EFFECTS OF SPEEDWRITING AND TASK REPETITION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF WRITING FLUENCY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of a) speedwriting (or "freewriting") and b) task repetition (writing on the same topic twice) in improving writing fluency. Participants were first-year university students studying English in Japan. Two of six classes formed the task repetition group, two the task speedwriting only group, and two the comparison group.

Participants in the two experimental groups (task repetition and speedwriting only) participated in a weekly in-class speedwriting task over ten weeks. Following brainstorming and planning sessions, they were asked to keep writing on a given topic during seven minutes without worrying about errors. Participants in the task repetition group wrote on the same topic for two consecutive weeks, those in the speedwriting only group wrote on a different topic each week, and those in the comparison group completed speedwriting tasks in Weeks 1 and 10 only.

The findings from the quantitative analysis (number of words per text), questionnaire, and semi-structured interviews revealed that speedwriting was effective for both experimental groups but that the effect of task repetition is sensitive to multiple factors such as English proficiency level, motivation, and students' attitude to task engagement.

INTRODUCTION

Casanave (2004) defines fluency as the "ability to produce a lot of language (or to read) without excessive hesitations, blocks, and interruptions" (p. 61). Traditionally, English writing instruction in Japan, especially at secondary school level, has focused on improving accuracy rather than fluency. While accuracy is an important aspect of the writing skill, there are numerous situations in real life when we have to write under time pressure. For example, in academic situations, students must produce large amounts of text within time limits when completing written exams in university or taking the writing sections of English proficiency tests such as TOEFL or IELTS. This is also true in business situations, where we are expected to produce reports or respond to text messages under time constraints. In real life, we often do not have the luxury of unlimited time to devote to careful writing, as we do in traditional English writing classes. Greater attention should therefore be paid to writing fluency.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Improving writing fluency

In a foreign language environment, where opportunity to produce output is limited, extended writing activities are necessary to develop fluency. Among some activities, such as blogging and diary writing (Fellner & Apple, 2006) and journal writing (Duppenthaler, 2002; Liao & Wong, 2010), speedwriting is well-known for developing writing fluency. Polio (2012) argues that introducing speedwriting in the classroom has advantages because, unlike other teacher-centered activities, it allows all students to engage in language production. Moreover, it provides students with opportunities to practice the language they recently learned, which is especially important for students studying in a foreign language environment, where opportunities for language production outside the classroom are limited. In addition, Liao & Wong (2010) indicate that some Taiwanese English learners avoid taking risks because in many cases, they are writing for exams. They emphasizes the importance of providing an "anxiety-free context" (p. 141) in language classes, and in this sense, speedwriting, an activity in which students can write without worrying about making errors, is ideal.

Beside these benefits, another advantage of speedwriting is that its features meet the four criteria that, according to Nation (2001, 2013), a fluency activity must meet. Nation (2001) suggests that to develop fluency: (a) the language involved in the activity must be known to learners so that they can work with easy materials; (b) the activity must put a

degree of pressure on the learners so that they are encouraged to process language faster than they normally do; (c) the activity must require learners to use large quantities of language; and (d) the activity must be meaning-focused. Speedwriting is an ideal activity for meeting all four criteria above.

Intervention studies on freewriting and writing fluency

Despite its popularity, only a few empirical studies have been conducted using speedwriting as an intervention for developing writing fluency, with mixed results. Doe and Figueroa (2015) implemented ten-minute freewriting sessions over seven weeks and examined the writing development of 51 Japanese university students learning English. At the completion of seven sessions over one semester, they compared the total number of words in ten minutes in Weeks 1, 6, and 7. As time went on, the average number of words per ten minutes increased, but the change between Weeks 1 and 7 was not statistically significant.

Nguyen (2015) conducted a similar study that involved 110 Vietnamese university students studying English. In her study, students in an intervention group completed a seven-minute freewriting activity three times a week over ten months. The results showed that students in both the intervention and the comparison groups were able to write more words in seven minutes after ten months, but only one of two intervention groups made statistically significant gains between pretest and posttest. Nitta and Baba (2014), who conducted ten-minute freewriting sessions over 30 weeks, also reported that there was no significant change in the total number of words per composition between Weeks 1 and 30, even though there was a significant increase in the other fluency measure, namely average sentence length. Finally, Herder and Clements (2012) conducted a speedwriting study at a Japanese high school for nine months. After 25 sessions, the mean total number of words per minute increased, but it was unclear whether the difference between pretest and posttest was statistically different because only descriptive statistics were presented. Therefore, since there is not enough evidence to support the effectiveness of speedwriting for developing writing fluency despite its widespread use, more research is necessary.

