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An Integrative Strategy Based on Task Based Learning and Peer Discussion to Develop EFL Descriptive Writing Performance and Self-Efficacy of Secondary Stage Students

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Abstract

The current research aimed to develop the EFL descriptive writing performance and of secondary stage students and to find its effect on their selfefficacy. Reaching this aim, the present study followed the pre-post, experimental and control group design. The researcher used two groups; experimental and control groups. Conducting this treatment, a number of sixty EFL second secondary stage students from Al-Ibrahimia Secondary school, Ibrahimia Directorate, Sharkia Governorate, Egypt, were randomly assigned in two groups, thirty students for quasi-experimental group and thirty for the control group, the researcher applied a pre and a post -test for the purpose of data gathering and analyzing.

The researcher designed an EFL descriptive writing test to measure EFL descriptive writing performance level before and after the treatment, a scale was designed for measuring the effect of the integrative strategy based on task based learning and peer discussion on the students' self-efficacy. The instruments were administrated before and after the treatment. Generally the current study was conducted over a period of ten weeks over the first term of the academic year 2022-2023. Finally, the results of the study showed that the integrative strategy based on task based learning and peer discussion has positive effect on developing the EFL descriptive writing performance of the secondary stage students and on their self-efficacy.

Keywords: Integrative Strategy, EFL descriptive writing, self-efficacy.

Introduction

Writing is the fuel that motivates and drives communication. Communication driven by good writing is crucial because it facilitates collaboration, business transactions and interactions. Writing is the main basis from which communication, history, record keeping and civilizations has begun. Writing helps to express oneself comfortably. Writing is involved in every aspect of our lives. Every field requires writing. Writing helps us come up with innovative and original ideas. Writing helps us to put our imagination into words.

Saud et al. (2014) mentioned that writing as a process consists of different stages; planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Willis (1996) mentioned that the writing process is a series of workrelated and affected each other. It begins with the planning stage that is carried out through various activities to arouse the interest of students to write. The second stage is drafting where students begin to focus on writing without seeing their grammatical errors. The next stage is revision and editing that is responding to students' writing and followed by assessment and publication.

(Khalala, 2016, p. 2) illustrates that a descriptive text is a type of writing which has the meaningful linguistics unit necessary to describe person, thing, event, and places and that descriptive text is

concerned with creating a verbal and painting a picture of what we experience and see.

Pardiyono (2007) cited in Helwa (2019) indicated that descriptive writing is one of the writing genres, which is visualizing the object (living and non-living thing) in order to give the description to the reader in a clear way. Sumarsih and Sanjaya (2013) also defined descriptive writing as a paragraph that describes a particular person, a place or an event in great detail. Also, descriptive writing portrays a thing (living and nonliving) in such a way that the reader can visualize and go through to the writer's experience or imagination. In descriptive writing, the writer deals with details, features of places, objects or persons. The description is a mean to describe something by giving details to visualize the object that will be described.

According to (Bandura, 2010), self-efficacy is the people's beliefs about their abilities to produce certain levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives. Selfefficacy beliefs determine how people think, feel, motivate themselves and behave. Aliegro (2006) stated that self-efficacy is the belief that one can complete a specific learning task effectively.

Williams (2012) mentioned that self-efficacy is one of the most important and influential motivational concepts for success in writing. El Marsafy (2019) also stated that writing self-efficacy plays a key role in improving of writing competence and that writing self-efficacy means to EFL students' beliefs in their ability to perform written English tasks successfully. Such tasks include composition, correctly punctuating writing and forming grammatically correct sentences.

Bruning et al. (2013) proposed three dimensions for a model of writing self-efficacy which are writing ideation, conventions and self-regulation. Firstly, writing ideation process focuses generating ideas. Secondly, writing conventions, concentrates on the usage of linguistic skills. Finally, self-regulation is revealed in the writer's self-management and affective control.

According to (Macmillan Dictionary 2009), task-based learning (TBL) is an approach of teaching and learning and it is based on performing tasks; also called TBL. Ellis (2003) asserted that a task requires the participants to function primarily as 'language users' in the sense that they are involved in life-like situations. Hasan (2014) stated that the essence of task-based learning is to actively engage learners. A task is an activity that requires the learners to arrive at an outcome through some process of thought. However, a task should, ideally, look difficult but attainable to students (Prabhu, 1987).

