

Promoting Foreign Language Learners' Writing: Comparing the Impact of Oral Conferencing and Collaborative Writing

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Abstract—This study was an attempt to compare the effect of oral conferencing alongside collaborative writing on writing ability of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. For this purpose, a piloted sample of the Preliminary English Test (PET) was administered to 90 intermediate female EFL learners, between 20 and 32 years old ($M_{age} = 26$). The results of this test enabled the researchers to select 60 homogenous individuals who were then randomly assigned into two experimental groups of 30 named "oral conferencing group" and "collaborative writing group". To ensure the homogeneity among the participants in terms of their writing ability before the treatment, their scores on the writing section of the PET test were analyzed in isolation and it was considered as the pretest of the study. Oral conferencing included the discussions and negotiations among the participants and the teacher before and after writing activities followed by live teacher-student as well as student-student feedbacks. In the collaborative writing group, the participants wrote compositions in groups based on the same topics introduced in the oral conferencing group. At the end, both experimental groups were given another piloted writing section of the PET test as the posttest. The analysis of the test scores using an independent samples *t*-test and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) revealed that there is a significant difference between the effect of oral conferencing and collaborative writing on EFL learners' writing ability. It was concluded that the ability of EFL learners' writing was more affected by applying oral conferencing rather than collaborative writing.

Index Terms—collaborative writing, oral conferencing, writing ability

I. INTRODUCTION

Writing is regarded as an instrument through which people communicate with one another in time and space, transmitting their culture from one generation to another. Writing as one of the main and productive language skills, which was once considered as the domain of well-educated people, is becoming an essential tool for everyone in today's community (Cushing Weigle, 2002).

In this perspective writing as a significant requirement for EFL learners is regarded as one of the most important communicative skills in English language learning (Biria & Jafari, 2013; Goodlet, & Pymberton, 1989; Hayes & Flower, 1986). Researchers have found that foreign language learners find it painstaking to write in the target language, producing less fluent sentences and encountering difficulties in the revisions of their written work (Fatemi, 2008; Hyland, 2003; McCoy, 2003; Tan, 2007). However, these difficulties are not only attributed to their linguistic abilities but they mostly lay in the nature of writing process itself (Chih, 2008).

Rooted in the ideas introduced in the process approach to writing, the provision of second party feedback, usually by the teacher, on learners' drafts is now given a higher level of attention (Williams, 2002). Accordingly, the provision of written corrective feedback on second/foreign language writing has been regarded as an integral component of writing programs (Mirzaei, 2012).

Oral conferencing is considered one type of corrective feedback (Mirzaei, 2012). According to Bayraktar (2009), oral conferencing is identified and "referred to as response sessions, assisted performance, face-to-face interaction, one-to-one teaching, conversation about the student's paper, and meaningful contact" (p. 11). Oral conferencing is advantageous in a way that teachers can foster learners' reflection on their own learning process; elicit language performances on particular tasks, skills, or other language points as well as helping them to develop a better self-image (Brown & Hudson, 1998).

Besides, oral conferencing is believed to assist teachers in creating a collaborative atmosphere, encouraging learners to actively engage in practicing writing (Ewert, 2009). Collaboration in writing has been drawing an increasing attention in language teaching and assessment (DiCamilla & Anton, 1997; Storch, 2005; Swain & Lapkin, 1998). According to Reither (1989) "thinking of writing as a collaborative process presents more precise ways to consider what writers do when they write, not just with their texts, but also with their language, their personae, and their readers" (p.

624). Collaborative writing requires learners to utilize a range of social skills that can help foster a sense of accountability, cooperation, and community (Murray, 1992; Savova & Donato, 1991; Villamil & De Guerrero, 1996). Moreover, collaborative writing, like any other collaborative activity, provides learners with the opportunity to give and receive immediate feedback on language, an opportunity which, as claimed by Vanderburg (2006) is "missing when learners write individually" (p. 378). Learners' working in groups, particularly in collaborative groups, constructs new ways of understanding and develops greater skills (Web, 1989).

However, writing is generally considered as an individual activity through which ideas are transferred from the writer's mind to the reader's. Therefore, quite few researches have been conducted to examine the impact of corrective feedback on productive English skills, particularly writing. As a result, this study aimed to investigate the comparative effect of oral conferencing, as a type of corrective feedback, and collaborative writing on EFL learner's writing ability.

