complex speech under familiar conditions, and increased their CAF in task repetition. Xuyan (2019) concluded that content familiarity and task repetition are two dimensions of topic familiarity, figure 1 display these results.

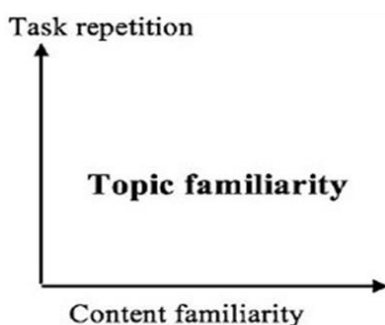


Figure 1. Two Dimensions of Task /Topic Familiarity (Qiu, 2020)



In a similar study, Nazemi and Rezvani (2019) investigated the effects of content familiarity and task repetition on Iranian EFL learners' engagement in L2 oral performance. Also their findings spotted potential interaction effect between content familiarity and task repetition. The results of the second research question partly support their findings too. As well, these finding are partly in line with Bayat (2018) study, who concluded that task repetition could increase the writing performance of language learners. And the results are consistent with Indrathne (2013), whose case study of written narrative task repetition revealed an increase in the participant's performance in accuracy, fluency and complexity of her written language production. The results of the second research question partly support the study of Kazemi and Zarei (2015) who found that topic familiarity has an influence on learners' oral presentations. And the results are in contrast with Salimi and Fatollahnejad (2012), who focused on the effect of manipulation of strategic planning and topic familiarity on EFL written task performance. However, their results indicated that familiarity of the learners with the task topic did not have any significant effect on the learners' performance.

Concerning the third research question, the mean scores indicated that the writing scores of learners receiving task repetition through weblog-based environment ($M=19.33$, $SD=1.54$) was larger than those in face-to-face classroom ($M=16.67$, $SD=2.38$). Despite that, the results of the Two-way ANOVA represented the Sig. value (.220) for interaction between groups and task types; accordingly, the third null hypothesis was confirmed. The results of third research question are partly parallel to the findings and studies in the first hypothesis. So compared to the face-to-face group, the weblog-based performed better, however, these findings were non-significant and the weblog-based group performing slightly, but non significantly. Weblog -based group was better than the face-to-face group in the case of receiving task repetition.

In accordance with the fourth research question, the table 6 demonstrated that in the weblog-based group, the mean score for the writing performance of learners receiving task familiarity ($M=18.67$, $SD=1.29$) was larger than those in face-to-face group ($M=17.20$, $SD=2.07$). But, the results of the Two-way ANOVA (Table 7) proved that there is no statistically significant difference between writing performance of learners who receive task familiarity through weblog-based environment in comparison to those in face-to-face classroom. As a result, the fourth null hypothesis was confirmed. As well, the results of the fourth research question are partly consistent with the findings and studies in the first hypothesis. Although, these findings were non-significant and the weblog-based group performing slightly, but non significantly better than the face-to-face group when receive task familiarity.

CONCLUSION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of the study was to investigate whether task repetition and task familiarity in weblog-based environment and face to face classroom had any statistically significant difference between the writing performance of Iranian EFL learners, and whether there was any statistically significant difference between the writing performance of EFL learners who was exposed to weblog based environment compared to those in face to face classroom. As far as the first research question was concerned, the present study found that the students in weblog- based environment outperformed those in face to face classroom ($P = .000 < .05$). Based on the results discussed earlier, in order to answer the second research question related to the differences between the writing performance of EFL learners receiving task repetition compared to those receiving task familiarity, the results of the Two-way ANOVA revealed that there is no significant difference ($P = .891 > .05$). As well, the participants in both groups (i.e. task repetition and task familiarity), gained higher mean scores in their second writing performance, and lower mean score in their first performance. Consequently, these findings validated that both task repetition and task familiarity had beneficial effects on EFL learners' writing performance.

The result of the third and fourth research questions of the study revealed that the weblog-based group performing slightly, but non significantly better than the face-to-face group when receiving task repetition and task familiarity. In view of the findings, some practical recommendations can be presented. First, EFL teachers should use blog-oriented environment in addition to traditional classroom setting to promote learners' writing achievement. For this purpose, policy makers, curriculum developers and material developers should pay attention to the contribution of blogging to writing achievement, and develop materials, techniques and procedures that are suitable for blog oriented writing. Second, this study brings out some useful conception on how task repetition can be used in second language writing classes. The findings of the study indicated that task repetition could increase the performance of written language production of the participant. Third, the findings of the study have shown that task familiarity makes



statistically significant contributions to effective L2 writing performance. These findings make important theoretical and practical implications. The theoretical contribution is that written language productions which are related to familiarity with the topic play a facilitative role in writing performance of EFL learners. Moreover, the results had also important implications for EFL teachers and material developers. In TBLT, it can be claimed that if learners become familiar with the content and organization of tasks or with topics that are provided; one of the benefits would be the fact that L2 writing performance is maximized.