Willis (1996) stated that TBL is a goal-oriented activity in which learners use language to achieve a real outcome. He introduced examples of such activities and tasks such as listing, ordering and comparing, problem-solving, sharing experience creative tasks. According to him, students can be asked to write about hotel reception skills, describing photos, giving students a line of pictures and challenge them to develop a story-line that links them all.

Richards and Renandya (2002) asserted that a task is an activity which the students perform using their available language resources and to achieve a certain outcome. They mentioned examples of activities such as playing a game, solving a problem, or sharing and comparing experiences that will lead to successful language development.

Willis and Willis (2013) mentioned three steps of performing tasks:

The teacher introduces the topic and gives the **1-** Pre-task. students clear instructions on what they have to do at the task.

- 2- Cycle task "the during-task phase", the cycle task consists of the task plus planning and report sub-phases.
- **3-** Post-task, here the focus returns to the teacher who reviews and analyses what happened in the task, in regards to language. The students do practice activities to increase their confidence and make a note of useful language.

M. A. Farag (2016) defined peer discussion as a chain of ideas or opinions exchanged among two or more participants, and linked in a sequence in which they are espoused by the participants. It also enables students to respond to each other. Smith et al. (2009) asserted that active engagement of learners during discussion with peers, some of whom know the correct answers, leads to increased conceptual understanding and improved performance.

Context of the problem

As a teacher of English, the researcher observed that EFL secondary stage students lack descriptive writing performance and self-efficacy. A pilot study was conducted by the researcher to a chosen group of EFL students in order to check the performance of EFL secondary school learners in descriptive writing and selfefficacy. The results of the study showed a lack of performance in descriptive writing and writing self-efficacy of the participants.

Table (1) Results of the descriptive writing test of the pilot study

No.	Performance Aspects	Percentage
1-	Content and details	30%
2-	Focus on topic	25%
3-	Grammar	45%
4-	Vocabulary (word choice: sensory words – adjectives)	32%
5-	Mechanics (spelling – punctuation)	42%
6-	organization	36%

Table (2) Results of the writing self-efficacy scale of the pilot study

Item	Percentage
Ideation	20%
Conventions	30%
Self-regulation	20%

Thus, the researcher will try to find out if EFL descriptive writing performance and writing self-efficacy can be developed through an integrative strategy based on TBL and peer discussion.

Statement of the problem

Secondary stage students showed a lack of performance in descriptive writing and writing self-efficacy. The current research attempts to utilize an integrative strategy based on TBL and peer discussion to develop EFL descriptive writing performance and writing self-efficacy of secondary stage students.

1.4 Questions of the research

A. What is the effect of an integrative strategy based on taskbased learning and peer discussion on developing EFL descriptive writing performance and self-efficacy of secondary stage students?

This main question can be subdivided into the following subquestions:

- **1-** What are the necessary descriptive writing skills required for EFL secondary stage students?
- 2- To what extent do the secondary stage students have descriptive writing performance?
- 3- What are the writing self-efficacy dimensions of EFL secondary stage students?

- What are the features of an integrative strategy based on task-4based learning and peer discussion that can develop EFL descriptive writing performance and writing self-efficacy of secondary stage students?
- 5- What is the effect of the strategy based on task-based learning and peer discussion on developing the EFL descriptive writing performance of secondary stage students?
- **6-** What is the effect of the strategy based on task-based learning and peer discussion on developing the EFL self-efficacy of secondary stage students?

Instruments of the research

The following instruments will be prepared:

- **a.** A test to measure the level of the students' performance in descriptive writing skills.
- **b.** A pre-post descriptive writing test that will be designed by the researcher to measure the participants' descriptive writing performance.
- **c.** A writing self-efficacy scale.

Study Hypotheses:

The following research aims at testing the following hypotheses:

1- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the experimental group and that of the control group

- in the post administration of the overall descriptive writing performance test in favor of the experimental group scores.
- **2-** There is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the experimental and that of control groups in the post administration of the writing self-efficacy scale, in favor of the experimental group.
- **3-** There is a positive effect of administrating the integrative strategy based on TBL and peer discussion on descriptive writing performance of EFL secondary stage students.
- 4- There is a positive effect of administrating the integrative strategy based on TBL and peer discussion on writing selfefficacy of EFL secondary stage students.