To fulfill this objective, the research question, stated below, was formulated:

Q: Is there any significant difference between the impact of oral conferencing and collaborative writing on EFL learners' writing ability?

Accordingly, the following null hypothesis was formulated:

H0: There is no significant difference between the impact of oral conferencing and collaborative writing on EFL learners' writing ability.

II. METHOD

Participants

The 60 participants of this study were chosen from Hermes Institute in Tehran. They were female EFL learners at the intermediate level whose mother tongues was Persian and their age was between 20 to 32 years old ($M_{age} = 26$). They had been exposed to English courses for about 5 years in average. These participants were selected conveniently and homogenized through a piloted PET test among 90 learners. They were randomly assigned into two experimental groups of 30 named "oral conferencing group" and "collaborative writing group". To ensure the homogeneity among the participants of the two groups in terms of their writing ability before the treatment, their scores on the writing section of the PET test were analyzed in isolation. Before administrating the PET test, a group of 30 students with almost similar characteristics -age, gender and proficiency level- to the target sample were used for the piloting of this test and the writing posttest. In addition to one of the researchers, as a teacher and rater, another trained rater participated in the assessment of writing section of PET test.

Instrumentation

In order to accomplish the purpose of the study, the following instruments were utilized:

The Preliminary English Test

The Preliminary English Test (PET) is now internationally recognized as a reliable test calibrated for the elementary level of English language proficiency. Being created by the University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations in England, the exam intends to be unbiased regarding test takers' linguistic backgrounds and nationalities. In addition to the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, the PET test deals with all of the four skills of language, namely Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking. The PET test contains 125 items, and it takes 125 minutes to take the whole test. In the present study, however, the speaking section of the PET test was not used due to the limitations imposed by the institute officials.

The Writing Scale of PET

The employed rating scale for rating the PET test's writing section in the present study was created by Cambridge, called *The General Mark Schemes for Writing*. Using the criterion stated in this rating scale, the writing scores ranged from 0 to 5.

Writing Pretest

In order to make sure that the participants in the two groups belonged to the same population in terms of writing ability, the participants' scores of the writing section of the PET test were analyzed in isolation and used as the writing pretest. This section consisted of three parts followed by 7 questions. The participants were required to fulfill the tasks of the test by using their lexical and syntactic abilities, such as writing letters, stories, and short messages.

Touchstone 3

Touchstone, by Michael McCarthy, Jeanne McCarten, and Helen Sandiford (2005) has been published by the press syndicate of the University of Cambridge. This textbook is argued to offer an innovative and novel approach to EFL learning and teaching. Focusing on the North American English, this textbook has employed the *Cambridge International Corpus* which is composed of a huge amount of conversations and written texts. This book contains all language skills and sub-skills, and offers exciting ideas for personalized, learner-centered interaction. In this study, the students dealt with three units of the textbook, units 6, 7, and 8.

Compositions

The participants were asked to write six compositions during the treatment sessions. They had 40 minutes to write about each predetermined argumentative topics. The topics of the compositions were the same across two experimental groups. The compositions consisted of 150 to 250 words and had to be written in descriptive voice. The compositions should have three parts -introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion.

In oral conferencing group each student should write her composition at home. In each session four or five students read their compositions in classroom. Contrary to oral conferencing group, the students in collaborative writing group were asked to write their compositions collaboratively in classroom.

Oral Conferencing Checklist

This checklist is designed by Moradan and Hedayati (2011). It contains a set of questions to be asked from all participants in oral conferencing group regarding pre and post writing activities during the treatment period. It is the result of discussions between the aforementioned researchers and their five coworkers in their study. It starts with some general questions regarding the participants' opinions about their writing abilities prior to the writing activity, and it ends with some questions about participants' ideas regarding their weaknesses and strengths in writing activity.

Jacobs, Zinkgraf, Wormuth, Hartfiel, and Hughey's (1981) ESL Composition Profile

This instrument is an analytic scoring scale and consists of five subcategories of content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. Each subcategory is in detail and the scoring system is clearly defined. The total score is calculated from 100 and the proportions of scoring are predetermined in the scale according to participants' performance in each part.

Writing Posttest

The posttest which was administered at the end of the study was the writing section of another version of PET. It was piloted in advance. This test was given to the participants for comparing the participants' writing ability in terms of the effect of both oral conferencing and collaborative writing.