Intervention studies on task repetition

Even though speedwriting activity provides students with opportunities for language production in L2 environments, doing a certain task only once might not provide enough

practice. Referring to Levelt's speech model (1989), Bygate (2001) indicates task repetition results in better oral performance because when the learners perform the task a second time, they are already familiar with the content, and this enables them to draw on more cognitive resources for lexical and grammatical selection.

Several studies have been conducted to investigate the effect of task repetition on oral performance under the above assumption. For example, Bygate (2001) had speakers repeat the same video narrative task twice and found that task repetition had a positive effect on accuracy. When doing the task a second time, the participants self-corrected some mistakes, and they were able to use more sophisticated selection of lexical and grammatical items than the first time. Bygate distinguished two types of task repetition: specific task repetition, and task-type repetition. The former means carrying out exactly the same task in the subsequent session, while the latter is defined as carrying out a new version of the same type of task in the subsequent session. As participants repeated the video narrative task either in narrative or interview style, Bygate found a strong positive effect in specific task repetition group but a weaker effect in the task-type practice group. Similarly, Gass, Mackay, Álvarez-Torres, and Fernández-García (1999) also showed evidence that favors specific task repetition over task-type repetition in terms of oral fluency.

However, Nitta and Baba's (2014) study, which focused on the effect of task repetition on writing, yielded contradictory results. Participants completed ten-minute freewriting sessions over 30 weeks. Those in the task-type repetition group wrote on a different topic each week, while those in the specific task repetition group wrote about the same topic for two consecutive weeks. Unlike with oral tasks, the researchers found that the effect of task-type repetition was strong while that of task-type repetition was limited.

Thus, although previous studies have reported the positive effects of specific task repetition on oral fluency, more research needs to be done to clarify its effect on writing fluency. As mentioned above, more empirical research on speedwriting needs to be conducted because results have been mixed. Moreover, some previous studies only presented and interpreted descriptive data, while only a few arrived at findings using statistical analysis. In response, the current study investigated the following questions:

1. Is speedwriting effective in improving students' writing fluency?
2. Is task repetition (writing on the same topic twice) effective in improving students' writing fluency?

METHOD

Participants

The participants in the study were 92 first-year students enrolled in six separate mandatory English courses at a private university in Japan. They studied in the Foreign Languages department, focusing on various languages such as Thai, Vietnamese, Indonesian, or Portuguese as their majors. The students were loosely sorted into eight English classes based on a TOEIC test conducted prior to the semester. Of these eight English classes, six participated in the study. The participants' average TOEIC score was approximately 350 out of 990. All students in the department were required to take four 90-minute English classes per week. The course in which this study was conducted, focused on reading, writing, and grammar. They met twice a week and the medium of instruction was mostly Japanese. The other course was communication-oriented course that also met twice a week, and focused more on productive skills such as presentation skills. The medium of instruction was only English.

Research Design

Table 1 shows the design of the study. Of the six classes participating in the study, two (Classes A and D) were assigned to a Task Repetition (TR) group, two (Classes B and C) were assigned to a Speedwriting Only (SWO) group, and two (Classes E and F) were assigned to a Control group (C). This was a convenient grouping because Classes A and D and Classes B and C were scheduled consecutively on the same day, so I could assign them only one type of intervention task per day. An ANOVA confirmed the homogeneity of students' TOEIC scores in each group and showed no significant differences in TOEIC scores between the Task Repetition (TR) group, the Speedwriting Only (SWO) group, and the Control (C) group ($F(5, 92) = .74$, $p = .59$).

Table 1

Grouping and interventions

Group 1: Task-repetition (TR)	Group 2: Speedwriting only (SWO)	Group 3: Control (C)
+ Speedwriting	+ Speedwriting	– Speedwriting
+ Task repetition	– Task repetition	– Task repetition
Classes A & D	Classes B & C	Classes E & F

To investigate the effect of two types of interventions (speedwriting and task repetition) on writing fluency, participants in the two experimental groups (TR and SWO) completed a seven-minute speedwriting activity over ten weeks. A topic was assigned by the instructor each week. Following Nation's four criteria for fluency activities, easy topics related to university students' lives were chosen so that participants could focus on meaning (for examples, see Table 2).