Purpose of the research

The purposes of the research are to:

- 1- Develop the descriptive writing skills of EFL secondary stage students through an integrative strategy based on TBL and peer discussion.
- 2- Develop the writing self-efficacy dimensions of EFL secondary stage students through an integrative strategy based on TBL and peer discussion.

Procedures of the research

To answer the previously mentioned questions and to verify the credibility of its hypotheses, the following procedures will be conducted:

- 1- As for "the descriptive writing skills necessary for EFL secondary school students", the researcher will:
 - **a.** Review the related studies related to descriptive writing and its skills.
 - **b.** Review the literature related to descriptive writing skills.
 - **C.** Prepare a descriptive writing skills list.
 - **d.** Submit the list to a jury to verify its validity and finally modify it in accordance with the jury suggestions.
- 2- To answer the third question about the extent of the students' performance in descriptive writing, the researcher will:
 - **a.** Prepare a test to measure the level of the students' performance in descriptive writing.
- 3- As for "the dimensions of writing self-efficacy necessary for EFL secondary school students", the researcher will:
 - **a.** Review the previous studies related to dimensions of writing self-efficacy.
 - **b.** Review literature related to writing self-efficacy.

- **c.** Prepare a list of writing self-efficacy dimensions necessary for EFL secondary school students.
- **d.** Submit it to a jury to verify its validity and finally modify it in accordance with the jury suggestions.
- **4-** To answer questions four related to the features of an integrative strategy based on task-based learning and peer discussion that can develop EFL descriptive writing performance and writing selfefficacy of secondary stage students, the researcher will:
 - **a.** Review previous studies related to integrating TBL and peer discussion.
 - **b.** Review literature related to TBL and peer discussion.
 - **c.** Prepare a strategy based on integrating TBL and peer discussion.
- 5- As for "the effect of an integrative strategy based on TBL and peer discussion on developing EFL descriptive writing performance of secondary school students", the researcher will:
 - **a.** Chose the participants and divide them into an experimental group taught through the integrative strategy based on TBL and peer discussion.
 - **b.** Prepare a descriptive writing test and submit it to a jury.

- **C.** Administrate the descriptive writing test.
- 6- As for "the effect of an integrative strategy based on TBL and peer discussion on developing EFL writing self-efficacy of secondary school students", the researcher will:
 - **a.** Chose the participants and divide them into an experimental group taught through the integrative strategy based on TBL and peer discussion.
 - **b.** Prepare a writing self-efficacy scale and submit it to a jury.
 - **C.** Administrate the writing self-efficacy scale.
- 7- Comparing the pre to the post results of both administrations of both instruments.
- Treating data statistically.
- **9-** Discussing the results of the study.
- 10- Providing conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

Terms of the study

Task based learning

Hasan (2014) defined TBL as a method of instruction in the field of language acquisition and learning. It focuses on the students doing meaningful tasks using the target language. Richards and Rodgers (2014) referred to TBL as a method based on the use of tasks as the

core unit of planning and instruction in language teaching. Operationally, TBL can be defined as the learner's ability to perform assignments or activities in classrooms using the second language.

Peer discussion

M. A. Farag (2016) defined peer discussion as a chain of ideas or opinions exchanged among two or more participants, and linked in a sequence in which they are espoused by the participants. It also enables students to respond to each other.

Operationally, peer discussion is an activity that encourages learners to engage with others in reflection on learning and practice and review their opinions and ideas.

An integrative strategy based on TBL and peer discussion

The steps and actions that the teacher follows inside the classroom to achieve the objectives of the curriculum including lesson planning, warm up, selecting activities and evaluation. Operationally, it can be defined as planning a lesson in light of TBL and peer discussion by which the teacher assign certain writing tasks to the students during which they exchange their opinions and ideas.

Descriptive writing

(Ginting (2018)) clarifies that descriptive writing describes a person, place, or thing to make the reader easily visualize the object and or can enter into the writer's experience.

Operationally, descriptive writing is used to refer to the vivid descriptive paragraphs produced by EFL describing people, objects or events using their senses properly.

Writing Self-efficacy

El Marsafy (2019) defined writing self-efficacy as the EFL student belief in his ability to perform written English tasks successfully.

Bandura (1982) asserted that self-efficacy is concerned with how well one can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations. Operationally, writing self-efficacy is the ability of the learner to express his ideas and thoughts into wellwritten sentences.

