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The contribution of oral conferencing and individual tasks to writing accuracy, complexity and fluency: The effect of gender

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Abstract: The present study is an attempt to investigate the effects of oral conferencing as a collaborative writing method and individual work on the writing ability of Iranian EFL learners. According to the research evidence so far, the collaborative activities provide learners with opportunities to work together for solution to their linguistic problems, form new language knowledge, and produce accurate texts. Based on this line of research, the present study aims at the comparison of writing accuracy, fluency and complexity of 60 English language learners. Oral conferencing included discussions and negotiations among the participants and the teacher before and after writing paragraphs which were followed by live teacher-student as well as student-student feedback. The study also examined the effect of gender on learners' writing outcomes. The analysis of the written texts revealed that whereas oral conferencing condition resulted in higher accuracy and fluency, it did not differ from the individual work with regard to the complexity aspect of writing. Moreover, the gender of the participants was not an influential factor upon the writing performance, in neither individual nor collaborative work. The implications of these results for the comprehension of both collaborative writing tasks and individual writing activity are discussed.

Keywords: accuracy, fluency, individual work, gender, complexity, oral conferencing, writing.

1. Introduction

Writing is a crucial prerequisite for EFL learners and is viewed as one of the most essential communicative abilities in English language learning (Sharples, Goodlet, & Pymberton 1989; Hayes & Flower 1986; Biria & Jafari 2013). Silva, Leki, and Carson (1977) contend that it is vital to perceive that "writing often serves practical, mundane, and communicative purposes that are profuse and fundamental in language learners' academic lives" (411). Figuring out how to write in a foreign language is of extraordinary significance and it appears relatively impossible for learners, since they require exact rules and more particular assignments for support (Mirzaii 2012). Likewise, these tasks need to be highlighted for the learners in order for them to attain their own decision regarding how to perform on writing tasks (Willis & Willis 1996).

Among the numerous strategies used in classroom writing activities, conferencing, according to Genesee and Upsure (1996), concentrates straightforwardly on learning process and strategies. Conferencing is additionally profitable in a way that teachers can encourage learners' reflection on their own learning process, obtain language performance on specific skills, abilities, or other language points (Brown & Hudson 1998). The writing conference, according to Hedge (1988) is "a face to face conversation between the learner and the instructor that manifests the instructor's support, assistance and extension the learners' ideas regarding the topic" (145).

According to Hedge (2008), "through careful questioning, the teacher can support a student writer in getting ideas together, organizing them, and finding appropriate language" (313). According to Brown and Hudson (1998), through conferencing, "teachers can inform, mold, observe, and gather information about students" (663). Conferencing can also provide teachers with an opportunity to establish collaborative environments in which the learners find opportunities to participate in their learning about writing (Ewert 2009).

2. Review of the Literature

2.1. Emergence and Importance of Oral Conferencing

The accessibility of different feedback types on FL/SL writing in literature, changes in writing instruction, and insights obtained from experiments have changed feedback practices, with teacher written comments now often combined with feedback types in accordance with the principles of alternative assessment as opposed to the practices of conventional assessment methods. Peer feedback, writing workshops, computer-delivered feedback, portfolio assessment, and oral conferencing are but some of the alternative feedback types which could be utilized in writing classes (Mirzaii 2012).

Considering the teacher-learner writing conferences, Bayraktar (2009) notes that throughout the last three decades, such conferences have been examined under distinctive names mirroring their various capacities including response sessions, helped performance, face-to-face interaction, coordinated instructing, discussion about the learner's paper, and meaningful contact.

Considering the body of literature on oral conferencing and how it may advantage teaching writing, the greater part of studies have centered their consideration on practices and the ways that writing conferences are required to be adjusted to the L2 context. For instance, it has been asserted that the standard nondirective 'hands-off' method of instruction in the L1 context is not effective and that a more directive role for L2 teachers in their role as cultural and language informants is obliged (Thonus 2002). Hence, it could be postulated that oral conferencing, as an alternative option for more conventional feedback options, has a significant potential for inducing a setting where the teacher as reader presents a more directive role in managing and endeavoring to enhance learner writers' accomplishments in writing. Calkins, Hartman, and White's (2005) work on the teacher-student writing conference is generally utilized among instructors. They depict the "architecture" or four stages of a teacher-student writing conference: the research stage (to discover what the writer needs), the decisions stage (to choose what to instruct), the teaching stage (teaching the

writer), and the linking stage (to guide the writer to autonomous writing).

