

Effects of task repetition
on written language production
in Task Based Language Teaching

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Abstract

Different types of communicative tasks are used to promote language learning in Task Based Language Teaching. Repetition of such tasks in class is considered to help learners to reflect on their own language production and thus assists them to improve their performance. It is believed that learners are able to store information related to conceptualisation, formulation and articulation when a task is performed for the first time and this information can be utilised productively when the same task is performed for the second time. Consequently, on the second performance, learners are left with more time to pay attention to other aspects such as fluency, accuracy and complexity of their language production. Several empirical studies on oral task repetition have given positive evidence of increased fluency, accuracy and complexity of task repetition. However, there has been limited research on the impact of repetition on written language production. This paper discusses the results of a case study of written narrative task repetition in which the participant displayed increased performance in accuracy, fluency and complexity of her written language production, in particular in accuracy. The study also reveals that learners are likely to transfer their knowledge of discourse features related to a task when it is performed repeatedly.

Keywords: *Accuracy, fluency, complexity, written task repetition*

1. Introduction

Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) emphasises the use of different types of communicative tasks in order to promote language learning. Task repetition has drawn much attention as an important aspect of TBLT since it is considered primarily useful in making learners alter their language production (Bygate, 1996; Bygate, 2001; Bygate & Samuda, 2005). Bygate and Samuda (2005) define task repetition as “repetition of the same or slightly altered tasks – whether whole task or parts of the task” (p.43). Bygate (2001) further identifies real task repetition as “the kind experienced by learners when they find themselves repeatedly in highly similar communication situations and with the opportunity to build on their previous attempt at completing the task” (p.29).

Several empirical studies on oral task repetition have investigated its impact on language performance and identified its ability to improve oral language production. One of them is Bygate’s (1996) study that investigated the effects of narrative task repetition. On the first occasion, the participant in this study had to watch a short video clip and narrate the story. On the second occasion, she had to watch the clip again and narrate the story again. Bygate (ibid) reports that both fluency and complexity of language performance increased in the second performance; however, the increase in accuracy was not so striking. In a similar study which ran for a longer period with more participants, Bygate (2001) reports similar findings.

Although there have been several empirical studies on oral task repetition, the research on the effects of task repetition on written language performance is limited. This paper discusses the results of a case study that investigated the written language performance of an L2 learner of English who had to perform a written narrative task based on two picture

stories. On the first occasion, the participant wrote a story based on a set of pictures and on the next day, she had to repeat the same task. On day three she wrote another story based on another set of pictures and repeated the task on day four. The participant was not given any input, feedback, or explicit instructions before the first performance or between performances. The performance was measured in terms of accuracy, fluency and complexity of the language produced on each occasion.

2. Literature Review

Levelt (1989) notes that there are four processes in speech production. The first, conceptualisation, is how the message is formed based on the speaker's knowledge of the topic, background, discourse and experience. The next process is formulation i.e. selection of appropriate words, expressions, sentences and even pronunciation to express the message. The third is articulation, which is the use of speech organs such as the tongue, lips, teeth and palate to produce the message. The last is self-monitoring, i.e. speakers are able to monitor their own speech and do self-correction. Bygate (2001, p.28) argues that when a task is performed for the first time, learners are able to store information related to conceptualisation, formulation and articulation of the task in their long term memory and this information is accessible to them when the task is repeated. Thus, they are left with an opportunity to alter their performance on the second occasion. Moreover, they have more freedom and time to pay attention to more redundant grammatical forms and discourse patterns on the second occasion; therefore, the repeated performance may become more accurate.

Even though task repetition is believed to improve language production in terms of conceptualisation, formulation and articulation, Bygate and Samuda (2005) note that the effect of repetition on articulation is generally likely to be minimal because it involves more

automated performance. However, they agree that conceptualization and formulation might be significantly affected by repetition. For example, learners might be able to use the information related to the topic and content stored in their long term memory when conceptualising the task when they perform it for the second time. Furthermore, they might be able to notice more information in the input provided to them when they pay attention to it for the second time. As a result, the formulation process may become speedier leaving more time for learners to self-monitor. For example, in his study of an oral narrative task repetition Bygate (1996) has identified that the participant of the study demonstrated more frequent self correction repetitions of words in the repeated performance. Bygate further points out that this result was likely due to the participant spending less time on content planning and thus having more time to pay attention to word choice and grammatical features on the second performance.