Participants of the Study:

Participants of the present study included 60 second year secondary stage students. They were randomly selected from Al Ibrahimia secondary school in Al Ibrahimia city in Sharkia Governorate during the school year 2022/2023. Those participants were divided into two equal groups of (30) students each, i.e., the experimental group and the control group. A descriptive writing performance test and a writing self-efficacy scale were delivered to both groups before and after administering the integrative strategy.

Design of the study:

The current study adopted the quasi-experimental design that included the pre/post test and control and experimental group design. So two classes were chosen to represent the experimental and control groups. The experimental group was taught using the integrative strategy for improving their descriptive writing performance and writing self-efficacy while the control group received regular instruction.

Finger (3): The design of the study



Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the statistical analysis of the data collected from the pre-post writing performance test and writing self-efficacy scale. All the data gathered were analyzed by using the Statistical Package for the Social Services (SPSS) version 23.

The Results

The results of the descriptive writing performance test and writing self-efficacy scale to both the experimental and the control groups were statistically discussed in the light of the study hypotheses mentioned before (see chapter one):

Table (8) The difference between the mean scores of the two groups at the pre-test

	Group	N.	Mean	SD	DF	T- value	Sig.
Total score	Post Experimental	30	19.35	2.232	- 58	0.0393	Not sig.
	Post Control	30	19.21	3.316			

Pre-test results from the above table shows that the t-test values were no significant which meant that there were no significant differences between students of the control group and of those in the experimental group in the writing performance pre-test.

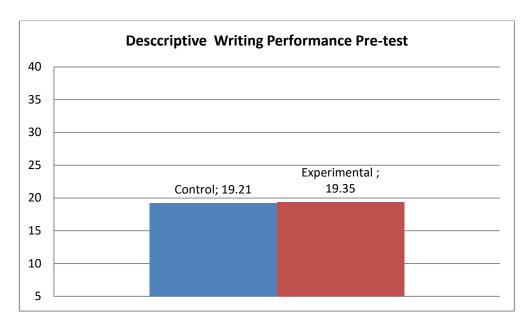


Figure (8): A comparison of the mean scores for the control and the experimental groups in the pre-test of descriptive writing performance.

Hypothesis 1:

The first hypothesis states that "There was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group in the post administration of the overall descriptive writing performance test results in favor of the experimental group".

Table (9)

Post t-test results of the control and the quasi experimental groups in the post descriptive writing performance Test

Group	N	Mean	SD	DF	T- value	Sig.
Post Experimental	30	56.54	9.95	58	9.685	0.000
Post Control	30	33.73	8.21	30		

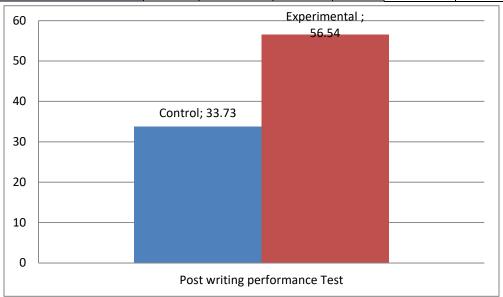


Figure (1): Means for the study groups of the post descriptive writing performance test.

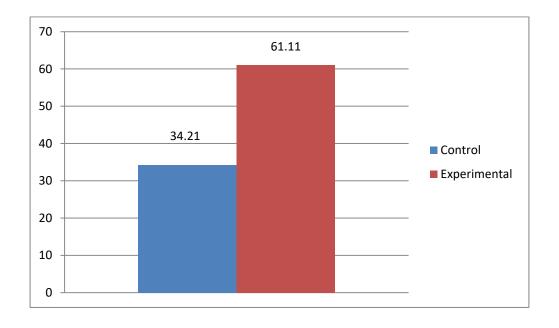
The table above indicates that the mean scores of the experimental group participants are higher than those of the control group participants on the EFL overall descriptive writing performance Test. and its subskills, which is significant at 0. 01 level of significance. Therefore, this hypothesis was confirmed. These differences can be attributed to the experimental integrative strategy.