Research in this area has also focused on issues, such as the roles of participants in conferences, the duration of such conferences, and the stages and sequences involved. Regarding the common practices of conferencing, Grabe and Kaplan (1996) recommend that teacher-learner writing conferences need to be carried out within 5 to 10 minutes, focus on a single assignment in an early draft, balance criticism of student work with praise, incorporate student negotiation in the conference, conclude with students' verbalizing of what they will do next, and have teachers track student progress over the year, presumably through anecdotal comments and by maintaining a record of students' revisions and grades.

Another study, conducted by Bitchener, Young, and Cameron (2005), attempted to investigate whether the type of feedback (direct, explicit written feedback accompanied by student-researcher 5-minute individual conferences; direct, explicit written feedback only; and no corrective feedback) provided to 53 adult migrant students on three types of error, i.e., prepositions, the past simple tense, and the definite article, brought about enhanced writing pieces over a 12-week period. Whereas the study found "a significant effect for the combination of written and conference feedback on accuracy levels, no overall effect on accuracy improvement for feedback types, when the three error categories were considered as a single group, was reported" (191).

Direct effects of writing conferences on students' learning and improved academic achievement have been investigated by Corden (2007). The study was an attempt to investigate the impact of explicit instruction of literary devices and a writer's workshop approach, with frequent conferences, on the quality of children's narrative writing. The study was carried out with eighteen teachers, working as research partners in nine elementary schools, over one school year. Each teacher worked with six case study students – two low-achieving, two average, and two high achieving student writers between the ages of 7 and 11. The participants of the study were selected based on their academic achievements in writing as shown by administered national exams. In

the course of the study, daily literary sessions were complemented by weekly writing workshops where students had the opportunity to engage in authorial activity and experienced writers' perspectives and readers' demands. Samples of the students' narrative writing were collected, and a comparison was made between the qualities of their independent writing at the beginning and end of the research period. Methods for data collection also included video-recording of peer-peer and teacher-led group discussions and audio-recording of teacher-student conferences. The audio-taped writing conferences were later on transcribed to determine whether the participants could show an awareness of audience and whether they could make effective revisions to enhance the quality of their writing. Analysis of data revealed that students' first drafts lacked a recognizable outline, followed a linear pattern, and had a limited vocabulary range with simple sentence structures. The students, having been through the experiment, however, showed the ability to produce high quality texts with good openings, contextualized, rich settings, appropriate punctuation marks, a wider range of vocabulary items, varied and more complex sentence structures, and various connectives. Therefore, Corden found that writing conferences could enhance writing performance by teaching students the characteristics of good writing and enhancing their voice, audience awareness, special literary skills, and the use of descriptive vocabulary. The results of the study further indicated that student writers could "gradually develop a meta-language and were able to use it effectively when discussing their own texts" (29). Besides, the study showed that students, by the end of the experiment, "were able to integrate the stylistic and organizational features of mentor texts into their personal repertoires and use them successfully in their own writing" (29).

In quite a different study, Liu (2009) examined 110 students' writing experiences and expectations of writing conferences, which they regularly went through, through a survey. It should be noted that the participants were composed of both native speakers of English (65 male and female students) and non-native speakers of English (45 male and female students). Regarding the participants' previous experiences, the study revealed that a much higher percentage of native speakers had

experienced participating in teacher-student writing conferences than their non-native counterparts. With respect to the participants' expectations of conferences, all of the American students and the majority of ESL students expected the instructor to give them suggestions on how to improve their following drafts. Moreover, about half of the students from both groups stated that "they enjoyed talking with the instructor privately and they thought conferences could help enhance a better personal relationship with the instructor" (107). The difference between the two groups, however, lied in their expectations as to which aspects of writing should be focused upon during conferences. While most ESL students expected the instructor to correct their grammar errors, the majority of native speaker students deemed surface-level correction of errors a "waste of time" (107), and instead favored the focus of attention on meaning and content of their texts.