Bygate (2001) also stresses that L2 learners have to primarily create form-meaning relations when producing language and for that they need to draw appropriate morphological items from memory, match them with the message that they have to produce and adapt the items if necessary. With this, they need to pay attention to irregularities of natural language and also redundant forms. If learners are familiar with the topic, then the time that they have to spend on conceptualization decreases allowing them to focus more on redundant language forms. As a result, if a task is repeated language production can be improved by means of fluency, accuracy and/or complexity. Fluency, according to Skehan (1998) is primarily related to learners' ability to communicate meaningfully in real time i.e. with minimal hesitations or pauses. Accuracy is how well a learner is able to produce language according to the rules of the target language and complexity relates to how advanced the language produced is, i.e. whether the learner is able to use a range of structures including more redundant forms (Skehan, 1998).

Several empirical studies have investigated the effects of task repetition on accuracy, fluency and complexity of oral language production. Bygate (1996) reports that fluency, complexity and accuracy increased in an oral narrative task repetition; however, the increase in accuracy was non-significant. Similarly, Bygate (2001) in another oral narrative task repetition study has identified a significant improvement in fluency and complexity; but not in accuracy. Birjandi and Ahangori (2008) have used three types of oral tasks: a personal narrative, a story narrative, a decision-making task in a study that involved participants' repetition of tasks and have observed an increase in fluency and complexity, but not in accuracy. In contrast, Matsumara, Kawamura and Affricano (2008) do not report any significant gain in fluency in two types of repeated tasks: a narrative and a decision-making task that they used in their study. However they have noticed improvement in accuracy and complexity in both types of tasks with a significant improvement in accuracy in the narrative task and a significant improvement in complexity in the decision-making task. Hawkes (2011) has identified that when a form-focused session is included in between the first and second performance of oral tasks, the participants are likely to focus more on accuracy in the second performance. Lynch and Mclean (2000) who believe that the intervals between the first and second performances of the tasks have an effect on production, have identified that the immediate repetition of a task could increase accuracy, performance in pronunciation, self correction and vocabulary selection. In summary, different empirical studies have provided evidence on the effects of task repetition on accuracy, fluency and complexity of oral language production.

A few studies have also investigated the impact of task repetition on written language production. For example, Jung (2013) reports a study that was focused on written language production through repetition of essays. This study highlights the fact that that task repetition was not able to increase accuracy of written language production, but was able to increase

fluency and complexity of it. Larsen-Freeman (2006) notes that the participants in her study, as a group, demonstrated that accuracy, fluency and complexity increased when a narrative task was repeated, first in the written mode and then in the oral mode. Since there is less empirical research on written language production, it is difficult to clearly hypothesise the extent to which task repetition can increase accuracy, fluency and/or complexity of language production.

Relating to assumptions made by psycholinguists, conversation analysts, ethnomethodologists and SLA theorists, Bygate and Samuda (2005) also suggest that when a particular type of communication task is repeated, information on discourse features such as narrative structures which are also stored in the long term memory store are likely to be accessible to the learners. Bygate and Samuda's (2005) and Bygate's (1996) studies have indicated an improvement in how learners use discourse features when the same task is repeated. For example, learners were able to produce better stories in terms of the use of discourse features in the repeated performance when narrative tasks were repeated. For example, Bygate and Samuda (2005) paid attention to how discourse complexity (e.g. discourse features such as evaluation, interpretation, summarizing and cohesive links) was affected by repetition and identified a significant increase of performance in how learners frame information when the task was repeated. Bygate (1996) also noticed a significant increase in evaluative comments and the use of cohesive devices by the participant in the second performance of the narrative task that he used in his study. Thus, it is evident that learners are able to utilise the discourse features that they learnt/practised in the first performance when they perform the same task on another occasion.

Several empirical studies on task repetition indicate that the type of task that is repeated also has a significant impact on performance. For example, Matsumara, Kawamura and Affricano (2008), in their study of Japanese EFL learners, state that a narrative task

repetition could reduce lack of fluency of the participants; however, a decision-making task repetition could not do so. In contrast, the decision making task could increase the complexity of language to a greater extent than the narrative task. Birjandi and Ahangori (2008), in their study of a personal narrative, a story narrative and a decision making task repetition by Iranian EFL learners have also identified that the personal narrative task was able to increase accuracy and complexity more than the other two types and that the task type did not make any significant influence on fluency. However, their use of personal task (in which learners were asked to explain a personal activity such as asking someone to turn off the oven in the flat where they live) may have an effect on the results since topic familiarity can affect performance in such tasks. Bygate (2001) in his study has identified that practising a particular task type does not have any significant effect on language production. Gass and Mackey (1999) have also reported less impact of task type repetition. For example, Gass and Mackey (1999) have identified that the participants in their study of narrative repetitions could increase their performance in holistic judgement and morphosyntax (use of *estar* in Spanish) when the same tasks were repeated, but did not transfer their ability to a similar type of task.