III. PROCEDURE

Prior to the experiment, the PET test and writing post-test were standardized by piloting among a group of 30 female students from Hermes Institute in Tehran. These EFL learners had almost similar characteristics of the main participants. The writing section of the PET test was scored, using the rating scale stated earlier, by the one of the researchers and another qualified rater. The researchers observed a consistency between the scores provided by the raters on the writings. This inter-rater reliability index acknowledged the existence of an acceptable consistency between the raters.

The piloted PET test was given to 90 intermediate level female students who were selected conveniently. Among them, 60 students were chosen whose score fall between one standard deviation above and below the mean. The 60 subjects were divided randomly into two experimental groups of 30 named "oral conferencing group" and "collaborative writing group".

To ensure that the two groups were homogeneous in terms of their writing ability, the scores of the writing section of the PET test were analyzed in isolation and were used as the pretest scores of the participants. Both groups received the same amount of instruction. The course consisted of 10 sessions of 90 minutes spanning over a period of five weeks.

One of the researchers (functioning as the teacher) tried to teach the relevant grammatical points as well as the essential vocabularies alongside of language skills with special focus on the writing skill. Participants were also given the same topics for their compositions and they were taught how to write a composition including introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion. Compositions were rated according to the Jacobs et al.'s (1981) ESL Composition Profile by the one of the researchers (the teacher) and the other rater.

Oral Conferencing Group

Oral conferencing in this study included the discussions and negotiations among the participants and the teacher before and after writing activities followed by live teacher-student as well as student-student feedbacks. To do this, the Anderson Model (2000) and Oral Conferencing Checklist designed by Moradan and Hedayati (2011) were used.

Anderson (2000, as cited in Bayraktar, 2009) states that teacher-student writing conferences generally fall into the following four types:

- 1) Rehearsal conferences which help students find idea to write about;
- 2) Drafting conferencing which assists students develop their ideas and determine which genre and style they want to write in;
- 3) Revision conferences which help student improve their initial drafts; and
- 4) Editing conferences whose main focus lies in helping students become better editors.

In this group students should write their compositions at home. Based on the feedback they had already received regarding the conferences in the class they would revise their writings. After completing the writing tasks, the students were asked to conference regarding their ideas, weaknesses, and strengths during the writing task.

The students in oral conferencing group were concentrated on the overall meaning and organization of their writing, and also on the vocabularies, language use, and the mechanics of writing. All the conferences conducted orally. Oral Conferencing Checklist designed by Moradan and Hedayati (2011) were used for this purpose. The teacher asked questions and gave students enough time to speak about their problems and to provide students with appropriate feedback.

Collaborative Writing Group

Whether to have students choose their own partners or they should be assigned at random into groups is the first major consideration in applying collaborative writing method (Mulligan & Garofalo, 2011). Although instructors may present a better idea for matching students in groups, if the students choose their own partners themselves it would be

more effective for cooperative learning as a basic goal of collaborative writing (Cote, 2006). Based on this, the students were divided into 5 groups of 6 in order to write the assigned compositions and provide each other with feedback regarding their weaknesses and strengths.

Contrary to oral conferencing group, the students in collaborative writing group were asked to write their compositions collaboratively in classroom. In other words, all members of a group were responsible for making a final piece of writing. The same procedure which was used for familiarizing students in oral conferencing group with how to write a composition was also used for students in collaborative writing group. The teacher had to provide them with topic then they should go through the process of writing collaboratively which was based on the proposed steps of Mulligan and Garofalo (2011). Based on the requirements of this study and limitations which were imposed on the researchers by the institute officials, some modifications on the Mulligan and Garofalo's model (2011) was done as follows:

- (1) Students chose their partners themselves;
- (2) All the members of a group brainstormed ideas about the target topic and organized the information into coherent groupings;
- (3) All the members of a group did outlining, planning, and crafting.
- (4) The whole writing (composition) was read in the classroom by one of the members of the group.
- (5) The teacher checked the compositions based on Jacobs et al.'s (1981) ESL Composition Profile, and pointing out structural and organization errors, and providing the related group with comments and suggestions.

At the end of the treatment phase, the participants of both groups sat for the posttest that was the piloted writing section of the PET test which took about 55 minutes. The result of the test was evaluated by the two raters based on the PET rating scale.