Whereas the studies mentioned thus far focused their attention primarily on the effects of teacher-student writing conferences on students' subsequent achievements in writing, Ghoorchaei, Tavakoli, and Nejad Ansari (2010) investigated the effects of such conferences on the periphery. In other words, they principally concentrated on the relationship between the use of portfolio assessment and Iranian EFL students' writing ability and attempted to determine the peripheral impact of oral conferencing on this relationship. The experiment included 61 students of similar writing ability who were divided into two groups – the experimental group and the control group. In the course of the study, while the control group underwent the traditional mode of assessment, the participants in the experimental group were asked to write essays on which the instructor left written comments concerning focus, elaboration, organization, conventions, and vocabulary. Upon the students' self-assessment of the comments, the students consulted their instructor to receive comments in one-to-one conferences. Having made the last revisions, the students put their final drafts in their portfolios. The findings of the study suggested that portfolio assessment, accompanied by oral conferencing sessions, could significantly enhance students' learning of EFL writing.

Phillips and Larson (2013) aimed to read information with the work of Karen Barad and to observe the teacher-student writing conferences

which they introduced in a typical teaching method of US primary school writing as intra-activity. Data were accumulated during teacher-student writing conferences in a grade five US classroom throughout a six-week period. One meeting between a researcher and a male Latino learner was diffracted. Reading and writing, and deduction with Barad disturb our routine methods for privileging language as representational. Instead, the material-discursive practices of educating was considered that creates what comes to matter, driving us to reimage the teacher-student conferences right now entrapped getting to be writing conferencing, addressing the assortment of participants, converging of bodies, constant development, open-ended conceivable outcomes, and expected change of intra-action.

Fidelia (2015) examined the effect of gender on the writing performance of learners through a collaborative program. 191 learners who were exposed to collaborative writing as opposed to conventional instruction took part in the study. Results indicated that males exposed to treatment using collaborative instructional strategy performed better than males in the control group. Females in the control group performed better than males in the control groups.

The present study investigates empirically how learners working together perform in a writing task in comparison to learners working individually. Moreover, it examines the effect of gender on learners' writing performance in both the individual and conferencing groups. The following research questions were therefore the focus of the study:

1. Is there any significant difference between the individual and oral conferencing writing performance of Iranian EFL learners with regard to accuracy, fluency and complexity?
2. Is there any significant difference between the male and female learners' writing performance in individual and oral conferencing groups?

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The study was conducted in four intermediate level classes of English as a foreign language at a language institute in Iran. A total of

60 students were asked to participate in the project. Thirty were female and thirty male, and their ages ranged from 18 to 26, with an average of 22. They were all Persian or Turkish native speakers. All the participants were enrolled in the same third-year English language course. They had been placed in this course after successful completion of the previous level class. However, in order to ascertain the homogeneity of participants according to a standard proficiency test, the Preliminary English Test (PET) was administered to the participants. Four classes of the same course were randomly selected for the study. Each class was taught by a different teacher, but with the same syllabus as well as teaching and evaluation materials. In two of the classes learners worked individually. In the other two classes they worked through oral conferencing procedure.

3.2. Materials

3.2.1. Preliminary English Test (PET)

The Preliminary English Test (PET) which is a standardized test developed by Cambridge University was administered to the participants in order to determine their level of writing proficiency and ensure that they were of near homogeneity. Only the writing section was used since the purpose of the present study was to evaluate learners' level of writing proficiency. The PET writing section includes three parts with a total of 7 questions carrying one mark for each correct sentence. The first part includes sentence transformations with five questions that are all about the same topic. For each question, there is a complete sentence and a second with missing word/s. Respondents are required to complete the second sentence in order for it to mean the same as the first sentence. This section tests the testees' capabilities in putting forward the same ideas in different ways. The second part is the evaluation of writing short communicative messages. This part includes one question the writers need to write about a theme in 35-45 words as required. This question has a total of 5 marks. The last part of the writing section is the evaluation of learners' continuous writing abilities which requires letter and story writing skills. This part includes one question which has a total of 15 marks.

3.2.2. Top Notch 3 (2nd edition by Saslow & Ascher, 2011)

The Top Notch 3 written by Joan Saslow and Allen Ascher (2011) was the book which was used in the present study. This textbook is taught in the language institute which was the context of the present study and includes the practice of different language skills. The book has primarily a communication and task-based focus, and motivates the students to use the language communicatively.

3.3. Procedure

Prior to the conduction of study, PET was administered to 66 learners who were in four classes selected for the study. Then, 60 participants whose scores fell one standard deviation above and below the mean were selected for the study and they were randomly divided into two experimental conditions of oral conferencing and individual writing. The treatment period took five weeks; the students of each group had a different teacher and they had 10 sessions totally during the treatment period. According to the time schedule of the institute, the runtime of each session was 90 minutes.