To investigate the effect of task repetition on writing fluency, those in the task repetition group (TR) wrote about the same topic for two consecutive weeks (for a full list, see Table 2). Note that while the topics in the two speedwriting only classes (SWO) change in each session, the students in the TR group wrote on the same topics twice. All the participants, including those in the control group (C), completed speedwriting sessions in Week 1 and Week 10, which served as pretest and posttest. The students in the control group (C) completed speedwriting in Weeks 1 and 10 only.

After the last session in Week 10, I conducted a simple questionnaire consisting of two questions about repeating the same task twice for the participants in the task repetition group (TR). The first question was: "How did you feel about writing on the same topic twice?" Respondents were asked to choose the most appropriate answer from three responses: a) the second writing was easier; b) there was no difference in difficulty between the first and second writing; and c) the first writing was easier. The second question was an open-ended question that asked them to describe the reasons for their choices in the previous question in Japanese.

Table 2

Study design

Week	Task-repetition (TR)	Speedwriting only (SWO)	Control (C)
1	My life as a university student (Pretest)		
2	Free time	Free time	-
3	Free time	TV/ Books / Movies / Music	–
4	Shopping	Shopping	–
5	Shopping	Family & friends	–
6	A place I want to visit	A place I want to visit	–

7	A place I want to visit	Food / restaurants/ cooking	–
8	Job / Career / Part-time job	Job/ Career/ Part-time job	–
9	Job / Career / Part-time job	Internet / Social Networking Service (SNS)	–
10	My life as a university student (Posttest)		

Procedures

The study was conducted over ten weeks in one semester. In the first session, having explained that I (the instructor) was conducting research on writing and ensured that the students were willing to have their compositions used as data, I asked them to sign an informed consent form and complete a background information sheet. I then explained the general concept of speedwriting. The students learned that: a) their task was to write as much as they could in English on a given topic within a time limit; b) they should not worry about mistakes; and c) they were not allowed to use dictionaries. The writing done in Week 1 was used as pretest.

In each session, I gave students the topic of the day, and the participants had three minutes to brainstorm ideas. As they brainstormed, they were allowed to take notes. The students then took part in speedwriting sessions for seven minutes. At the end of the session, they counted the total number of words they wrote in seven minutes and recorded the results on a chart in individual journals. They also wrote reflections as well as their goal for the next session. In addition, I asked them to look up the words whose meaning they could not recall during speedwriting sessions and write them down in their journal. This procedure was repeated from Week 1 to Week 10. As mentioned earlier, participants in the task repetition group (TR) wrote on the same topic for two consecutive weeks. At the start of the second writing sessions, I told them that they were allowed to recycle the ideas they used in the previous session but that they were not allowed to look back and simply copy the text of the previous week. In the last session (Week 10), all the participants completed speedwriting on the topic they wrote on in Week 1, and this served as posttest. After the last session, students in the task repetition group (TR) were asked to complete a questionnaire. I also interviewed two participants from the TR group and two from the speedwriting only group (SWO) who volunteered to be interviewed. The interviews were conducted in

Japanese and the translation of the excerpts was checked by one colleague who had profound knowledge of Japanese and English.

Data collection and analysis

In studies of writing fluency, this construct is usually measured by the number of words a writer wrote in a given time span (Doe & Figueroa, 2015; Nguyen, 2015; Nitta & Baba, 2014). Some scholars such as Nguyen (2015) included complexity or accuracy measures in their analysis because "a reasonable degree of comprehensibility or accuracy" (p. 709) should be achieved with fluency development. In the present study, I only used the total number of words produced in seven minutes because the majority of participants were at novice level and the proportion of error-free units was very small even after the intervention sessions. For similar reasons, I also decided not to focus on complexity because many participants in the study struggled to produce complex sentences.

For the analysis, I used the manuscripts of all writings throughout the semester, the results of the questionnaire, and interview data. Regarding the questionnaire, I counted the number of responses for each question. Finally, the interviews were transcribed for later analysis.