IV. RESULTS

This study set out to compare the effect of oral conferencing and collaborative writing on EFL learners' writing ability. The design of this study is quasi experimental. The independent variable has two modalities, oral conferencing and collaborative writing. The dependent variable is writing ability. The two control variables are the language proficiency and gender of the participants. In order to answer the research question of this study both descriptive and inferential statistics were taken in the piloting phase and administration, respectively.

Following the piloting of the PET test, the mean scores, the standard deviation of scores, and the reliability indices were calculated. This calculation demonstrated that the mean score was 53.24 and the standard deviation was 8.74. The item analysis revealed that there were two malfunctioning items in the test. After the deletion of the 2 malfunctioning items, the reliability of the test using Cronbach alpha was .94. The inter-rater reliability was calculated using the Pearson correlation coefficient, showing the existence of a significant correlation. Accordingly, the same raters could be used for rating the following administrations of the test.

After the procedure of piloting the PET test, it became an instrument to homogenize the students for this study. 90 EFL learners took part in the test administration. Following the administration, the descriptive statistics were calculated. This showed that the mean was 55.24 and the standard deviation was 9.20. The reliability of the PET test in this actual administration was .89. In the next phase, the scores of the participants on the PET writing section were analyzed in isolation in order to inspect the homogeneity of the participants in the two groups before the treatment. The two groups' mean scores were almost the same (Oral conferencing = 10.6000, Collaborative writing = 10.0033). Thus, one can conclude that there was no noticeable difference between the means of the two groups at the outset of the study. Also, according to the results of a *t*-test, there was not a significant difference between the two experimental groups regarding their writing ability ($t(58) = .77, p > 0.05$) which confirms their homogeneity (Table 1).

TABLE 1:
T-TEST RESULTS OF EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS ON WRITING PRE-TEST

		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	2.85	.096	.779	58	.439	.56667	.72727	-.88913	2.02246
	Equal variances not assumed			.779	55.296	.439	.56667	.72727	-.89065	2.02398

The results of the Pearson correlations indicated that there were significant agreements between the two raters who rated the subjects' writings on the posttest ($r(58) = .94, p < .05$ representing a large effect size) for the writing part 2 and posttest of writing ($r(58) = .96, p < .05$ representing a large effect size) for the writing part 3.

Testing Assumptions

In this study the data were analyzed through an independent *t*-test and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) which have two common assumptions; normality and homogeneity of variances. The latter will be discussed below when reporting

the main results. As reported in Table 2, the skewness and kurtosis ratios were within the ranges of +/- 1.96, confirming the normality of the data.

TABLE 2:
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF PET OF THE TWO EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS

Group		N	Skewness		Kurtosis			
			Statistic	Std. Error	Ratio	Statistic	Std. Error	Ratio
Conferencing	Reading	30	.177	.427	0.41	.560	.833	-0.67
	PreWR	30	-.234	.427	-0.55	.140	.833	-0.17
	LC	30	.005	.427	0.01	-1.153	.833	-1.38
	PostWR	30	-.559	.427	-1.31	.380	.833	0.46
	Proficiency	30	.148	.427	0.35	-.733	.833	-0.88
Collaborative	Reading	30	.479	.427	1.12	-.558	.833	-0.67
	PreWR	30	.098	.427	0.23	-1.149	.833	-1.38
	LC	30	-.188	.427	-0.44	.317	.833	-0.38
	PostWR	30	-.080	.427	-0.19	-1.405	.833	-1.69
	Proficiency	30	.069	.427	0.16	-.470	.833	-0.56

The results of the independent *t*-test ($t(58) = .16$, $p > .05$, $r = .021$ representing a weak effect size) showed that there was not any significant difference between two groups' mean score on the PET test (Table 3). As a result, it was concluded that the two groups were homogeneous regarding their general language proficiency prior to the treatment.

TABLE 3:
INDEPENDENT SAMPLES TEST, PET BY GROUPS

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	2.151	.148	.15858	.875	.267	1.689	-3.11	3.64	
Equal variances not assumed			.15855	826.875	.267	1.689	-3.11	3.65	

As reported in Table 3, it should be pointed out that:

a) The assumption of homogeneity of variances was met (Levene's $F = 2.15$, $P > .05$). Therefore, the first row was reported; and

b) The negative lower bound value of 95% confidence interval, i.e. -3.11 indicated that the difference between the two groups' means on the PET can be zero.