During the treatment period, the students in both groups in the first 30 minutes of the class were taught the units of the book which includes all language skills and sub-skills. Due to aforementioned features of this course book, the teacher tried to teach the relevant grammatical points as well as the essential vocabularies alongside the language skills with special focus on the writing skills of the students. For instance, students were all supposed to take notes for using the given points regarding writing, i.e., how to write a four paragraph essay. The students were also taught how to write a topic sentence, thesis statement, blue print, and support sentences in details. They were given a for-and-against topic each session and then were asked to write paragraphs in the classroom.

In this study, oral conferencing included discussions and negotiations among the participants and the teacher before and after writing paragraphs which were followed by live teacher-student as well as student-student feedback. The students, thus, were divided into groups of five to participate in conferences for 15 minutes in average in each session. However, they were required to read their writing in the

class prior to the conferences, and subsequently performed better in the following writing activity, since they have already received feedback regarding the shortcomings of their previous writing. The students received feedback throughout the process of the conferences and they concentrated on the overall meaning and organization of their writing in general, and also on the vocabularies, language use, and the mechanics of writing in details.

The learners of the individual group went through the same writing instruction and were exposed to the same materials and syllabus with the exception of the use of pre- and post-writing discussions and oral feedback. Totally, the participants of this study performed eight conferences. All the conferences were conducted orally and the teacher gave students enough time to speak about their problems and to provide students with appropriate feedback.

At the end of the study, the participants sat for the post-test that was a sample of PET writing test which took 40 minutes. The written texts produced by the groups and the individual learners were analyzed for accuracy, fluency, and complexity. In summary, the following quantitative measures were used to analyze the writing produced by the participants:

Fluency
- average number of words per text
- average number of T-units per text
- average number of clauses per text

Complexity
- proportion of clauses to T-units
- percentage of dependent clauses of total clauses

Accuracy
- percentage of error-free T-units
- percentage of error-free clauses

In addition, inter-rater agreement was checked with a random sample of 20 texts being coded by a second rater. Inter-rater agreement for T-unit and clause identification was 84% and 81% respectively and for error free clause identification was 75%. Although the latter may be regarded

a low inter-rater agreement value, obtaining a high level of inter-rater reliability on accuracy is fairly difficult.

4. Results

To begin with, the data were analyzed to ensure the assumptions of normality. The results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests show that the scores were normally distributed ($p > 0.05$).

In order to investigate the first research question which is concerned with the difference between the conferencing and individual writing, a multivariate analysis of variance (MNOVA) was carried out. The results are shown in tables 1 and 2 below. Table 1 indicates the results of descriptive statistics and table 2 shows the results of MANOVA.

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics for Writing Elements across Tests and Groups*

	Tests	Groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Accuracy	pre-test	Individual	3.63	.99	30
		Conference	3.53	1.04	30
		Total	3.58	1.01	60
	post-test	Individual	1.76	1.00	30
		Conference	3.50	.68	30
		Total	2.63	1.22	60
	Total	Individual	2.70	1.36	60
		Conference	3.51	.87	60
		Total	3.10	1.21	120
Fluency	pre-test	Individual	2.36	.66	30
		Conference	2.86	.89	30
		Total	2.61	.82	60
	post-test	Individual	.96	.71	30
		Conference	2.56	.81	30
		Total	1.76	1.11	60
	Total	Individual	1.66	.98	60
		Conference	2.71	.86	60
		Total	2.19	1.06	120
Complexity	pre-test	Individual	3.13	1.10	30
		Conference	3.36	.88	30
		Total	3.25	1.00	60

post-test	Individual	3.35	.95	30
	Conference	3.6333	.66	30
	Total	2.5000	1.37	60
Total	Individual	2.2500	1.32	60
	Conference	3.5000	.79	60
	Total	2.8750	1.25	120

The results of descriptive statistics show that in the accuracy aspect of writing, oral conferencing method was more successful in reducing the errors of pre-test (M=3.63, SD=0.99) in the post-test (M=1.76, SD=1.00) compared to the individual writing group in the pre-test (M=3.53, SD=1.04) and post-test (M=3.50, SD=0.68). The same result holds true for the fluency category, with the oral conferencing method proving to be effective in the post-test (M=0.96, SD=0.71) compared to the individual writing group (M=2.56, SD=0.81). However, complexity aspect of writing seems to be exception to this pattern since there were no difference between oral conferencing method (M=3.35, SD=0.95) and the individual writing group (M=3.63, SD=0.66) in the reduction of errors in the post-test.