REFERENCES

- Ahmadian, M. J. (2011). The effect of 'massed' task repetitions on complexity, accuracy and fluency: Does it transfer to a new task? *The Language Learning Journal*, 39(3), 269-280.
- Akdag, E. (2017). Enhancing writing skills of EFL learners through blogging. *The Reading Matrix*, 17(2), 79-95.
- Alsamadani, H. A. (2018). The effectiveness of using online blogging for students' individual and group writing international. *Education Studies*, 11(1), 44-51.
- Azari, M. H. (2017). Effect of weblog-based process approach on EFL learners' writing performance and autonomy. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 30(6), 529-551.
- Bayat, N. (2018). A comparative study of the effects of task repetition, unguided strategic planning, and pressured on-line planning on the accuracy of upper-intermediate EFL learners' written production. *Linguistics and Literature Studies*, 6(1), 1-11
- Behjat, F., Yamini, M., & Bagheri, M. S. (2014). Technology-integrated instruction: Iranian EFL learners' perceptions of using web 2.0 tools in language classes. *IJLLALW*, 5(2), 2289-3245.
- Birjandi, P., & Ahangari, S. (2008). Effects of task repetition on the fluency, complexity and accuracy of Iranian EFL learners' oral discourse. *Asian EFL Journal*, 10(3), 28-52.
- Birjandi, P., & Seifoori, Z. (2009). The effect of training and task-planning on the complexity of Iranian learners' oral speech. *Applied Linguistics*, 2(1), 57-80.
- Bygate, M. (2001). Effects of task repetition on the structure and control of oral language. In M. Bygate, P. Skehan, & M. Swain (Eds.), *Researching pedagogic tasks: second language learning, teaching and testing* (pp. 23_48). Essex: Pearson Education Limited.
- Bygate, M., & Samuda, V. (2005). Integrative planning through the use of task-repetition. In R. Ellis (Ed.), *Planning and task performance in a second language* (pp. 37_74). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Chen, J. C., & Brown, K. L. (2012). The effects of authentic audience on English as a second language (ESL) writers: A task-based, computer-mediated approach. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 25(5), 435-454.
- Daiunte, S. M. (2009). *How computer-mediated communication affects ELL students' writing processes and writing performance* (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Oklahoma).
- Dehghan, M., & Chalak, A. (2015). Code glosses in academic writing: The comparison of Iranian and native authors. *Research in English Language Pedagogy*, 3(2), 21-29.
- Du, H. S., & Wagner, C. (2007). Learning with weblogs: Enhancing cognitive and social knowledge construction. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, 50(1), 1-16.
- Ellis, R. (2000). Task-based research and language pedagogy. *Language teaching research*, 4(3), 193-220.
- Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language learning and teaching*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R. (2009). Task-based language teaching: Sorting out the misunderstandings. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 19(3), 221-246.
- Emrah, Ö., & Selami, A. (2015). The effects of blogging on EFL writing achievement. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 19(2), 372-380.
- Foroutan, M., Noordin, N., & Sahandri, G. M. (2013). Weblog promotes ESL learners' writing autonomy. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 4(5), 994-1002.
- Goldberg, A., Russell, M., & Cook, A. (2003). The effect of computers on student writing: A meta-analysis of studies from 1992 to 2002. *The Journal of Technology, Learning and Assessment*, 2(1), 1-51.
- Gordon, L. (2008). Writing and good language learners. In C. Griffiths (Ed.), *Lessons from good language learners* (pp. 244- 254). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Indrarathne, B. (2014). Effects of task repetition on written language production in Task Based Language