The Research Question

In order to compare the effect of oral conferencing and collaborative writing on EFL learners' writing ability, the following research question was formulated:

Q. Is there any significant difference between the effect of collaborative writing and oral conferencing on EFL learners' writing ability?

To address this research question, an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was run to compare the oral conferencing and collaborative writing groups' mean scores on the writing posttest while controlling for the potential effects of participants' initial writing ability (the pretest). The ANCOVA has two main assumptions; homogeneity of regression slopes and linear relationship between the dependent variable and the covariate.

The assumption of homogeneity of regression slopes assumes that the relationship between the dependent variable (posttest of writing) and covariate (pretest of writing) shows the same regression slopes across the two groups. The regression line for collaborative writing group and oral conferencing group did not show any interaction, i.e. they did not cross each other Figure 1. Based on these results it can be concluded that the assumption of homogeneity of regression slopes was met.

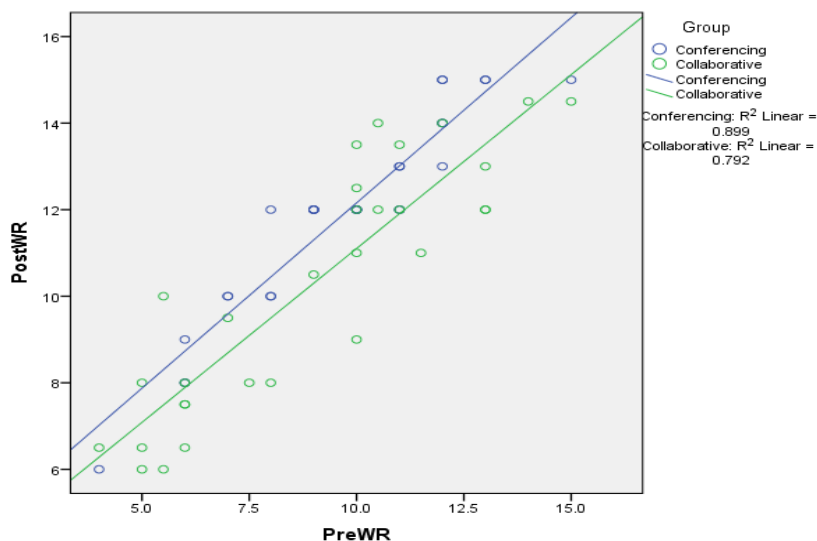


Figure 1: Homogeneity of Regression Slopes; Posttest of Writing by Groups Controlling for Pretest

The linear relationship between the dependent variable and covariate can be tested by examining the spread of dots around the diagonals. If the dots spread around the diagonal, it can be concluded that the second assumption is also met. The spread of dots for both groups were close to the diagonals (Figure 2).

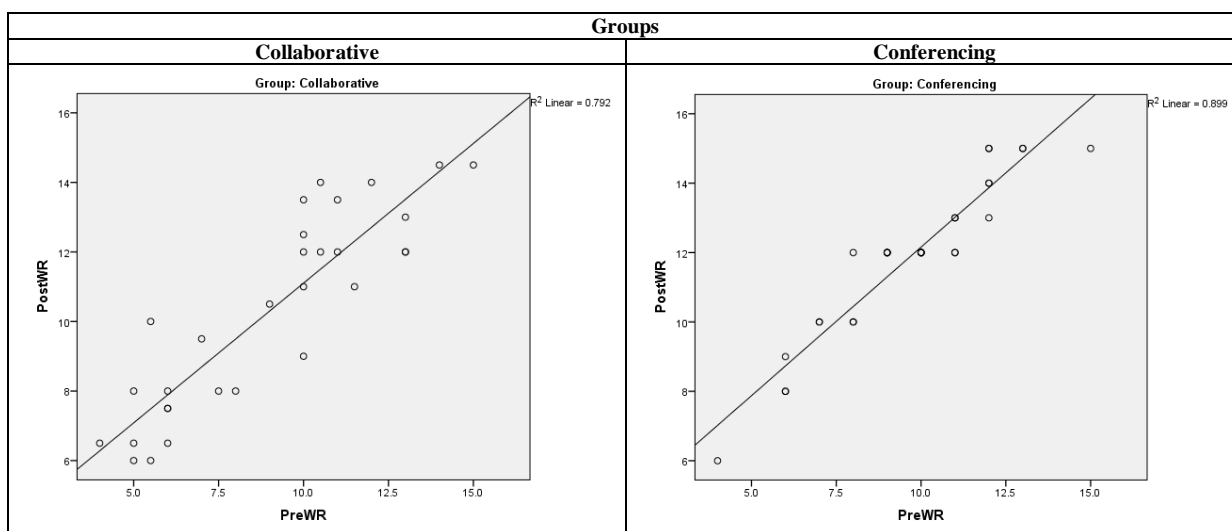


Figure 2: Assumption of Linear Relationship between Dependent Variable and Covariate