Table 2. *M ANOVA Results for Writing Elements across Tests and Groups*

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	Accuracy	72.29[a]	3	24.09	27.06	.000	.41
	Fluency	63.82[b]	3	21.27	34.87	.000	.47
	Complexity	94.75[c]	3	31.58	39.66	.000	.50
Intercept	Accuracy	1159.40	1	1159.40	1.30	.000	.91
	Fluency	576.40	1	576.40	944.84	.000	.89
	Complexity	991.87	1	991.87	1.24	.000	.91
Tests	Accuracy	27.07	1	27.07	30.40	.000	.20
	Fluency	21.67	1	21.67	35.52	.000	.23
	Complexity	16.87	1	16.87	21.19	.060	.15
Groups	Accuracy	20.00	1	20.00	22.46	.000	.16
	Fluency	33.07	1	33.07	54.21	.000	.31
	Complexity	46.87	1	46.87	58.86	.072	.33
Tests * Groups	Accuracy	25.20	1	25.20	28.30	.000	.19
	Fluency	9.07	1	9.07	14.87	.000	.11
	Complexity	31.00	1	31.00	38.94	.000	.25

Error	Accuracy	103.30	116	.89		
	Fluency	70.76	116	.61		
	Complexity	92.36	116	.79		
Total	Accuracy	1335.00	120			
	Fluency	711.00	120			
	Complexity	1179.00	120			
Corrected Total	Accuracy	175.59	119			
	Fluency	134.59	119			
	Complexity	187.12	119			

a. R Squared = .412 (Adjusted R Squared = .396)

b. R Squared = .474 (Adjusted R Squared = .461)

c. R Squared = .506 (Adjusted R Squared = .494)

The MANOVA revealed a significant effect of pre- and post-test for both 'accuracy' [$F(1, 116) = 30.40$, $p = .000$] and 'fluency'[$F(1, 116) = 35.52$, $p = .000$], but not for 'complexity' [$F(1, 116) = 21.19$, $p = .060$]. These results are in line with those of descriptive statistics, indicating the writing improvement of oral conferencing group's participants in their post-test scores. According to the results, there is a significant main effect for the oral conferencing and individual writing groups on the 'accuracy' [$F(1, 116) = 22.46$, $p = .000$], 'fluency'[$F(1, 116) = 54.21$, $p = .000$], but not for 'complexity' [$F(1, 116) = 58.86$, $p = .072$]. This result supports those of descriptive statistics referring to the difference between the oral conferencing and individual writing groups only in the accuracy and fluency aspects. The results of this analysis also revealed a significant tests-groups interaction for the 'accuracy' [$F(1, 116) = 28.30$, $p = .000$], 'fluency'[$F(1, 116) = 14.87$, $p = .000$], and 'complexity' [$F(1, 116) = 38.94$, $p = .000$]. Also, the adjusted R square below the table shows that tests, groups and their interaction effects could explain 39, 46 and 49 percent of the overall variation in the 'accuracy', 'fluency' and 'complexity' categories respectively.

In order to examine the second research question which is concerned with the differences between the EFL learners' individual writing performance with regard to their gender, an independent samples t-test was run. First, the results of descriptive statistics are shown.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Individual Writing Performance across Gender

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Individual witting	Male	30	23.51	9.66	1.42
	Female	30	24.12	10.54	1.40

As the mean and standard deviation scores in table 3 show, there are very nuance differences between the male (M=23.51, SD=9.66) and female (M=24.12, SD=10.54) learners' performance in the writing post-test. However, in order to get more accurate and reliable results, an independent samples t-test was run, the results of which are displayed in table 4.

Table 4. *T-test Results of Individual Writing Performance across Gender*

		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
Individual witting	Equal variances assumed	1.11	.29	-.39	58	.69	-.80	2.02	-4.81	3.21
	Equal variances not assumed			-.39	58.00	.69	-.80	2.00	-4.77	3.17

The results show that the significance level of Levene's test is $p = 0.29$, which means that the variances for the two groups (male and female) are the same. The results of independent samples *t*-test show statistically insignificant difference (t (58) = -0.39, $p > 0.05$) between the male and female learners in the post-test.

In order to examine the differences between the EFL learners' writing performance in the oral conferencing group with regard to their gender, an independent samples t-test was run. First, the results of descriptive statistics are shown.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of Oral Conferencing Writing Performance across Gender

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Oral conferencing	Males	30	48.44	5.18	.99
	Females	30	48.84	3.58	.70

As shown in table 5, there is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of males (M=48.44, SD=5.18) and females (M=48.84, SD=3.58). In order to obtain more objective results, an independent sample t-test was run, the results of which are presented in table 6.