Taking the literature discussed in this paper into account, it is possible to state that most empirical studies have identified significant effects of task repetition on fluency, accuracy and complexity of oral language production. The learners have further demonstrated their ability to utilise discourse features that they learnt/used in the first performance when they repeat the same task. The studies discussed here further suggest that the type of task that is repeated also has an impact on the performance. For example, it is evident that narrative tasks provide more evidence on the positive effects of task repetition. Although the effect of task repetition on oral language production has been investigated, little research to date has investigated its effect on written language production. Taking this into account, a case study

was designed to analyse the effects of narrative task repetition on written language production.

Research questions

- Does task repetition increase fluency of written language performance?
- Does task repetition increase accuracy of written language performance?
- Does task repetition increase complexity of written language performance?

3. Methodology

3.1 Participant

Mojavesi (2013) reports that learners with higher L2 proficiency demonstrated more improvement in accuracy, fluency and complexity compared to the lower L2 proficiency level learners in an oral task repetition study. Jung (2013) used two groups who engaged in task repetition i.e. a group who received feedback between sessions and a group who did not receive feedback. One of the two participants in the second group was in the higher intermediate level and the other in the lower intermediate level. The participants in Larsen-Freeman's (2006) study were also in the higher intermediate level while Matsumara, Kawamura and Affricano (2008) used advanced beginners in their study. Considering the fact that most of these empirical studies have used either higher proficiency level learners or lower proficiency level learners, the present study was focused on a learner at a mid proficiency level.

The participant of this study was a 26 year old Greek female who was reading for a master's degree in management at a UK university. Her IELTS score was 6.5 and she did not follow any English language course during the period of this study. She had learned English

as a foreign language for nearly 16 years in Greece, but had not learned any other foreign language. By the time the study was conducted, she had lived in the UK for five months.

3.2 Procedure

Two picture stories were used in the study and both stories contained six pictures each. Story A (Appendix A) was used on the first two days and story B (Appendix B) was used on day three and day four. The participant had to write a story based on the pictures in A on day one, repeat it on day two and write a story on the pictures in B on day three and repeat it on day four. A pre or a post-test was not conducted in the study and the analysis was purely done based on the four written stories produced by the participant. On all occasions, the participant was not allowed to see the previous writings; however, she could refer to the pictures while writing. Furthermore, no linguistic input, feedback, or instructions were given to the participant before the first performance or between performances.

On the first day, the participant was told that she needed to write this story to be sent to a children's magazine and on the second day, she was told that she needed to rewrite it. However, she was not allowed to see the story that she wrote on the previous day. On the third day, she was asked to write another story to be sent to a primary school teacher who could use it in her class and similar to the procedure on day two, on the fourth day, the participant was asked to rewrite the story. The participant was asked to write a 'story for a children's magazine' and 'to be used in a primary class' in order to provide a purpose for her writing.

The interval between each task repetition was approximately 24 hours. On all four days, the participant was informed that the maximum time available for the task was 45 minutes. The participant was not reminded about the time remaining while she was writing. The study was conducted in the same room with only the participant and the researcher

present, and without any disturbances. The participant was not allowed to use any other resources such as dictionaries, books or the internet when writing. Thus, the tasks were repeated under the same conditions. After all four phases of repetition, the participant was interviewed to obtain her views on her experience and the answers are analysed in the discussion section of this paper.

3.3 Instruments

Narrative tasks (picture stories) were used as the instrument of this study for two reasons: firstly it is the most common type of task that has been used in empirical studies on oral task repetition, and secondly most of these studies highlight that repeating narrative tasks have an impact on language performance (Bygate, 1996; Bygate, 2001; Bygate & Samuda, 2005; Matsumara, Kawamura & Affricano, 2008; Birjandi & Ahangori, 2008; Gass & Mackey, 1999). Moreover, Bygate (as stated in Matsumara, Kawamura & Affricano, 2008, p.130) states that narrative tasks “invite linguistically denser talk” contributing to L2 development. Furthermore, Kawauchi (as stated in Matsumara, Kawamura & Affricano, 2008, p.130) points out that narrative tasks can minimise individual variations in language production.