Before discussing the results of the ANCOVA, it should be stated that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was not met (Levene’s $F = 8.93, P < .05$). As noted by Bachman (2005), Filed (2013) and Pallant (2011) in case the sample size is equal, there is no need to worry about the violation of this assumption.

As displayed in Table 4 the oral conferencing group ($M = 11.61, SE = .19$) had a higher mean than the collaborative writing group ($M = 10.58, SE = .19$) on the posttest of writing after removing the effect of pretest.

TABLE 4:
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS, POSTTEST OF WRITING BY GROUPS CONTROLLING FOR PRETEST

Group	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Conferencing	11.612	a.193	11.225	11.998
Collaborative	10.588	a.193	10.202	10.975

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: PreWR = 9.35.

The results of ANCOVA ($F(1, 57) = 13.93, P < .05, \text{Partial } \eta^2 = .19$ representing a large effect size) confirmed the existence of a significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups on the posttest (Table 5 and Figure 3). Thus, the null-hypothesis which stated that *-There is no significant difference between the effect of oral conferencing and collaborative writing on EFL learners' writing ability*, was rejected.

TABLE 5:
TESTS OF BETWEEN-SUBJECTS EFFECTS; POSTTEST OF WRITING BY GROUPS CONTROLLING FOR PRETEST

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Pretest	315.761	1	315.761	284.608	.000	.833
Group	15.455	1	15.455	13.930	.000	.196
Error	63.239	57	1.109			
Total	7810.000	60				

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

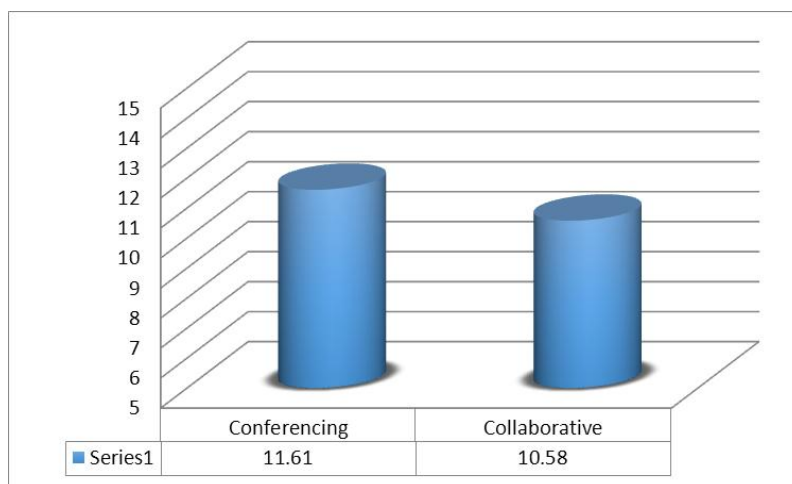


Figure 3: Posttest of writing by Groups Controlling for Pretest

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Regarding the question posed in the present study and based on the statistical analysis of the data, there is a significant difference between the effect of oral conferencing and collaborative writing on EFL learners' writing ability. The results of an independent samples *t*-test and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) revealed that the ability of EFL learners' writing was more affected by applying oral conferencing rather than collaborative writing tasks.

This finding supports previous researches. Goldstein and Conrad (1990), for example, examined learner input and negotiation of meaning through oral conferences between one teacher and three learners of an advanced level writing class. They came to the conclusion that learners who negotiated the meaning in the conferences could make better revisions in their drafts, which in turn improved their writing. On the contrary, those learners who were not encouraged to negotiate meaning were inclined towards not making revisions or making very perfunctory revisions that did not result in improved drafts.

This finding, also, is in line with the results of Bitchener (2005) and Wallis (2010) which revealed that a better achievement in writing can be gained through oral conferencing effective feedbacks between the teacher and the student.

