The Effect of Socio-Affective Strategies Training in Peer Review on the Revision Ability of Iranian EFL Learners

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Abstract
The current study aimed at investigating the impact of socio-affective strategies training on EFL learners’ revision ability in writing. Participants were 60 Iranian female EFL students at the Zabansara Institute in Tehran, who were randomly assigned to a control group (n = 30) and an experimental group (n = 30). This study employed a quasi-experimental design with two equivalent groups. The experimental group was taught socio-affective strategies in reviewing peers’ writing, including training some strategies such as cooperating with others, asking questions for clarification, and self-talks through some steps of Oxford’s training model (1999). The control group received no instruction on these strategies. Prior to the treatment, homogeneity of the participants regarding their revision ability was checked. After the treatment, as the post-test, participants wrote a formal e-mail and revised their own works after one day to reveal their revision ability. After data analysis through the implementation of t-test, it was found that both groups had an improvement in the writing revision ability while the experimental group considerably outperformed the control group who received no instruction on the socio-affective strategies. Based on the findings of the present study, considering socio-affective strategies in revision stage can improve writing and revision ability of learners.

Keywords: Expository writing, Oxford’s model, Peer review, Revision, Socio-affective strategies

Introduction
Writing “requires thought, discipline, and concentration” (White, 1987, p. 266) and it is also believed that “writing is a set of distinctive thinking processes” (Flower and Hays, 1981, p. 366). Besides, Flower and Hays (1981) claim that most of the writers write without any purpose, while “writing is a purposeful act” (p. 377). Therefore, before writing, the writers need to think, look for ideas, and then they need to organize, develop and revise those ideas in a good way that the readers can receive their messages (Flower and Hays, 1981).

In the line with the previous studies, Cumming (2002) claims that describing and modeling for learners the writing processes and strategies (e.g., generating ideas, planning, drafting, and revising) and giving feedback on their performance in order to enable them to apply these processes and strategies can independently help them improve their writing ability. Sommers
(1980) states that the processes that underlie in the second language writing is linear and revision is an insignificant stage; however, some researchers (e.g., Emig, 1971; Perl, 1980) believe in a recursive model through which the writer deals with all stages of the writing process in order to produce a text and the last stage is crucial to improving learners’ writing ability.

In addition to the main role of revision, the findings of the study conducted by Hanjani and Li (2014) indicated that collaborative revision had a positive impact on learners’ writing ability. Peer review used as one part of the feedback in the process of writing at the revision stage is defined in this study as the implementation of “students as sources of information and interactants for each other in such a way that learners assume responsibilities normally taken on by a formally trained teacher in commenting on and critiquing each other’s drafts in both written and oral formats in the process of writing” (Hansen & Liu, 2005, p.1). Accordingly, Since the late 1980s, a large body of research has been done on the effect of peer-review of the students’ second language regarding writing skill (e.g., Paulus, 1999; Liu & Hansen, 2002; Yang et al., 2006). In addition, an investigation has been conducted in order to find out the impact of peer review in the second language writing on the revision ability of the students passing and receiving comments (Lundstrom & Baker, 2009). As the results of these investigations, peer review had a considerable effect on the quality of learners’ writing. Moreover, there has also been a study into the impact of teachers’ commentary on the learners’ L2 writings (Goldstein, 2004). Besides, the effect of training how students revise their peers’ papers was investigated (Berg, 1999; Rahimi, 2013). The findings of these studies indicated the positive impact of peer-review training on learners’ revision and writing ability and they also emphasized the significance of instruction on peer review in second language writing. In this regard, Hansen and Liu (2005) suggest different methods to teach peer-review to learners, while Lundstrom and Baker (2009) state that how to train peer-review depends on the different needs of the learners contained and what method is best differs in the various situations. However, according to many research, peer-review can be beneficial when it is utilized correctly (Paulus, 1999), particularly when learners are instructed on how to give and use feedback (Min, 2006).

Writing skill and peer review seems to be still given less significance at some language institutes in Iran due to the lack of time and a lot of materials which are due to be taught each term. Therefore, writing is still a demanding skill for learners, which they avoid to do.