It was also important to select a task which has the qualities of tasks used in TBLT for this study. A task is defined by Skehan (1998, p.95) as “an activity in which: meaning is primary; there is some communication problem to solve; there is some sort of relationship to comparable real world activities; task completion has some priority; and the assessment is in terms of task outcome.” In this study, the participant was asked to write two stories based on series of pictures to be published in a children’s magazine and to be used in a language class. Therefore, the writer had to pay attention to meaning which is the primary focus of the task. Since she had to describe the pictures by analysing the underlying story and also had to make

links between the different scenes, there was a communication demand for the participant. Furthermore, the task resembles real world activities because story telling takes place in real world contexts mainly in the form of personal narratives. Task completion was given priority by asking the participant to complete writing the story for a purpose i.e. the task should have been completed to serve the purpose (sending it to a magazine, sending it to a teacher). The analysis of language proficiency of task repetition was done based on the outcome (the written stories) of the task. Thus, the narrative tasks used in the study can be considered compatible with the definition offered by Skehan on ‘a task.’

The results obtained in the task repetition phases were analysed quantitatively in order to answer the research questions. The other instrument of the study was the interview conducted with the participant and the answers were qualitatively analysed to investigate the participant’s experience of task repetition.

3.4 Data analysis methods

Data analysis of the study was done based on fluency, accuracy and complexity of the written stories produced by the participant. Housen and Kuiken (2009) mention that fluency, accuracy and complexity measurements are the major research variables used in applied linguistic research in order to measure learners’ proficiency and progress in language learning. Thus, those measurements were used to analyse the written language production of the participant of the present study.

Several researchers have used different measures to analyse fluency, accuracy and complexity of written language (Ellis & Yuan, 2004; Larsen-Freeman, 2006; Storch & Wigglesworth 2007). The main measurement tools (which are also called ‘production units’) used in such analyses are T units and independent and dependent clauses (Wolfe-Quintero,

Inagaki & Kim, 1998). A T-unit is defined by Hunt (as stated in Bardovi-Harlig, 1992, p.390) “as a combination of an independent clause and its dependent clauses.” An independent clause, according to Richards, Platt and Platt (as stated in Storch & Wigglesworth, 2007) is a clause that can stand on its own and a dependent clause is a clause which has to be used with another clause to form a grammatical sentence (ibid). Storch and Wigglesworth (2007, p.160) state that an independent clause minimally consists of a finite verb and a dependent clause minimally consists of a finite or non-finite verb element and “one other clause element (subject, object, complement or adverbial).” Based on these definitions, T units and clauses were identified in the written scripts in this study.

3.4.1 Fluency measurements

Fluency in written language appears to be slightly different from fluency in oral language (see the literature review for the explanation of oral fluency). For example, Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki and Kim (1998) state that fluency in writing can be measured through number, length or rate of the production units in the text. As Larsen-Freeman (as stated in Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki & Kim, 1998, p.14) mentions, a fluent writer is considered to have the ability to write longer compositions; thus, length of the composition is a measure of fluency. Therefore, one length measure (number of words per T unit) of fluency was used in this study. However, time factor plays an important role in length measurements because the length depends on whether the learner used the maximum available time or otherwise. In the present study, even though the participant was given a time limit, the nature of the task made the learner use less time to complete the composition when the tasks were repeated. Therefore, a ratio fluency measure was also necessary for the analysis. Hence, number of words per minute which is considered to have a strong positive correlation with proficiency

was also used for the analysis (This was first proposed by Arthur as a fluency ratio measure (as stated in Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki & Kim, 1998, p.14)).

3.4.2 Accuracy measurements

In order to measure text accuracy, the primary method used in empirical studies is calculating the number of errors in a composition. As an accuracy frequency measure, the number of error-free T units was used in this study. This measurement is proposed by Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki and Kim (1998) as a development measure that has a strong positive correlation with proficiency. Ratio measures such as error-free T units per T unit and error-free clauses per clause are also frequently used to measure accuracy; however, they are considered to be suitable for analysing accuracy in long term studies (ibid). Since the present study is a short term study aimed at measuring the overall accuracy of texts, errors per T unit was used as a ratio measure because it correlates with holistic ratings (ibid). As proposed by Storch and Wigglesworth (2007), syntactic (word order, missing words) and morphological (verb tense, subject-verb agreement, articles, prepositions and word forms) errors were identified as errors for calculations.