RESULTS

Effects of speedwriting on writing fluency

To answer to the first research question (Is speedwriting effective in improving students' writing fluency?), differences between pretest and posttest were compared separately for each group. As the data were not normally distributed, I used a Wilcoxon signed rank test, a non-parametric test used for comparing repeated measurements. Table 3 shows differences between pretest and posttest for each group. There were significant differences between pretest and posttest for the two groups that completed speedwriting (TR: $Z = -4.28$, $p < .01$, r = -.76; SWO: $Z = -3.85$, $p < .01$, $r = -.80$), whereas there was no significant difference between the two tests for the control group (C: $Z = -.73$, $p = .47$, $r = -.14$). Unlike some previous studies that showed no statistical difference between pretest and posttest, the results of this study show that speedwriting was effective for improving the fluency of writing.

Table 3

Differences between pretest and posttest

	n	M (Pretest)	M (Posttest)	Z	p	r
Task-repetition (TR)	32	63.66	90.94	- 4.28	.00	-.76***
Speedwriting only (SWO)	23	73.76	108.57	-3.85	.00	-.80***
Control (C)	27	97.86	102.04	- .73	.47	-.14*

Effect size r = *** large; **medium; *small

Effects of task repetition on writing fluency

The second research question was: "Is specific task repetition (writing on the same topic twice) effective in improving students' writing fluency?" To investigate this question, total word counts for the first and second writing sessions were compared using Wilcoxon signed ranked tests separately for each set of sessions, (i.e., Weeks 2 and 3, 4 and 5, 6 and 7, and 8 and 9). Results showed that for Weeks 2 and 3 (z = -2.88, p = .00, r = -.51) and Weeks 4 and 5 (z = -2.10, p = .04, r = -.38), total word counts for the second writing was significantly higher than that of the first, whereas for Weeks 6 and 7 and 8 and 9, no significant differences were found between the first and second writing (z = -.12, p = .91, r = -.02; z =-1.65, p = .10, r = -.30) (Table 4). In sum, statistical data indicated mixed results for the effect of task repetition on writing fluency. An interpretation of these results will be presented in the Discussion section.

Table 4

Differences between first and second writings (TR group)

Session	n	M First	M Second	Z	p	r
1 – (Weeks 2-3)	32	81.4	92.7	-2.88	.00	-.51 ***
2 – (Weeks 4-5)	30	77.7	88.2	-2.10	.04	-.38 **
3 – (Weeks 6-7)	32	91.1	89.7	-.12	.91	-.02
4 – (Weeks 8-9)	31	80.5	85.8	-1.65	.10	-.30*

Effect size r = *** large; **medium; *small

Analysis of Questionnaire

As explained above, I administered a simple questionnaire to the participants in the task repetition group (TR) to investigate whether repeating the same topic helped them write more. For the analysis, I decided to combine responses B (there was no difference in difficulty between the first and second writing) and C (the first writing was easier than the second writing) because as I checked responses to the open-ended question, respondents agreed with the point that they were unsure whether speedwriting was effective or not. I therefore compared the number of occurrences for response A (the second writing was easier than the first) and responses B and C combined (Table 5). The result of the chi-squared test showed there was no statistical difference between the two response groups (response A vs. responses B or C). However, I noticed that Classes A and D, which showed unequal English proficiency, showed different trends. Specifically, as it seemed that more students in Class A, that class with less proficient students, responded that the second writing was easier than the first writing compared to students in Class D, I calculated responses separately for each class. While there was a significantly higher number of occurrences of response A compared to responses B and C for Class A ($df = 1$, $p = .05$), there was no statistical difference between the two for Class D, the higher-proficiency class ($df = 1$, $p = .44$). This indicates that student perceptions of the effect of task repetition on writing fluency differed depending on their English proficiency level.

Table 5

Questionnaire results

	Response			
	A	B or C	p	r
Class A	12	4	.05	.29
Class D	6	9	.44	.28
Total	18	13	.37	.05

Response A: The second writing was easier than the first writing

Response B: There was no difference in difficulty between the first and second writing

Response C: The first writing was easier than the second writing

To supplement the results of the questionnaire, responses to the open-ended question were also analyzed. Of the 31 participants in the task repetition group (TR) who responded to the questionnaire, 18 chose answer A ("The second writing was easier than the first").

Meanwhile, a majority of students answered that the second writing was easier because they could recycle the ideas they used in the first writing and add new ideas in the second writing. One participant said: "I wrote it once before, so it was easier to get ideas." Another said: "Because I already wrote it once, I did not have to think about the content from scratch and I was able to develop the idea based on it." By repeating the same task, these students were able to gather ideas and develop the content more efficiently in the second writing.