Furthermore, Pathy-Chavez and Ferries (1997) found that the quality of the writing can be enhanced by oral conferencing sessions which support the outcome of this study. This outcome, too, is in line with the findings of Mirzaii (2012) who conducted a study to inspect the impact of providing written corrective feedback through oral conferencing on the writing performance of Iranian intermediate-level EFL learners.

In spite of the significant improvement of participants in the oral conferencing group, the learners who received collaborative writing, also had a better performance in their writing in the posttest (As shown in Table 4), albeit insignificantly. Therefore, this result suggests that collaborative writing can also be useful in teaching writing in some contexts. This result is in line with the finding of a study by Storch (1999), indicating that collaborative tasks are more accurate compared to the tasks carried out individually. In addition, Kuiken and Vedder (2002) investigated the role of group interaction in L2 writing in a cross-sectional study. The result showed that, collaborative writing had an overall significant effect on students' L2 writing.

Pedagogical Implications

It should be noted that the aforementioned advantages identified for the use of oral conferencing can only be realized when the teacher can effectively carry out the task, i.e. offering encouragement, making specific suggestions, establishing a positive rapport, and having abilities and strategies such as appropriate interaction, effective monitoring, and supportive evaluation.

Considering the provision of feedback through oral conferencing, the students can be capable of recognizing their own errors and erroneous areas, planning their learning, and finally evaluating what they have acquired. Also, being engaged in the conferences, students needed to maintain the conversations in order to reflect on the points made by the teacher and the peers; consequently, the speaking ability of the students can be enhanced as well.

Further studies can be carried out to investigate the longer effects of instruction types on writing enhancement. In other words, future studies can adopt a longitudinal design rather than a cross-sectional one. In future research, there is a need to have a larger subject sample size. The more subjects, the greater reliability and validity will result. Also, the effect of oral conferencing can be investigated on other language skill and sub-skill performance. Apart from corrective feedback some other feedbacks i.e. electronic feedback's effect can be investigated on writing ability. Learners' individual differences such as learning styles, creativity, critical thinking, learning strategies, learning aptitude, age, gender, cultural background, background knowledge, and the affective domain are believed to play an important role in learning and using foreign or second language (Nosratinia & Zaker, 2013, 2014, 2015; Zaker, 2015). Due to some restrictions, these variables have not been taken into account in the present study. Further studies are suggested to investigate these different variables.

APPENDIXES

General Mark Schemes for Writing

Mark	Criteria
5	All content elements covered appropriately. Message clearly communicated to the reader.
4	All content elements adequately dealt with. Message communicated successfully, on the whole.
3	All content elements attempted. Message requires some effort by the reader. Or One content element omitted but others clearly communicated.
2	Two content elements omitted, or successfully dealt with. Message only partly communicated to reader. Or Script may be slightly short (20-25 words).
1	Little relevant content and/or message requires excessive effort by the reader, or short (10-19 words).
0	Totally irrelevant or totally incomprehensible or too short (under 10 words).

ESL COMPOSITION PROFILE			
STUDENT	DATE	TOPIC	
	SCORE	LEVEL	CRITERIA
CONTENT	30-27	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD:	knowledgeable • substantive • thorough development of thesis • relevant to assigned topic
	26-22	GOOD TO AVERAGE:	some knowledge of subject • adequate range • limited development of thesis • mostly relevant to topic, but lacks detail
	21-17	FAIR TO POOR:	limited knowledge of subject • little substance • inadequate development of topic
	16-13	VERY POOR:	does not show knowledge of subject • non-substantive • not pertinent • OR not enough to evaluate
ORGANIZATION	20-18	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD:	fluent expression • ideas clearly stated/ supported • succinct • well-organized • logical sequencing • cohesive
	17-14	GOOD TO AVERAGE:	somewhat choppy • loosely organized but main ideas stand out • limited support • logical but incomplete sequencing
	13-10	FAIR TO POOR:	non-fluent • ideas confused or disconnected • lacks logical sequencing and development
	9-7	VERY POOR:	does not communicate • no organization • OR not enough to evaluate
VOCABULARY	20-18	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD:	sophisticated range • effective word/ idiom choice and usage • word form mastery • appropriate register
	17-14	GOOD TO AVERAGE:	adequate range • occasional errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage <i>but meaning not obscured</i>
	13-10	FAIR TO POOR:	limited range • frequent errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage • <i>meaning confused or obscured</i>
	9-7	VERY POOR:	essentially translation • little knowledge of English vocabulary, idioms, word form • OR not enough to evaluate
LANGUAGE USE	25-22	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD:	effective complex constructions • few errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions
	21-18	GOOD TO AVERAGE:	effective but simple constructions • minor problems in complex constructions • several errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions <i>but meaning seldom obscured</i>
	17-11	FAIR TO POOR:	major problems in simple/complex constructions • frequent errors of negation, agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions and/or fragments, run-ons, deletions • <i>meaning confused or obscured</i>
	10-5	VERY POOR:	virtually no mastery of sentence construction rules • dominated by errors • does not communicate • OR not enough to evaluate
MECHANICS	5	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD:	demonstrates mastery of conventions • few errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing
	4	GOOD TO AVERAGE:	occasional errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing <i>but meaning not obscured</i>
	3	FAIR TO POOR:	frequent errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing • poor handwriting • <i>meaning confused or obscured</i>
	2	VERY POOR:	no mastery of conventions • dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing • handwriting illegible • OR not enough to evaluate
TOTAL SCORE	READER	COMMENTS	