3.4.3 Complexity measurements

Storch and Wigglesworth (2007) emphasise the importance of analysing the complexity of language production when measuring proficiency because of the possibility of learners refraining from using complex structures to achieve higher accuracy. Thus, complexity measurements can determine whether the learner is willing to experiment with complex forms of language. Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki and Kim (1998) state that there are two types of complexity measure: grammatical and lexical. Proportion of clauses to T unit (grammatical complexity) and lexical sophistication (lexical complexity) proposed by them

as reliable complexity measures were used in this study. It was necessary to judge whether the words were sophisticated or not in order to measure lexical sophistication. Therefore, Oxford 3000 words list which includes the most frequent English words (Turnbull, 2010) was used to determine sophistication of words. The words which belong to this list were not considered sophisticated. In summary, data analysis was done based on the measurements given in Table 1.

Table 1

Fluency, accuracy and complexity measures

| Fluency | Accuracy | Complexity |
|----------------------------|--------------------|---|
| number of words per T unit | error-free T units | proposition of clauses to T unit |
| number of words per minute | errors per T unit | lexical sophistication (total number of sophisticated lexical words/ total number of lexical words) |

3.5 Data coding

The researcher coded the data for the first time and a second coder was used to ensure the reliability of coding. The intra-coder reliability for T-unit measurements varied from 94% to 97%. Then a third coder was used and the intra-coder reliability between the first and third coders for T unit measurements was 98% to 100%.

4. Results

The results of the study are summarised under each measurement category. Considering the small amount of data involved in this case study, a statistical analysis was not conducted. It is also worth noting here that the participant spent 35, 25, 20 and 18 minutes

respectively to complete the four performances without the researcher reminding her of the amount of time left.

4.1 Fluency

As can be seen in Table 2 below, the number of words per T unit increased in the second performance compared to the first in both tasks; however, the increase in the second task is less striking. Number of words per minute also indicates a clear increase in the second performance compared to the first in the first task and a slight increase in the second task. The results of the fluency measures of the two tasks demonstrate that repetition of both tasks impacted the participant's written language fluency.

Table 2

Fluency measures

| Task | Performance | Number of words per T unit | Number of words per minute |
|-------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | 1 | 10.08 | 6.914 |
| | 2 | 12.26 | 9.320 |
| 2 | 1 | 10.40 | 13.000 |
| | 2 | 10.45 | 13.940 |

4.2 Accuracy

The error free T units measurement highlights an increase in the second performance compared to the first in both tasks. The errors per T unit measure demonstrates a decrease in the second performance compared to the first in both tasks. This indicates that task repetition can make a positive impact on accuracy of written language production.

Table 3

Accuracy measures

| Task | Performance | Error free T units % | Errors per T unit |
|-------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | 1 | 37.50 | 0.70 |
| | 2 | 57.89 | 0.42 |
| 2 | 1 | 72.00 | 0.36 |
| | 2 | 83.33 | 0.20 |

4.3 Complexity

Proportion of clauses to T units demonstrates an increase in the second performance compared to the first in both tasks. Lexical sophistication also demonstrates similar results. However, the increase in lexical sophistication is clear in the second task compared to the first.

Table 4

Complexity measures

| Task | Performance | Proportion of clauses to T units | Lexical sophistication |
|-------------|--------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| 1 | 1 | 1.25 | 0.016 |
| | 2 | 1.47 | 0.017 |
| 2 | 1 | 1.28 | 0.038 |
| | 2 | 1.37 | 0.055 |

5. Discussion

It is noteworthy that the findings discussed in this paper are of a case study and thus it is difficult to generalize them without analysing the language production of a large group of participants. However, the study provides some useful insights into the effects of task

repetition on written language production. The results of this study, in summary, indicate that task repetition could increase fluency, accuracy and complexity in written language production. In particular the two accuracy measurements i.e. error free T units and errors per T unit indicate a striking increase in accuracy in both repetitions. Complexity also demonstrates an increase in both tasks. However, the increase of performance in fluency is less striking particularly in the second task. The less striking increase of fluency could be a result of possible ‘trade off’ effect (Bygate, 2001): the gains in accuracy and complexity must have been paid for by a loss or by a small gain in fluency. For example, the participant of this study spent 20 and 18 minutes respectively in the two performances of task two and the difference between times is not significantly different. Therefore, it is possible to predict that the participant may have paid more attention to accuracy and complexity in the second performance and thus could not demonstrate a striking improvement in fluency.