Consequently, training and utilizing the socio-affective strategies are suggested to pave the way for the improvement on this demanding skill. Therefore, it is necessary to explain and categorize these strategies first. O’Malley and Chamot (1990) know language learning strategies as the special thoughts that learners apply to assist them in understanding, learning, or retaining new information. Language learning strategies are divided into: metacognitive, cognitive and socio-affective strategies (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990). According to Oxford (1990), socio-affective strategies are defined as non-academic strategies which create a level of empathy between teachers and learners, which leads to learning. Oxford (1990) also notes that emotions
and attitudes are involved in these strategies. Furthermore, Goh (2002) claims those learners who implement socio-affective strategies can learn successfully in all contexts of learning. Moreover, Thanasoulas (2000) states that students’ socio-emotional traits are required to be considered since they assist students in learning a language and knowing themselves very well, and also they help students take responsibility for their own learning. As a result, learning language occurs when learners efficiently interact and cooperate while communicating (Donato, 1994). Thus, direct training on the language learning strategies is incorporated into the curriculum (Derry and Murphy, 1986). Besides, Marefat, and Ahmadi Shirazi (2003) emphasized the importance of explicit training of language strategies.

Some studies have been carried out to investigate the impact of socio-affective strategies on some skills such as reading and speaking (e.g., Chou, 2004; Zeynali & Pishdadi Motlagh, 2015; Zhi-hong, 2007). The findings of these investigations indicated that training and applying these strategies resulted in the improvement of learners in reading and speaking. In addition, socio-affective strategies are regarded as effective strategies which enhance learning among learners since considering affective factors of learners and students’ social, emotional traits can lead to learning a language (Habte-Gabr, 2006; Thanasoulas, 2000). However, learning strategies were hardly regarded in writing and revision. Particularly no studies have been conducted to find out whether considering and training socio-affective strategies in peer review have a significant impact on the revision and writing ability of learners or not. Therefore, this study aimed to examine whether training socio-affective strategies during revising peers’ writing can result in the improvement of learners’ ability in revising their own writing. It is noteworthy that students’ personal, emotional, and social traits were emphasized in this study by training socio-affective strategies, and training these strategies can enable learners to edit their own writing, promote cooperative learning, foster positive personality traits and decrease the negative ones, and eventually take control of their own learning.

To meet the afore-mentioned purpose, this study addressed the following question and null hypothesis:

**RQ:** Does the instruction of socio-affective strategies in peer reviewing have a significant impact on students’ revision ability?

**HO:** Instruction of socio-affective strategies in peer reviewing does not have any significant impact on EFL learners’ revision ability.

**Method**

**Participants**

30 Iranian female EFL students at the pre-intermediate level who ranged in age from 15 to 60 participated in the writing course lasting seven forty-five-minute sessions at the Zabansara Institute (Resalat Branch) in Tehran, Iran. Two intact classes were selected based on convenient sampling after winning the approval of the teachers and learners of the respective classes. The
Researchers administered the Key English Test (KET) to the learners in order to ensure that they were homogeneous at the level of language proficiency. And they were randomly divided into two groups: the control group and the experimental group. The two intact groups were instructed during the writing classes by the second researcher.

Furthermore, for the pre-test and post-test, the learners in both groups were supposed to write a formal e-mail during ten-minutes. Therefore, their first and revised drafts were rated by two female teachers trained at the Zabansara Institute (Resalat Branch) in Tehran according to the rating rubric. These raters have been working as teachers at various institutes for 15 years and they had experience in grading learners’ writing as well as rating final writing of students studying English utilizing the institution’s five-point rubric.

Prior to the treatment, the Key English Test (KET) was piloted to 24 female and male learners at the pre-intermediate level, who were studying English conversation at the Zabansara Institute (Resalat Branch) in Tehran to estimate the reliability of KET.

**Instruments**

The following instruments were implemented in this research:

**Key English Test (KET)**

The Key English Test (KET) was piloted first to twenty four students at the Zabansara Institute and the reliability was calculated; moreover, it was administered to the participants in order to assure the homogeneity of the two intact groups. This instrument involves three papers: Reading and writing, listening, and speaking. The speaking part was deliberately omitted due to limit of time and facilities at the institute and also since the focus of the current study was not on speaking.