Hypothesis 2:

It was hypothesized that "There is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the experimental group and that of the control group in the post administration of the writing self-efficacy scale, in favor of the experimental group"

Table (10)
Comparing the Post Administrations of both the Experimental
Group and control group in the skill of writing self-efficacy

Post-test	N.	Mean	SD	DF	T-value	Sig.
Experimental g.	30	61.11	6.52	58	17.6538	0.000**
Control g.	30	34.21	5.21			



Means for the study groups of the post Figure (2): administration of the writing self-efficacy scale

The previous table indicates that there was a statistically significant difference at (0.01) level between the experimental group mean scores and that of the control one favoring the experimental group in the post administration of the writing self-efficacy scale. This hypothesis could be subdivided into the following four skills as follow:

1. There was a statistically significant difference at 0.01level between the mean scores of the experimental and that of the control one in the post administration of the writing self-efficacy scale in the skill of ideation favoring the experimental group.

Conclusion:

On the basis of the present study results, the following conclusions could are obtained:

In the light of the findings, the results of the study prove the positive effect of the integrative strategy based on TBL and peer discussion to improve descriptive writing performance and writing self-efficacy. Moreover, the self-efficacy of the participants was increased and their willingness to learning was motivated. Furthermore, it has been all proven the positive influence on experimental participants' writing self-efficacy. Findings of the current study also concluded that the integrative strategy based on TBL and peer discussion has a wide range of benefits in raising the level of descriptive writing performance and self-efficacy domains. These benefits are as follows:

- 1- The integrative strategy based on TBL and peer discussion, has had many advantages over the traditional way of teaching descriptive writing performance and selfefficacy.
- 2- The participants managed to write a well-organized paragraph, setting the topic sentence and conclusion clearly.
- 3-The integrative strategy based on TBL and peer discussion provided an active learning environment.
- The integrative strategy based on TBL and peer 4discussion improved the experimental participants' ability to understand information from the text.
- The integrative strategy based on TBL and peer 5discussion activated their brain, and improved their ability to judge the text.
- The integrative strategy based on TBL and peer discussion allowed the experimental participants' to express their points of view.

- 7- The integrative strategy based on TBL and peer discussion, has had a positive effect on learning domains especially descriptive writing and self-efficacy.
- **8-** The participants became able to use logical transitions for ensuring a clear and smooth flow of thoughts and achieve logical sequence of sentences.
- **9-** It is noticeable that the students became able to choose the words and phrases appropriate for the writing topic.

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جامعة الزقازيق، كلية التربية قسم المناهج وطرق التدريس باللغة الانجليزية

استراتيجية مقترحة قائمة على تكامل التعلم القائم على المهام ومناقشة الأقران لتنمية أداء الكتابة الوصفية باللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية والكفاءة الأقران لتنمية أداء الذاتية لدى طلاب المرحلة الثانوية

إعداد

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ادر پس

أستاذ المناهج وطرق تدريس اللغة الانجليزية المتفرغ كلية التربية جامعة الزقازيق

أستاذ المناهج وطرق تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية المتفرغ كلية التربية جامعة الزقازيق هدفت الدراسة الحالية الى تحقيق فاعلية استخدام استراتيجية مقترحة قائمة على تكامل التعلم القائم على المهام ومناقشة الأقران لتنمية أداء الكتابة الوصفية باللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية والكفاءة الذاتية لدى طلاب المرحلة الثانوية. تكونت عينة الدراسة من (60) طالبا بمدرسة الابراهيمية الثانوية بنين بمحافظة الشرقية. وقسمت العينة الى مجموعتين إحداهما تجريبية وعددها (٣٠)طالبا وأخرى ضابطة وعددها (٣٠)طالبا ودرست المجموعة التجريبية باستخدام استراتيجية مقترحة قائمة على تكامل التعلم القائم على المهام ومناقشة الأقران وبينما قامت المجموعة الضابطة بدارسة نفس المحتوى بالطريقة التقليدية. تم تطبيق اختبار الكتابة الوصفية في اللغة الانجليزية قبل وبعد تطبيق استراتيجية مقترحة قائمة على تكامل التعلم القائم انتائج الدراسه فاعلية تطبيق استراتيجية استراتيجية مقترحة قائمة على تكامل التعلم القائم على المهام ومناقشة الأقران ، حيث ان نتائج المجموعة التجريبية كانت افضل من نتائج المجموعة الضابطة في اداء الكتابة الوصفية والكفاءة الذاتية لدى طلاب المرحلة الثانوية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: استراتيجية مقترحة قائمة على تكامل التعلم القائم على المهام ومناقشة الأقران – الكتابة الوصفية – الكفاءة الذاتية