The results of this study are in contrast with the results of three main oral narrative task repetition studies. For example, Bygate (1996, 2001) and Birjandi and Ahangori (2008) reported that both fluency and complexity of oral language performance increased when oral narrative tasks were repeated in their studies. However, the gains in accuracy were minimal in all these studies. In contrast, the written narrative task repetition (this study) indicates an increase in accuracy and complexity and a less striking increase in fluency. This could be due to the mode of output: in oral task performance, learners pay more attention to speed of articulation and in written task performance, they pay more attention to grammatical accuracy of sentences.

Bygate (2001) and Gass and Mackey (1999) indicate that task type repetition has less impact on language production i.e. the features learnt by performing one task cycle cannot be or may not be transferred when performing a similar task type. However, the present study indicates that there could be an effect of task type repetition on written language production.

For example, the participant's performance in number of words per minute, error free T units, errors per T unit and lexical sophistication demonstrates a clear difference between the second performance of the first task and first performance of the second task. Number of words per minute (fluency), error free T units (accuracy) and lexical sophistication (complexity) increased in the first performance of the second task compared to the second performance of the first task and errors per T unit (accuracy) decreased in the first performance of the second task compared to the second performance of the first task. This could be due to the participant transferring the abilities gained in performing the first task to the performance of the second task. Thus, it is possible to state that task type repetition might also assist learners to improve written language performance.

It is also important to analyse the post interview data in order to understand how the participant viewed the task repetition process. The participant stated that it was easier for her to write the second versions of the stories due to the fact that she needed less time for planning 'what to write.' This resembles Bygate's (1996) finding in which he states that the participant of his study could perform better on the second occasion because he spent less time on content planning in the repeated performance. The quantitative data in the present study also indicate that the participant could perform better in the second performance.

The participant also stated that she could remember what she wrote in the previous task which helped her to 'change certain words and sentences.' This resembles Bygate's (2001) arguments that learners can utilise information stored in long term memory when repeating a task and learners are left with more time to pay attention to redundant forms when a task is repeated. One such occasion of the present study was that the participant used the word 'disappeared' (which is a more suitable word for the situation) in the second performance of the second task to explain that the two children could not see their food in the basket which she did not use on the first occasion to explain the same situation. The

participant further stated that writing stories became easier and easier because ‘I know how to do it now.’ This is apparent in the narrative structure of the stories that the participant wrote. For example, there is an increased use of connectors such as ‘and, when, after few minutes’ in the second performances of the stories to connect events in them. This could be due to, as Bygate (2001) also suggests, the possibility of the participant accessing information on discourse features which are also stored in long term memory.

6. Pedagogical implications

This study brings out some useful insights on how task repetition can be applied in second language classes. It clearly demonstrated that the repetition of a written narrative task could increase accuracy, fluency and complexity of written language production to a greater extent. Therefore, it would be useful for language teachers to use such task repetitions in order to increase the written language production of their learners; in particular, to increase accuracy.

The study also indicated that task type repetition might also increase the performance of written language production of L2 learners. Therefore, task type repetition in class could be worth trying in order to improve the written language production of learners. It is also noteworthy that task type repetition might not be able to increase language production in all aspects related to fluency, accuracy and complexity discussed in this paper since this study also indicated an increase of performance in some of these aspects only. Moreover, task type does not imply the same difficulty; therefore, performance could vary depending on the difficulty level of tasks.

It is also important for teachers to bear in mind that all tasks might not give the same results as discussed here. For example, narrative tasks are considered contributing to L2

development minimizing individual variations in language production (Matsumara, Kawamura & Affricano, 2008). Further, narrative tasks have been successfully used in oral task repetition studies. This study indicated that narrative tasks could increase the performance of written language production of the participant as well. Therefore, it is highly likely that narrative tasks can be successfully used in task repetition. However, other types of tasks might not bring the results brought by narrative task repetition. Thus, teachers have to be careful in selecting tasks.

