The Effect of Thinking Together Approach vs. Autonomous Learning Approach on Iranian EFL Learners' Writing Ability

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Abstract

Writing, as an influential tool for a permanent record of one's voice, has been at the locus of EFL learning and teaching for centuries. Considering the fact that individuals' ability to write is of the utmost importance in today's era of communication and social life, the current study was conducted in order to make a comparison between Autonomous Learning Approach and Thinking Together Approach, in order to find out which one is more efficient considering the writing skill of the language learners. At the first stage, in order to homogenize the participants based on their language proficiency Preliminary English Test (PET) was administered. According to the results of PET out of 77 participants 60 language learners were selected. As far as random selection of the participants was not feasible, the design was considered to be quasi-experimental with pretest and posttest. To achieve the research objectives, the participants separated into two groups. In the Thinking Together group, the participates were trained to work in a group, share their ideas with each other, use their reason and support their ideas, reach to an agreement, by other members, and write according to their talk in their groups, while in the Autonomous group the participants were supposed to express their ideas efficiently. Then, the post-test was administered and the results were compared and contrasted for further analyses. In this case, paired sample t-test results were checked. As the results indicated, the Thinking Together treatment had a greater effect on individuals' writing performance than Autonomous Learning Approach. Thus, it can be considered as a suitable approach to be applied in language classes.

Keywords: *Autonomous Learning, Pre-intermediate Learners, Thinking Together Approach, Writing Ability*

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Introduction

Previously, teachers had the main role in language classes. As the classes were teacher-centered rather than learner-centered. Nowadays, according to WU (as cited in Bagheri & Aeen, 2011), classes are more communication-oriented. Learners have more roles in their classes. The concept of learner-centeredness has generated another concept, which is learners' autonomy in EFL. It is obvious that for these learners, who are trained to manage their own language classes and at the same time be autonomous, writing has its own value and importance for it is a mean of permanent record and communication.

Alves (2008) stated that communicative competence is not merely restricted to oral skills. It is made of all four skills; he claimed that in order to have an accurate analysis of writing, the whole process of writing should be considered. Modern methodologies of teaching writing put emphasis on co-operative learning not only between teachers and learners but also between learners.

As stated by Little (1990), language learners would be proficient in second language communication if they increase their self-confidence and independence. He believed that by empowering learners' intrinsic motivation and self-confidence, and facilitating their ability to interact and they could be autonomous learners who are self-instructed and do not have too much reliance on their teacher. Little (1990) stated that in addition to autonomy, interaction is an essential factor in the development of language learning too.

Learners should also learn to initiate learning and to express themselves. Following these discussions, this study will be conducted in order to make a comparison between thinking together approach and autonomous learning approach in order to find out which one will be more affective for promoting learners' writing ability.

Learners and teachers consider communicative competence as capability in oral skills. According to Brown (2004), it is impossible to develop one skill without considering at least one other skill. So in order to help learners promote textuality in their writing production, teachers should pay attention to other skills as a promoter. Unfortunately, by mistake, most teachers consider writing as students' assignment. In some books, writing sections are attached to the end part of the unit. Actually, there is this wrong belief that the sections of the course books are ordered and designed based on their degree of importance that is probably one of the reasons that teachers and learners underestimate the importance of this skill. Both teachers and students are not satisfied with the progress which is made in writing during language learning courses. Although plenty of time is dedicated to the correction of the writing assignments, the same mistakes occur repeatedly. There is also a lack of attention to the process of writing. How should it be done based on the special genre of the writing? Pair-works and group-works are being performed in classes but most teachers are not conscious enough about the applicability of teamwork, moreover, they should consider the fact that in some cases learners will have better production if they work independently.

Nowadays there is a suggestion about paying attention to other factors in writing such as promoting motivation, raising consciousness, increasing real attention to content instead of considering it as just different mechanical stages such as drafting, prewriting, writing, and rewriting. Teachers should train their students to have confidence to refuse ideas, have reasoning and use evaluation strategy in the process of writing. By doing so, students will progress not only in writing, but also in all four skills (Brown, 2004).