**Materials**

Expository topics of writing were chosen from the course book (American English File 2, the first edition) including an informal e-mail (describing yourself), 'the story behind the photo', an 'informal letter', a 'formal e-mail', and 'giving your opinion'. They were taught to the students during the writing course. For the pre-test and the post-test, a formal email (American English File 2, the second edition) was utilized.

**Rating Rubric for Writing**

To assess the drafts which the students wrote for the pre-test and post-test, the grading rubric used by Weigle (2002, p. 117) was implemented in the present study. This scoring guide was selected since it allowed us to assess both the micro level and the local aspects of writing of learners who were at the pre-intermediate level. The scoring guide was based on a three-point scale for each part, and the learners’ e-mails were assigned a score on the scale from zero to three for each of the following writing aspects: compositional organization, grammar, mechanical accuracy. In this scale, the compositional organization refers to the overall shape and
internal pattern, and mechanical accuracy refers to punctuation and spelling. Ultimately, the sum of the scores of these four parts was calculated to assign an overall score.

**Pretest and Posttest**
In advance of treatment, all the learners in both groups took a pre-test to assure their homogeneity in regard to the revision ability. After treatment, the learners took post-test and their drafts were scored by two raters using the rating rubric. The participants in both groups wrote a formal email as the pre-test and post-test during ten minutes without referring back to their emails and making changes in them; furthermore, they revised their first drafts with a one-day time interval. In fact, each student submitted two drafts to the researchers for each test.

**Procedure**
Before going through the procedure, the Key English Test (KET) was administered to 24 other students at the piloting stage to ensure its reliability and next the intra-reliability of the free writing, and the reliability of the whole test were separately calculated; the intra-reliability of the free writing was 0.867, and the reliability of the whole test was estimated 0.747. Afterwards, it was administered to thirty female learners forming two pre-intermediate level intact classes at the Zabansara Institute (Resalat Branch) in Tehran in order to assure the homogeneity of the two intact classes in terms of their general English proficiency. The results compared through a t-test indicated that the two groups were not significantly different in terms of general English proficiency level. Next, the two groups were randomly assigned to a control group and an experimental group who participated in a seven-session writing course.

At the beginning of the course, the learners in both groups were asked to write a formal e-mail as a pre-test and revise their own e-mails with a one-day interval. The writing revision score of each student was rated by the degrees of difference between the scores of her two drafts (e.g., the second draft score minus the first draft score) through the EXEL. For instance, the score of Mozhgan’ first draft for post-test was assessed 5; therefore, she edited her first draft encompassing changes created in eight parts containing grammar, spelling and punctuation after one day and her revised draft was scored 8. Subsequently, a difference between her first and second draft was marked (8−5= 3). Thus, her revision ability was estimated 3. Then, homogeneity of the learners regarding their revision ability in writing was ensured through comparing the two groups' revision scores.

At the treatment stage, the learners in both groups were instructed expository writing extracted from the course book (American English File 2) during seven forty-five-minute sessions. The details were as follows:

Each student in the experimental and control group was given a writing sample which exists at the end of each file of the textbook (American English File 2, the first edition) in each session and they went through it in order to answer some questions asked about the picture or the topic as a pre-writing stage to elicit ideas, issues, thoughts and vocabularies that could potentially get
them started on their writing. For instance, for the first text which was an informal email, to elicit the organization of an informal email, the learners were asked some questions (e.g., who is the email to or from? Do they know each other? What does an informal email start with? What does it end in?). Then they answered some questions which existed in the writing sample. After checking the answers, the teacher explained how to write as the sample one. Finally, they were supposed to write their own texts according to the sample writing of the text book (American English File 2) during ten minutes without referring back to their writing and making changes in their writing.