While 18 participants found that repeating the same task helped them improve their writing fluency, 12 participants responded that "there was no difference in difficulty between the first and second writing" or that "the first writing was easier than the second." Of those who responded that "the first writing was easier than the second," the most popular answer was that they avoided recycling ideas, either intentionally or unintentionally, even though they were told that they could write about the same things in the first and second writings, One student said: "I wanted to write about something different for the second writing, so I avoided the same topics," while another participant wrote: "I tried to write something different, so it took time to decide what to write." These responses indicate that those who were not sure of the effect of speedwriting tried to change the content for the second writing.

Interviews

The quantitative results reviewed above raised two questions: a) In what way was the speedwriting activity helpful in developing writing fluency? and b) Did the participants feel task repetition had positive effects on writing fluency? Why or why not? To answer these questions, I now report the findings of the interviews.

Positive effects of speedwriting

The quantitative results indicated that speedwriting enhanced students' writing fluency. As all four interview participants returned positive responses for speedwriting activities, I asked them in what way it was helpful in enhancing their writing fluency. The first example concerns a motivational factor. After each session, students counted the total number of words written in seven minutes and recorded the figure in a graph. Three students responded that one of the positive effects of speedwriting was that they could check their progress objectively.

I think I improved a lot. The graph showed I was gradually making progress as I tried again and again. It visually showed I was improving, and that simply made me happy. (Student A)

Another example concerns paraphrasing or elaborating ideas. One student mentioned that speedwriting provided opportunities to practice paraphrasing ideas by comparing the writing activity to the speaking activity.

I could connect this activity with speaking. When speaking, if I pause too long to find the right word, I will make the listener bored. But if I use gestures or I paraphrase to say something similar to my idea, the listener can guess what I want to say. And it's ideal if a speaker can produce ideas in a short time, so it was like a writing version of speaking practice. I thought we were doing this activity to develop an ability to think. (Student B)

When this respondent used the word "ability to think," the context suggests that what she meant was "ability to paraphrase."

Another student stated that the speedwriting activity was effective for practicing elaborating ideas.

To increase the word count, I tried to modify the ideas by adding details. I tried to include details such as where, who, when, or colors as much as I could…but I'm not sure if I succeeded in doing it. (Student A)

Through speedwriting, this student was able to practice how to elaborate ideas by adding rich details, and it helped her when she had to write long essays for a different English class.

In sum, the advantages of speedwriting are as follows: a) it has positive influence on student motivation; and b) it provides students with opportunities to practice paraphrasing or elaborating ideas. In the Discussion section, I will review how these factors positively affected improvements in writing fluency.

Effects of task repetition

Of the four interviewees, two were in the task-repetition group (TR). Both responded that in general (though not always), they were able to write more in the second writing. One reason was that they could incorporate new vocabulary or recycle ideas of the previous writing session in the second writing, as the following examples illustrate.

> I tried to look up the words I didn't know after counting the total number of words. If the impression "Aha, I didn't know that" was strong, I thought "Yes, I remember that" when I wrote on the same topic, and I used it in my writing. (Student B)

> For the first writing, I wrote this and that, and the following week, I remembered what I wrote before. I also thought about what I did recently. Using my first writing as a base, I could add more information. (Student B)

This student said that she remembered new words even one week later. However, Student C said that although task repetition was effective in general, writing performance in the second writing decreased despite being interested in the topic.

> Maybe it's because I could concentrate more on a topic I was interested in. I thought I should avoid using the ideas I used in the first writing, so as I focused on that too much, the performance in the second writing went down. Also, in the first writing, I already wrote about the things I like, so I ran out of the ideas. (Student C)

This student also stated that performance in the first writing affected that in the second.

> If I wrote more than 120 words for the first writing, I was satisfied with my performance. On the other hand, if I didn't do well, I pushed myself to work harder for the second writing. (Student C)

These examples show that the results of the first writing worked as a benchmark and that students generally made efforts to outperform the outcome of the previous session. However, a ceiling effect was also noted. If they performed well enough in the first writing,

they were not likely to gain from the task repetition, and no improvement would therefore be expected.

Both Student B and C said they partially changed the content for the second writing even though they were told they did not have. I was curious to find out the reason.