Like any other skills, writing requires creativity, motivation, and imagination. In addition, this skill can be used not only for language acquisition but also for the promotion of creativity and communication. Thinking Together Approach has a great emphasis on raising awareness in language learners. By doing so, they will be able to perform better on problem-solving tasks which include generating ideas, finding out a 'voice' with which to write, plan, set goals, monitor, and evaluate what is going to be written and how it is going to be written in order to convey the meaning (White & Arndt, 1991).

By engaging students in joint activities, they will have some improvements in their speaking skill, which will result in enhancement in writing. On the other hand, an autonomous learners will gain some advantage in the process of writing. They will be capable of initiating their own writing, they can express their ideas freely, and they can produce coherent stretches of utterances with little or no help from their teacher. If teachers have enough experience about the process of these two approaches and about the suitable circumstances that every one of these approaches can be applied, language learners may make a considerable progress in their language acquisition and production. The process of teaching writing will be more systematized and learners will be able to organize and use their own ideas and those of their peers in a more fruitful way (Mercer, 2003).

Research Questions

In order to find out which approach will be more affective the following questions were asked:

1. Does the Thinking Together Approach have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' writing ability?
2. Does the Autonomous Learning Approach have any significant effect on Iranian EFL writing ability?
3. Is there any difference between the effect of Thinking Together Approach and Autonomous Learning Approach on Iranian EFL learners' writing ability?

Research Hypotheses

The following null Hypotheses were proposed in order to investigate the above-mentioned questions.

1. The Thinking Together Approach does not have any significant effect on Iranian EFL writing ability.
2. The Autonomous learning approach does not have any significant effect on Iranian EFL writing ability.

3. There is not any difference between the effect of Thinking Together Approach and Autonomous Learning Approach on Iranian EFL learners' writing Ability.

Methodology

The present research was conducted to evaluate and compare the effect of the two popular approaches, (i.e., Thinking Together Approach and Autonomous Learning Approach) on Iranian EFL learners' writing ability. The procedure of the study is explained below.

Participants

At the onset of the study, out of the pool of 77 male and female language learners, 60 were chosen to form the sample of the current study. All of them were adult learners who were studying English at the Technical Institute of Tehran. They were derived from eight classes. Four classes received Autonomous Writing Treatment and four classes received Thinking Together Treatment.

First, in order to have homogenized participants, the Preliminary English Test (PET) was given to the learners. After that the language learners received the treatments. Then their writings were rated by two raters. The researcher and one other language teacher who had MA degree in language teaching corrected the writings. As long as all the raters rated the writings according to Examination for the Certificate of Proficiency in English, 2014 scale, it can be claimed that the writings were corrected objectively as much as possible. In order to find out that the ratings were matched with each other, the inter-rater reliability of them was calculated. The average of the students' scores which were provided by the researcher was considered as the final score for every single participant in the study.

Instruments

The PET, the writing rating scale, and some writing assignments were used in the current study. Basic characteristics of these instruments are described below:

Preliminary English Test (PET) was used in this study. Choosing PET as pre-test had two reasons: first, its level was consistent with the proficiency level of language learners (pre-intermediate), second the last part of the test was a writing section. Therefore, in addition to learners' English proficiency their writing points were part of their total scores, which could be considered as a privilege, because this skill was under precise examination in the current research. Preliminary English Test (PET) includes four parts. Part four of this test, which is the last section, includes two writings. The first writing task was a response to an email, and the second one was a story that its first sentence was given to the learners. They were supposed to initiate a story, narrate it and finally put an end to it. In order to have more accurate understanding of language learners' level of proficiency they were asked to write both writings although according to the instruction they were optional. In their PET tests students were supposed to answer 30 items. For the sake of homogeneity, only those who succeeded to gain the scores which was one standard deviation above and below the mean were selected for the current

research. Therefore, the number reduced from 77 to 60. Then they were divided to two groups each of which included 30 participants.

A writing scale was used for rating the learners writing. The scale which was used for this study was ECPE (2014). In this scale writings should be examined based on three dimensions including rhetoric, grammar/ syntax and vocabulary. The raters rated the writings based on these three aspects from 1 to 5 which made total number 15.