Table 6. T-test Results of Oral Conferencing Writing Performance across Gender

		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
Oral conferencing	Equal variances assumed	4.36	.04	-.37	58	.74	-.40	1.22	-2.86	2.06
	Equal variances not assumed			-.39	58.00	.74	-.40	1.22	-2.85	2.05

As it is shown in this table, statistically insignificant difference (t (58) = -0.39, $p > 0.05$) between the male and female learners in the post-test.

5. Discussion

The first question addressed in the present study concerns the difference between oral conferencing and individual writing conditions on the writing accuracy, complexity and fluency of the EFL learners. Results of statistical analyses show that although the writing accuracy and fluency of the oral conferencing group was superior to the individual group, the complexity aspect does not show variation

between the groups. Past research has also found that learners' writing in groups resulted in linguistically more accurate writings than those writing alone (Storch 1999; Storch 2005; Storch & Wigglesworth 2007; Wigglesworth & Storch 2009). Also, in the current study, writings composed with the conferencing of participants were generally more precise than those composed individually. The lack of significant differences in complexity between oral conferencing and individual groups had also been seen in past studies looking at group and individual work (Storch 2005; Storch & Wigglesworth 2007; Wigglesworth & Storch 2009). This study additionally observed that learners' writing through oral conferencing needed more time to finish a written work assignment than learners writing alone (Storch 1999; Storch 2005; Storch & Wigglesworth 2007). In the present study, all the learners finished the assignment under the same classroom conditions and were subsequently allotted the same period of time. Learners working collaboratively needed to concur on both the content of their writings as well as on the language to be utilized as a part of their writings. Specifically, it urged learners to work together when creating ideas regarding the content of their papers. As the more detailed analyses of the writings illustrate, these group work exercises gave the learners impressive chances to share thoughts and pool their language knowledge as has been discovered more generally in individual works (see, for instance, Dillenbourg 1999; Strauss & U 2007). Therefore, the complexity lagged behind the accuracy and fluency aspects.

In this sense, working collectively will advantage instead of hindering learners in addition to presenting them with learning opportunities which in the case of formative classroom evaluation is prone to advantage the learners, and additionally give the instructor pieces of knowledge into how the learners are enhancing as far as the scripts they are creating. Accordingly, while collaborative writing activities of this sort may not be suitable in high-stakes testing circumstances, in the classroom context they may address the triple purposes of evaluation, learning, along with presenting learners with the experience they require in order to take part beneficially in group assessment activities they are likely to experience in the college and beyond.

The analyses conducted to answer the second question of the study revealed that male and female learners did not show differences either in individual work or in collaborative oral conferencing group. This implies that in order to give male and female learners the opportunity to flourish as writers, teachers should become aware of their own gender ideologies and how these ideologies are communicated and created through their language and written feedback to learners' writing. This awareness therefore results in teaching and evaluation that respects female and male learners' writing styles, and that communicate the worthwhile roles that writing might play in their lives.

6. Conclusion

The utilization of group work in the L2 classroom has received much research consideration with totally supportive results. The adoption of collaborative writing in general, and for evaluation purposes specifically, is far less common, mostly maybe due to the hesitance of learners to take part in co-authoring (McDonough 2004). Obviously, there is a need for more research into what happens in both conferencing and individual writing circumstances over a scope of distinctive tasks to focus on the learning opportunities such assignments provide to the learners, and the quality of the writings created. Quality should be researched not just through discourse analysis, but also regarding scores appointed both to individuals and groups (Brooks 2009). Likewise, worthy of research is the topic of whether the clear advantages of group writing are internalized by the learners and thus yield higher scores on resulting individual written work evaluations. Proof of such internalization has been accounted for by Swain and Lapkin (1998) working with school children in a French submersion circumstance. Yet these issues are to be investigated in adult learning and evaluation settings. It might be for instance that a few learners acquire more than others from collaborative work both in the short and long term, or that practices watched on communicative language tasks are prescient of future language learning and scholarly accomplishment. Lastly, a critical area of study would be the experiences which instructors pick up from observing learners in collaborative writing environments and how these illuminate their pedagogical choices and

activities. These various types of evidence are crucial to completely advocate the recommendation set forward.

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