I thought it was meaningless to write exactly the same thing. Even if I wrote about something similar to the first writing, I tried to change things a little. (Student B)

I think it's meaningless because I used exactly the same words. In the first writing [on shopping], I said: "I bought this," so for the next one, I commented on the item I wrote about [in the previous writing] and said: "I am going to buy this next." It's more fun, and I feel I'm writing for a purpose. (Student B)

In sum, task repetition allowed participants to recycle ideas or learn new words, which positively affected the development of writing fluency. However, some of the responses also revealed cases where task repetition did not work. I discuss this issue further in the Discussion section immediately below.

DISCUSSION

The first research question was: "Is speedwriting effective in improve students' writing fluency?" Based on the result of the quantitative analysis, I conclude that speedwriting is indeed an effective activity for improving writing fluency. Results showed that both experimental groups, i.e., those that completed the speedwriting task over ten weeks, performed significantly better on the posttest compared to the control group, which took only the pre- and posttests. Data for effect size show that the impact of the intervention was large, most likely because the participants in the study were all first-year students, who for the most part had not had opportunities to produce large quantities of text in English before entering university. As a result, weekly speedwriting activity probably served as an ideal extensive writing activity.

The interview data revealed two factors that may have positively affected the development of writing fluency. The first was a motivational factor. After each session, the participants counted the total number of words written in seven minutes. As one student commented, being able to see growth visually made her happy, and one benefit of

speedwriting is that students can recognize the results objectively through figures or graphs. As this provides them with targets for subsequent sessions and therefore encourages them to outperform the previous session, they drive themselves to write faster under time pressure, which, according to Nation (2001), is necessary for improving fluency.

Moreover, the interview data suggested that speedwriting provides opportunities for practicing paraphrasing and elaborating ideas within time constraints. Unlike in traditional process writing, students do not have unlimited time to edit their output. If there is a word they do not know in English, they must replace it with a word they already know or express their idea in a different way. In that sense, speedwriting is closer in nature to speaking, which requires instant output. The underlying assumption is that as they practice speedwriting throughout the semester, students continue practicing paraphrasing and elaborating ideas under time pressure, which will lead them to write faster.

These result are in contrast with those of previous studies that found no statistical differences between pretest and posttest (Doe & Figueroa, 2015; Nguyen, 2015; Nitta and Baba, 2014). One possible explanation for this discrepancy is that although the participants in the present study live in an environment where English is not used daily, like the participants of the three studies mentioned above, they have access to English only environment while on campus, for example in an English chat lounge. Therefore, the activities outside the class may have affected positively to English development of the students participated in the current study.

Another contributing factor may be the duration of the intervention period. Foreign language acquisition does not occur over a short period, and it is often necessary to observe development longitudinally. However, the drawback of repeating the same type of task for long periods of time is that students may get tired of it. While the intervention period for this study was about three months, Nguyen (2015) and Nitta and Baba (2014) conducted one-year studies. In particular, the participants in Nguyen's study completed the task three times a week for the entire academic year. Although task repetition is effective for language development, too much repetition may result in the loss of motivation. However, this is only an assumption, and further research will be necessary to support it.

The second research question was: "Is speedwriting effective in improving students' writing fluency?" Previous research has yielded mixed results for the effect of task repetition. Of four sessions, two were significant, while the other two were not. Although interpretation of the quantitative result was complex, the following conclusions can be

reached. First, generally speaking, it can be assumed task repetition has positive effects on improving writing fluency. The quantitative results show that in two out of four sessions, task repetition was effective, and one of the two classes in the task repetition group reported in the questionnaire that the second writing was easier. In addition, both interviewees in task repetition group (Student B and C) agreed that task repetition was helpful in improving writing fluency because it allowed them to recycle ideas from the previous session and also provided them with opportunities to learn and use new language. This shows that when these conditions are met, task repetition is effective in improving writing fluency.

What additional factors may therefore have contributed to the mixed results? One factor may be the influence from other English classes. To answer this question, I choose to focus on the mean score for the Session 3, the session in which no significant difference was found between first and second writing. I noticed that the mean score for the first writing in Session 3 was 91.1, which is much higher than for the other three session (Session 1: M= 81.4; Session 2: M= 77.7; Session 4: M = 80.5), and I was curious to find out in the interviews the reasons for this discrepancy. It turned out that the students performed particularly well in that session, in which the writing topic was "A place I want to visit," because they had given group presentations on a similar topic in a different English class. This explains the high performance in the first writing in Session 3, followed most likely by a ceiling effect. If the performance of the first writing was especially positive, it would be challenging to outperform it in the second writing.