In order to compare writing proficiency of the participants before and after the treatments, writing assignments were given to the students. The autonomous group members were provided with three topics. As they were autonomous, they were supposed to choose one of the topics, and then express their own personal views toward it in 150 words. In the thinking together group, like the autonomous group, the participants were supposed to select one topic, discuss it with other member of the group, reach an agreement and write about it in 150 words.

Procedure

Initially, 77 pre-intermediate language learners who were studying in the Technical Institute of Tehran were selected. At the first session, the PET was administered to the subjects to homogenize them. In their PET test, they were supposed to answer 30 items and write two writings. The first one was an email to a friend and the second one was a short story. Then the mean of the all 77 participants' scores were calculated and only those who succeeded to gain the scores between one standard deviation below and above the mean were selected as participants of the study. So the language learners ranged from 20 to 30 out of 35 were accepted. Finally, 60 participants were chosen, and then they were separated into two groups of 30. One group was taught under the effect of Autonomous Learning Approach while the other group was treated under the influence of Thinking Together Approach. Both groups initiated a writing course, which included seven sessions (an hour and fifteen minutes a day, three days of a week). The study aimed at finding a better approach with greater effect on writing skill of the language learners.

Then the participants of both groups were given the pre-test. The autonomous group was divided in to four subgroups, as they were distributed in four classes. The pre-test, which was considered for autonomous group, was a paper with an instruction that asked learners to write about an important event or experience in their own lives in a form of a short story in 150 words. Members of the autonomous group were supposed to express their own personal views toward the topic that they had chosen. According to Lavasani (as cited in Bagheri & Aeen, 2011), when learners try to describe their own views toward a topic, it would help them to understand the process of their own learning and be more independent. It also helped them to improve their writing skill with less support from their instructor. Reporting an event, story or experience would decrease their reliance on their teacher and make them conscious about their own learning strategies. After the first session, the learners were asked to to do some self-studies. They had to read some articles from journals or internet, and then write a composition based on their own favorite topic that was chosen by themselves.

At the next sessions, the instructor talked about the general format of writing, that is to say how they could initiate, elaborate and put an end to their writings. The learners were asked to write about their favorite topic in 150 words. During the test, the instructor explained that they were allowed to use dictionary if they would wish to. The learners were provided with a simplified scale, and were asked to evaluate and assess their own writings according to the scales. The teacher models autonomous writing for the learners. She explained that learners could express their ideas freely. The use of their own vocabularies and grammar was suggested. During the course when the learners had questions about the procedure of their writings, they were free to ask their questions from their instructors and from their peers. They were taught to express their own views in their writing, for example, how they felt about the topic or whether they agreed or disagreed, which helped them to have a better writing as well. Explaining their ideas, answering "why" was highly recommended. Their teacher provided them with some samples of writing in the pre-intermediate level. They were asked to bring samples to the class. If the learners' samples were suitable, they were distributed to all learners. At the end of the seventh session, the participants were provided with another assignment. Like the pre-test, they should select one of the topics and write about it in 150 words. They were allowed to use dictionaries. Same as the pre-test, they were supposed to express their own ideas in their writings.

The Thinking together group, the same as the autonomous group, was categorized in to four classes. This group had also seven sessions (an hour and fifteen minutes, three times a week). The treatment was given to the participants, and they were asked to share their ideas with their partners about one single topic, which was chosen by them from the three given topics. Topics were suitable for group work. Then they had to write about the selected topic individually. During the course, the learners were asked to express their opinions in their groups. They tried to convince each other and reach to an agreement at the end of their discussions. As post-test, they were given writing assignments, like the pre-test they had 45 minutes, and they were provided with three different topics that they had to choose from.

In the end, two raters, based on the ECPE writing scale, the two raters rated the writing samples. The mean of the two scores was considered as the final score for the participants. In order to find the degree of reliability between two raters codes, the inter rater reliability was calculated. The results indicated a high reliability index among the raters in pretest stage of the study.