Teachers also have to bear in mind that the type of narratives used for written language production might influence the lexis that students may produce and thus, it is important to analyse the vocabulary that could be elicited in a task especially if the repetition aims at vocabulary development. For example, lexical complexity achieved by the participant in this study is significantly higher in the second task than in the first task. It is likely that the type of incidents, scenes, and objects included in the pictures have made an impact on lexical sophistication in the performance of the two tasks. Furthermore, the participant used spoken language utterances such as ‘oh god’ and ‘bad luck’ in the stories which might be worth considering when narrative tasks are utilized to improve the written language production of learners in real class contexts.

This study also indicated that learners might not fully utilise the full amount of time available for completion of the task especially when it is repeated. This was evident in the present study because the participant decreased the time spent in each performance. This could be because the participant was over confident, less interested in repeating the performance, had lost motivation or sense of challenge or had gained maximum ability. If the reason is one or more of the first two, teachers can make sure that learners pay enough attention to using the extra time available for them maximally to increase their performance. Providing some guidance on what language aspects could be improved in the second

performance could be useful in this regard. It is also important to provide a clear purpose for the second performance to make it more meaningful for learners which could also increase their interest. Teachers might also need to raise the stakes increasing the challenge to keep students focused.

7. Conclusion

Several empirical studies conducted based on oral task repetition provided positive results of language development of learners in terms of accuracy, fluency and complexity. However, a trade-off effect was also quite apparent in the findings. Further, there was less evidence on the positive effects of task type repetition. The present study on written narrative task repetition indicated that task repetition may increase the written language production in terms of accuracy, fluency and complexity and furthermore task type repetition may also positively affect the performance of a similar task later.

Thus, it could be useful for language teachers to utilize written task repetition in order to increase written language development of their learners. However, it is also important for them to carefully select the types of tasks that could be repeated. Furthermore, it is better if the teachers can provide a clear purpose for the learners to repeat a task otherwise the repetition process could be less interesting to the learners.

This study also has several limitations. For example, it was limited to one participant; therefore it is difficult to generalize the results to broader contexts. Furthermore, the participant had constant exposure to English while participating in the study since she lived in the UK during the time of the study which might also have affected the results. Moreover, the English language level of the participant may have played a role in her performance; the

results of a similar study with participants from another English language level may bring different results. The study was also not conducted in a real classroom situation so the results might not be valid to real class contexts as well. Thus, it would be useful to conduct studies with more participants in real classroom contexts to examine the effects of narrative task repetitions on written language production.