A second factor concerns the change in the content of the first and second writings. As mentioned in the previous section, responses of the questionnaire showed that some students in the task repetition group (TR) changed the content from the first to the second writing even though I told them they could write about the same thing for both writings. The interview data revealed although both Student B and C recycled some ideas from the previous session when they wrote about the same topic, they were unwilling to repeat exactly the same content. As mentioned above, one student reported that writing exactly the same thing for the first and second writing would be meaningless and boring. Similar comments were observed in responses to the open-ended question. Another interviewee mentioned that in some cases, the first writing was better than the second because he had to look for new ideas he did not cover in the first writing. The point of repeating the task is to reduce the burden of information processing by recycling the ideas used in the previous

session. However, if the writers changed the content, not only would they not get the advantage of repeating the same task, but the second writing could be cognitively more demanding than the first. Therefore, the extent to which the participants recycled the content is another factor that may explain the mixed results.

Another possible contributing factor may be students' English proficiency level. Students in Classes A and D, the two classes that formed the task repetition group, responded to the questionnaire differently. While more students in Class A, the class with a lower average pretest score, perceived task repetition as helpful, there was no significant difference between the number of students who perceived task repetition as helpful and those who responded that the first writing was easier or that they were not sure in the case of Class D, the class with higher pretest scores. As Nitta and Baba (2014) suggest, "to progress in L2 development, learners need to engage in meaningful and challenging L2 production" (p. 108). One condition for task repetition to be effective may therefore be to provide students with tasks that are challenging enough. The participants with lower proficiency may have benefited more from task repetition because it allowed them to reduce the burden of language processing by recycling the content from the previous session. However, for some students with higher English proficiency, writing about a topic related to daily life was not challenging enough, and this may be why they performed better in the first writing. Due to a ceiling effect, it would have been difficult to do even better in the following writing. In fact, the interview data showed that when the students had an easy topic, the second writing was difficult because they were satisfied with their performance in the first writing and therefore tried to find a new topic or to change the content. The connection between language proficiency and task performance is also discussed in Ruiz-Funes (2015), which shows that fluency in students with intermediate proficiency is interrupted when they perform cognitively complex task and thus fail to devote attentional resources to syntactic complexity, accuracy, and fluency simultaneously. Although the present study yielded no objective data in this respect, it is reasonable to assume that there is a connection between proficiency level and how students engage in a task. It is therefore important for instructors to assign students tasks that are appropriate to their proficiency level.

The results of task repetition were similar to those of Nitta and Baba (2014) and Doe and Figueroa (2015), who found greater gains in task-type repetition than in specific task repetition. As Nitta and Baba (2014) argue, the effect of task repetition in writing may not

be as strong as in oral tasks because unlike in speaking, the time constraint is less stringent in the case of writing. However, the results of the present study revealed evidence of positive influence of task repetition on writing fluency. Though sensitive to multiple factors, if it is implemented appropriately (i.e., emphasizing students to recycle the ideas used in the previous sessions in advance, checking the syllabus for other English classes), task repetition can be effective in improving writing fluency. However, further research is necessary if we are to obtain stronger evidence in this respect.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the effect of speedwriting and task repetition on writing fluency. The result showed that speedwriting was effective in develop writing fluency because it put students under pressure to write as much as possible within time constraints, pushed their output, and enhanced their writing speed. Regarding the effect of task repetition, the findings show that task repetition was effective, at least to some extent. However, it was sensitive to multiple factors. One factor is influence from other English classes. Another reason is that some highly motivated students avoided recycling ideas they used in the first writing and therefore did not fully benefit from task repetition. In addition, the data suggest that the participants in the low-proficiency class tended to appreciate task repetition more than those with higher proficiency.

These findings raise two pedagogical implication. One is the adequate length of time permissible for repeating the same task of type of task. Even though the intervention was effective, a longitudinal study will be necessary if we are to really observe its effect as students can get bored doing the same task if the intervention period is too long. Moreover, the results suggest that as the impact of the task is sensitive to multiple factors, instructors must use the task appropriately for their own students. The results also imply that even if the same task is implemented, students engage in the task differently depending on their background, including proficiency level and attitude toward learning English. Instructors should therefore consider these issues carefully when implementing the task in order to maximize its effect.

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