Results

Concerning the aim of the study, which is investigating if the two instruction methods can help Iranian EFL learners' writing ability, the researcher conducted a series of paired sample tests**.**

For any inferential statistics to be used, the data should meet two important assumptions (i.e., normality of the distribution and homogeneity of variances) and t-test is not an exception. Besides, conducting the main tests and a test of related assumptions, descriptive statistics on group performances are reported to give a comprehensive picture of the related attributes in each group. Moreover, a report of participant selection and interrater reliability in rating the writing

performances across the groups is presented. To select the participants, those whose scores were one standard deviation (3.20) above and below the mean (25.15) were selected to participate in this study. Therefore, the participants whose scores were between 21.95 and 28.35 were chosen as the target participants.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the PET of the two groups

Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	Std. Error	Kurtosis	Std. Error
20.00	30.00	25.150	3.20394	10.265	-.163	.309	-1.163	.608

N=60

Since two raters were used in rating the writing assignments of the learners, inter-rater reliability was calculated for the raters rating on the pretest stages across the groups. Since there was a high reliability index among the raters in the pretest stage of the study and since the same raters were used in the posttest stage, the researcher concluded that the decisions made based on the scores and ratings given by the raters are reliable decisions.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of Inter-rater reliability across groups

		Pretest stage thinking together group			*Pretest stage autonomous group*	
		N	%		N	%
	Valid	30	100.0	Valid	30	100.0
Cases	Excluded[a]	0	.0	Cases Excluded[a]	0	.0
	Total	30	100.0	Total	30	100.0

Table 2 shows the number of the rated participants in each group and Table 3 and Table 4 show the reliability index for the group which received thinking together treatment and the one which was treated according to the principles of autonomous learning respectively. As the tables show, The Pearson's r for the correlation between the two raters' scores in Thinking Together pre-test is 0.983 and for Autonomous Learning groups is 0.984. These numbers are very close to 1, therefore, the correlation between the two ratings came out to be statistically significant at the 0.01 level of significant.

Table 3. Inter-rater reliability statistics in pretest of thinking together group

	1.Rater 1	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Rater1	--	7.2667	1.87420
2. Rater2	.983[**]	7.4000	1.79271
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). N=30			

Table 4. Inter rater reliability statistics in pretest of autonomous group

	1. Rater 1	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Rater1	--	9.9667	3.12370
2. Rater2	.984[**]	10.1333	2.86156
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). N=30			

Any original research paper starts with a descriptive statistics, which provides a summary of the data. Table 5 tabulates the descriptive statistics of the data. As Table 5 shows, 30 students participated in each group; a group receiving autonomous writing as its treatment. The same is true for the group that received thinking together as its treatment. The mean and the standard deviation of the performances of participants in autonomous group and thinking group in pretest are as follow: autonomous group (pretest M= 10.20, SD= 3.07) and thinking together (pretest M= 7.23, SD= 1.83) and respectively for the posttest of the same groups, the mean and standard deviation across the groups are M= 10.18, SD= 3.42 and for the autonomous group and M= 7.81, SD= 2.21 for the thinking group.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of writing performances across groups

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mini	Max
						L Bound	U Bound		
Pretest	Autonomous	30	10.2000	3.07549	.56150	9.0516	11.3484	5.00	15.00
	thinking together	30	7.2333	1.83704	.33540	6.5474	7.9193	4.50	12.00
	Total	60	8.7167	2.92327	.37739	7.9615	9.4718	4.50	15.00
Posttest	Autonomous	30	10.1833	3.42275	.62491	8.9053	11.4614	1.50	15.00
	thinking together	30	7.8167	2.21080	.40364	6.9911	8.6422	4.00	12.00
	Total	60	9.0000	3.09592	.39968	8.2002	9.7998	1.50	15.00

A more detailed way of describing data is tabulated in Table 6 and Table 7 with specific information about the skewness and kurtosis. Since skewness and kurtosis are two indexes of normality of the distribution, they are reported to a way of checking normality assumption. According to Larson Hall (2010), if the skewness and kurtosis values are less than two, there is no concern regarding normality assumption.