Oral Conferencing Checklist

Directions:

Ask the following questions in a comfortable, face to face setting. The teacher should assure students that he/she is only interested in their thoughts strengths and weaknesses in order to help them on writing. The teacher can ask students to elaborate their answers by asking questions such as:

- Can you tell me more about it?

- What else do you suggest?

Ask following questions at the very first conference:

- What do you think about your writing ability?
- Do you think you are a successful writer?
- Who is a successful writer?
- What do you do if you have problem in writing?
- What strategies do you use to improve your writing?

Ask the following question when each paragraph is written:

- What is your strength?
- What is your weakness?
- Do you think you have been a successful writer?
- What will you do to improve your paragraph?

Topic sentence

- What is the main idea you want to talk about?
- Is your main idea mentioned in the topic sentence?

Support

- Do you think you have been successful in convincing the reader?
- Are your supports convincing enough?

Coherence

- Are your supports related to the topic sentence (main idea)?

For the Purpose of This Study the Checklist Is Categorized as Follows:

A) Ask the following questions at the very first conference:

- What do you think about your writing ability?
- Do you think you are a successful writer?
- Who is a successful writer?
- What do you do if you have problem in writing?
- What strategies do you use to improve your writing?

B) Ask the following questions when each paragraph is written:

- What is your strength?
- What is your weakness?
- Do you think you have been a successful writer?
- What will you do to improve your paragraph?
- Can you tell me more about it?
- What else do you suggest?

C) Topic sentence

- What is the main idea you want to talk about?
- Is your main idea mentioned in the topic sentence?

D) Support

- Do you think you have been successful in convincing the reader?
- Are your supports convincing enough?

E) Coherence

- Are your supports related to the topic sentence (main idea)?

Oral Conference Sample

a) Some examples of the questions and answers between the teacher and learners in first conference:

Instructor: What do you think about your writing ability?

Learner 1: It is awful, I don't like writing.

Learner 2: I have even have problem with writing a paragraph in my mother tongue.

Instructor: Do you think you are a successful writer?

Learner: I think I can be a successful writer if I try.

Instructor: Who is a successful writer?

Learner1: A good writer is a person who reads a lot.

Learner 2: A successful writer has self-confidence.

b) Example of the questions and answers between the instructor and learners in conferences after writing each paragraph:

Instructor: What is the main idea you want to talk about?

Learner1: Um, m... I want to talk about both sides of the topic. I both agree and disagree.

Instructor: do you believe it is a good idea to write about both of them in one paragraph?

Learner2: we can write about each one of them in a separate paragraph.

Learner3: for each of them one paragraph.

Instructor: Do you think you have been successful in convincing the reader?

Learner1 reads his paragraph and hesitates.

Learner2: as a reader I am not convinced.

Learner to Learner1: What will you do to improve your paragraph?

Learner1: I can give an example. Something has happened to me.

Instructor: What is your weakness?

Learner1: I always had problem with different tenses?

Instructor: it is great that you check your writing, try to do some grammar exercises. You can ask someone else to read it and check.

Instructor: It is great that you check your writing, try to do some grammar exercises. You can ask someone else to read it and check your grammar. It is a good idea to buy newspaper, read articles and underline verbs and determine their specific tenses.

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