- Teaching. *Papers from the Lancaster University Postgraduate Conference in Linguistics and Language Teaching*, 42-46
- Jung, S. (2013). The effect of task repetition on corrective feedback in L2 writing. *MSU Working Papers in SLS*, 4, 26-29.
- Kazemi, S. K., & Zarei, L. (2015). The efficacy of topic familiarity on oral presentation: Extensive speaking assessment task of Iranian EFL learners in TBLT. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature*, 4(3), 93-97.
- Leeser, M. J. (2007). Learner-based factors in L2 reading comprehension and processing grammatical form: Topic familiarity and working memory. *Language Learning*, 57(2), 229-270.
- Long, D. R. (1990). What you don't know can't help you: An exploratory study of background knowledge and second language listening comprehension. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 12(1), 65-80.
- Maftoon, P., Birjandi, P., & Pahlavani, P. (2014). The impact of using computer-aided argument. *JTSL*, 34(2) 127-152.
- Maftoon, P., & Sharifi Haratmeh, M. (2012). The relative effectiveness of input and output-oriented tasks with different involvement loads on the receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge of Iranian EFL learners. *Journal of Teaching Language Skills*, 31(2), 27-52.
- Mason, L. H., Harris, K. R., & Graham, S. (2011). Self-regulated strategy development for students with writing difficulties. *Theory into Practice*, 50(1), 20-27.
- Mehrang, F. & Rahimpour, M. (2010). The impact of task structure and planning conditions on oral performance of EFL learners. *Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2, 3678-3686.
- Mojavezi, A. (2013). The relationship between task repetition and language proficiency. *Applied Research on English Language*, 3(1), 29-40.
- Nazemi, M., & Rezvani, E. (2019). Effects of task familiarity and task repetition on Iranian EFL learners' engagement in L2 oral performance. *Contemporary Research in Education and English Language Teaching*, 1(1), 45-56.
- Negari, G. M. (2011). A study on strategy instruction and EFL learners' writing skill. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 1(2), 299-307.
- Nunan, D. (2004). *Task-based language teaching*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Omaggio Hadley, A. (1993). *Teaching language in context*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Qiu, X. (2020). Functions of oral monologic tasks: Effects of topic familiarity on L2 speaking performance. *Language Teaching Research*, 24(6), 745-764. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168819829021>
- Rahimpour, M. (2008). Implementation of task-based approaches to language teaching. *Research on Foreign Language Journal of Faculty of Letters and Humanities*, 41, 45-61.
- Richardson, W. (2010). Blogs, wikis, podcasts, and other powerful web tools for classrooms. *SAGE Publications*, 24(2) 123-126.
- Robinson, P., & Gilabert, R. (2007). Task complexity, the cognition hypothesis, second language learning and performance. *International Review of Applied Linguistics*, 45(3), 161-177.
- Saeedi, M., & Rahimi Kazerooni, S. (2013). The influence of task repetition and task structure on EFL learners' oral narrative retellings. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 8(2) 116-131.
- Salimi, A. & Dadashpour, S. (2010). *Task complexity and L2 learners' written performance*. A paper presented at WCCES 14. Bogazici University, Istanbul, Turkey, 14-18 June.
- Salimi, A. & Dadashpour, S. (2012). *Task complexity and language production dilemmas* (Robinson's Cognition Hypothesis vs. Skehan's Trade-off Model). A paper accepted for presentation in WCES 2012, Barcelona University, Barcelona, Spain.
- Salimi, A., & Fatollahnejad, S. (2012). The effects of strategic planning and topic familiarity on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' written performance in TBLT. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2(11), 2308-2315.
- Seyyedrezaie, Z. S., Ghonsooly, B., Shahriari, H., & Hosseini Fatemi, A. (2016). Mixed methods analysis of the effect of Google Docs environment on EFL Learners' writing performance and causal attributions for success and failure. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education (TOJDE)*, 17, 90 -110.
- Skehan, P., & Foster, P. (1997). Task type and task processing conditions as influences on foreign language performance. *Language Teaching Research*, 1(3), 185-211.
- Sturm, J. & Rankin-Erickson, J. (2002). Effects of hand-drawn and computer-generated concept mapping on the expository writing of middle school students with learning disabilities. *Learning*



Disabilities Research and Practice, 17(2), 124-139.

Sun, Y. C., (2010). When technology speaks language: An evaluation of course management systems used in a language learning context. *RECALL*, 22(3), 332-355.

Van den Branden, K. (2006). *Task-based language teaching: from theory to practice*. Cambridge: CUP.

Wang, S., & Vasequez, V. (2012). Web 2.0 and second language learning: What does the research tell us? *Calico Journal*, 29(3), 412-430.

Yunus, M. D., Tuan.J. & Salehi H. (2009). Using blogs to promote writing skill in ESL classroom. *Recent Advances in Educational Technologies*, 6, 109-113.