Table 6. Descriptive statistics on pretest writing scores of autonomous and thinking groups

	Group membership		Statistic	Std. Error
Pretest	autonomous	Mean	10.2000	.56150
		Variance	9.459	
		Std. Deviation	3.07549	
		Minimum	5.00	
		Maximum	15.00	
		Skewness	-.075	.427
		Kurtosis	-1.326	.833
	thinking together	Mean	7.2333	.33540
		Variance	3.375	
		Std. Deviation	1.83704	
		Minimum	4.50	
		Maximum	12.00	
		Skewness	1.146	.427
		Kurtosis	1.348	.833

Table 7. Descriptive statistics on posttest of autonomous and thinking together groups

Group membership			Statistic	Std. Error
posttest	autonomous	Mean	10.1833	.62491
		Variance	11.715	
		Std. Deviation	3.42275	
		Minimum	1.50	
		Maximum	15.00	
		Skewness	-.470	.427
		Kurtosis	-.208	.833
	thinking together	Mean	7.8167	.40364
		Variance	4.888	
		Std. Deviation	2.21080	
		Minimum	4.00	
		Maximum	12.00	
		Skewness	-.022	.427
		Kurtosis	-.972	.833

A more powerful test of normality is used to ensure that the normality of the distribution as one of the assumptions required for t-test (the main test of the study) is not violated. The results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov are presented in Table 8.

Table 8.Tests of normality

	Group membership		Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]		Shapiro-Wilk	
			Statistic	Sig.	Statistic	Sig.
Pretest	dimension1	autonomous	.187	.009	.936	.071
		thinking together	.217	.001	.900	.009
Posttest	dimension1	autonomous	.128	.200*	.954	.216
		thinking together	.170	.026	.952	.196

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction
*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.   df= 30

As the results reported in Table 8 illustrate, the level of significance of the pretest and posttest across autonomous and thinking groups (0.009, 0.200, 0.001 and 0.026) are less than the research confidence interval (0.05) which means that the normality assumption is not met in all groups at all performances and the researcher should be conservative in her interpretation.

To answer the first research question which investigates if Thinking Together Approach has any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' writing ability, a paired samples t-test is used, the results are indicated in Table 10 and Table 11.

Table 9. Paired statistics samples

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest thinking together	7.2333	30	1.83704	.33540
	Posttest thinking together	7.8167	30	2.21080	.40364

As Table 9 shows, mean comparison of the performances in pretest and posttest of thinking together group shows that there is a difference in performances (Pretest M= 7.23, SD= 1.83< posttest M= 7.81, SD= 2.21). However, to investigate if the mean difference within the groups is significant enough, the results of paired sample t-test in Table 11 are reviewed.

Table 10. Paired samples test

		Paired Differences							
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pretest thinking together – posttest thinking together	-.58333	1.41472	.25829	-1.11160	-.05507	-2.258	29	.032

As it can be seen in Table 10, the level of significance of the test (0.032) is less than the research confidence interval (0.05) which suggests rejecting the first null hypothesis stating that thinking together does not affect Iranian EFL learners' writing ability. Learners have a better writing performance in posttest than in pretest as a result of the treatment which is thinking together.

To investigate if autonomous learning approach has any influence on Iranian EFL learners' writing ability, a paired samples t-test is used. The results are indicated in Table 11 and Table 12.

Table 11. Paired samples statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest autonomous	10.2000	30	3.07549	.56150
	Posttest autonomous	10.1833	30	3.42275	.62491

The results shown in Table 11 indicate the mean comparison of the performances in the pretest and posttest stage of the group receiving autonomous learning as its treatment. Learners had better performances in posttest than in pretest (posttest M= 10.18, SD= 3.42> pretest M= 10.20, SD= 3.07). To see if these mean differences are significant enough to attribute better performances in posttest to autonomous learning as the treatment, the results listed in Table 13 are reviewed.

Table 12. Paired samples test

		Paired Differences							
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pretest autonomous – posttest autonomous	.01667	3.52450	.64348	-1.29940	1.33274	.026	29	.980

As the results in Table 12 show, the significance level of the test (0.98) is greater than the research confidence interval (0.05) which suggest that the mean differences from pretest to posttest are not significant and differences cannot be attributed to the treatment confidently. Therefore, the second null hypothesis which says Autonomous Learning Approach has no effect on writing ability is not rejected.

In order to answer the third question of the study, it was required to compare the post-tests of the autonomous and thinking together means; therefore, paired sample t-test results were checked. As indicated in the table below, the results of the t-test showed that at the 0.05 level of significance there was a significant difference between the mean ranks of the thinking together and that of autonomous learning group on the writing post-test (N1=30, N2=30, P=.002< 0.05). The sig value is .045< 0.05.Therefore, the third null hypothesis which says there is not any difference between the effect of Thinking Together Approach and Autonomous Learning Approach on EFL learners' Writing proficiency is rejected, as the results indicated the participants in the thinking together group outperformed the autonomous learning group in their post-tests.