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Appendix A

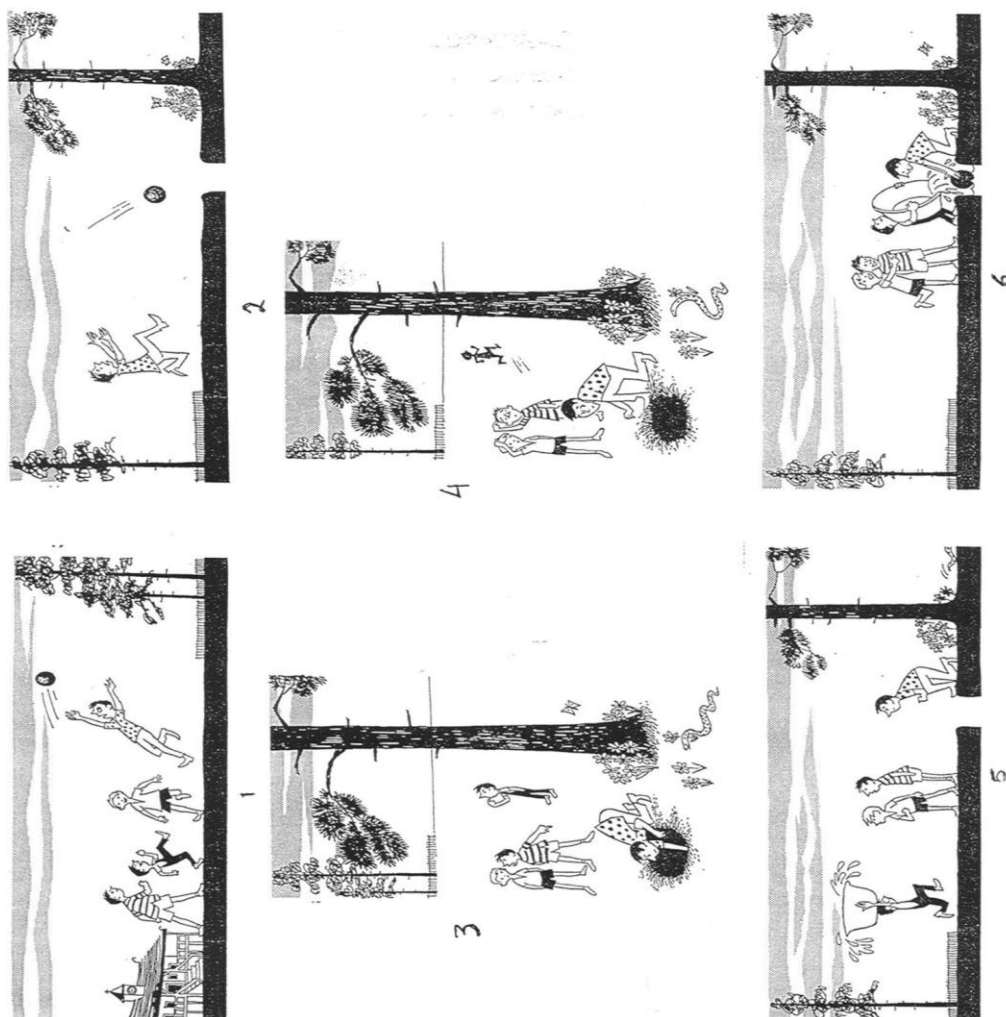


Figure A4 Football Task, Heaton, 1966.

Tavakoli & Foster (2008, p. 473).

Appendix B

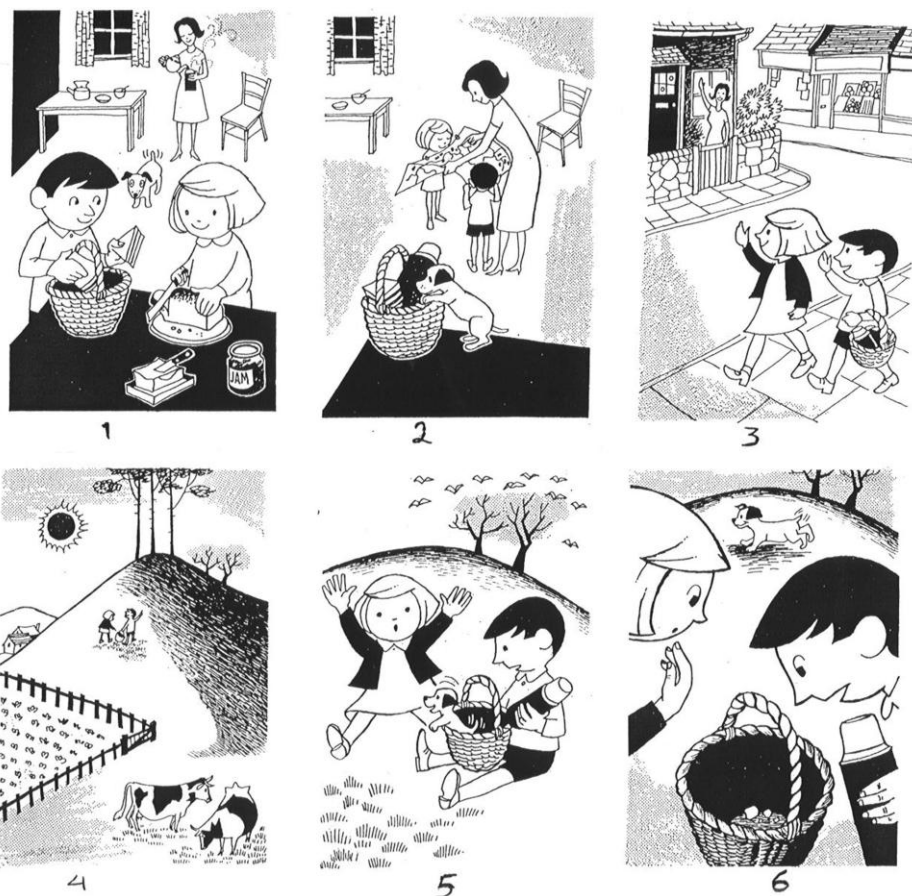


Figure A2 Picnic Task, Heaton, 1966.

Tavakoli & Foster (2008, p.447)