Table 13.Independent sample test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig.	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Posttest	Equal variances assumed	4.195	.045	3.181	58	.002	2.3666	.74393	.8775	3.8558
	Equal variances not assumed			3.181	49.610	.003	2.3666	.74393	.8721	3.8611

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to make a comparison between, Thinking Together Approach and Autonomous Learning Approach in order to determine the more influential could be applied suitably in language learning classes regarding writing ability of learners. Actually the researcher found that Thinking Together Approach had a significant effect on learners' writing proficiency while Autonomous Learning Approach did not have any significant effect on learners' writing ability. However, in a research, which was conducted by Bagheri and Aeen (2011), the results opposed the results of the current study.

In their research, they investigated the effect of practicing autonomy on Iranian EFL learners' writing ability. There were the same number of the participants as the present study. After giving the treatments to the experimental group, it was indicated that they had better performance in comparison with the control group in their writing ability. Another study, which was similar to the current study, was done by Shakre (2013). He investigated the relationship between concept

of learner autonomy and feedback given on writing tasks in second language learning. Based on the results of this study, writing sessions enhanced the sense of autonomy in language learners. So it could be concluded that autonomy and writing have a reciprocal effect. Related to the presented discussion was the study which was conducted by Amiri and Sheikhy (2014). They investigated the effect of autonomy versus critical thinking on EFL learners' writing achievement. They proved that both treatments had a considerable influence on the progress of learners' writing ability.

Moreover, in a study conducted by Hallbach (2015). The researcher measured the effect of students' change of talk (talk and think together) on their writing performance. Based on her research, as learners talked with each other, their language awareness increased and therefore, they had more cohesive and coherent writing production.

In a research called Talk Lessons, which was done by Lyn Daws, Rupert Wegerif, Karen Littlton, and Mercer (2005), a special program was conducted. The aim of the study was finding out about the impact of talk (thinking together) on learners' problem-solving ability. As the result indicated the learners, who thought with each other outperformed the control group and they could produce longer stretches of utterances.

In another study which was conducted by Rojas-Drummond, Mercer and Dabrowski, (2001), the effect of thinking together was evaluated considering language production of the learners. As the results indicated, children who received thinking together treatment were able to support their ideas appropriately. The results of this study, like the previous one, was consistent with the result obtained from the current study. All of them confirmed the significant effect of Thinking Together Approach on of students' language production.

Eventually, the research, which was very similar in objectives with the present research, was the study conducted by Storch (2005). In his research he made a comparison between collaborative writing and autonomous writing as well. In the end, after analyzing the results, he concluded that the test which was produced in collaborative group were shorter, but more structured, the sentences were longer and more complex and accurate. Besides, learners in collaborative group had the chance to get spontaneous feedback from their peers, while the autonomous group was not benefited from this privilege. In addition, they had the opportunity to interact and investigate different aspect of topics in their writings, therefore it was concluded that like the result of the current study, pair-works and group-works had more significant effect on language learners' writing progress. Storch (2005) explained that although the results were analyzed both in quantitative and qualitative manner, in order to achieve more certain results, concluding further researches is recommended too.

Conclusion

This study was a quasi-experimental design with a pretest and a posttest in order to find out the effect of autonomous language learning vs. thinking together on pre-intermediate EFL learners' writing ability.

In the present study, the possible effect of the two important approaches (i.e., Thinking Together Approach and Autonomous Learning Approach) were investigated and then the results were compared. According to the results obtained, the first and the third null hypotheses are rejected. It can be concluded that, although both treatments had some effect on writing progress of language learners, Thinking Together Approach was the one which had a greater influence. It can be claimed that in Thinking Together Approach**,** learners used all four skills as the process of writing. They talked**,** while they were engaged in discussion, they listened to each other's opinions, and then they started writing. In the end, they read and revised their writings. On the other hand, participants in the autonomous group indicated no progress in their writing.

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