Afterwards, the following ways were used in order to train all the participants in the experimental and control groups how to revise:

- The students were firstly given a text which had been written by a student and the incorrect parts had been underlined
- Second, the teacher asked the students some questions about the incorrect parts of the writing in order to correct, to understand the nature of the incorrect part (grammar, punctuation, and spelling), and to connect the ideas
- The students went through the writing and corrected each error after each question being asked by the teacher. For instance, they were asked why the word “greens” was incorrect, and they replied that it was incorrect because it had plural “s”, and this was grammatically incorrect.

The next step was teaching the socio-affective strategies to the experimental group according to Oxford's (1999) model while they were reviewing their peers’ writing; moreover, the learners were taught some strategies such as cooperating and interacting with each student, asking the teacher and their peers some questions for clarification, and self-talking to reduce anxiety. One-time strategy training method offered by Oxford (1999) was used in the current research since socio-affective strategies were taught, practiced, and integrated with revision tasks, and also because participants were taught just socio-affective strategies for a few sessions rather than more various strategies for a long time. These strategies were run in different orders as Oxford (1999) believes that ‘this model can be adapted for one –time training by selecting specific units’ and also ‘the steps might not always have to be done in this order; some can be performed at the same time, or in a slightly different order’ (p. 203). Thus, the learners in the experimental group were trained socio-affective strategies through the following steps:

- According to the third step of this model, learners were firstly divided into several small groups in order to review the writing of one member of each group
- One learner was chosen in each group as a leader, and then a student’s paper was selected. In addition, leaders were supposed to ask their peers some questions as the teacher did in the revision treatment in order to connect the ideas and to review peers’ works. The teacher asked the students to check grammar, punctuation, spelling and compositional organization
as the check list given in the course book (American English File 2, the first edition). This stage was done according to the fifth step of this model

- At this stage, after carrying out the revision task, they were given the opportunity to express their opinions in Persian about the strategies used during the accomplishment of the revision task. Next, the teacher demonstrated the categories of socio-affective strategies containing cooperating and interacting with other learners (practicing English with other learners), asking for clarification (asking the peers or the teacher to provide more explanations when something is unclear), and self-talking (not being concerned about making mistakes). She, furthermore, clarified why these strategies could be helpful and how to apply them accompanied with other various language tasks and skills. Finally, the teacher suggested that the students practice socio-affective strategies through correcting the others’ writing in their group (sixth step, Oxford’s model).

To review peers’ writing in the experimental group, the learners were divided into groups and one student was chosen as a leader and asked her peers some questions about the errors in a student’s paper through instruction on socio-affective strategies. One instance is provided below:

Maryam: Parisa wrote “I have 34 years old”. Is it correct?
Helia: I don’t think so.
Maryam: why is it incorrect?
Sedigheh: we use “am” for age.

However, the students in the control group read their peers’ papers individually, underlined their wrong words and corrected them. As an instance, Maryam read Sara’ paper and corrected her errors and Sara edited Hanieh’s paper.

The instruction lasted for seven sessions after which a posttest of writing was given to both groups. Then they were asked to revise their own writing after a one-day time interval. The two drafts were scored by two raters and the difference between each student's score on the first writing and her revised writing was calculated and considered as her revision ability. This was done only after the inter-rater reliability was estimated to make sure about the consistency of the scores given by both raters, and the average score for each student was calculated.

**Design**

In this research, a quasi-experimental research with two equivalent groups posttest only design was adopted. The socio-affective strategies training through peer reviewing was used as an independent variable, whereas, revision ability was regarded as the dependent variable. Furthermore, two intact groups were used in this study due to the fact that pure randomization was impossible. In addition, two groups were randomly assigned to a control group and an experimental group, so the seating was truly random rather than in groups of friends or acquaintances in order to gain precise results of this research. Proficiency level and gender were control variables.
Results

The dependent variable in this study was writing revision ability of the learners. The researchers had to make sure that the two groups were homogeneous regarding their revision ability at the outset before the intervention. Two raters scored the writing of the two groups and came up with exactly identical scores. So, the inter-rater reliability was inherently ensured as there was not even one different score. There was one person in the experimental group who obtained a score of 0.5 and the rest obtained 0 which indicated that learners did not show any revision ability before the intervention. The following table shows the descriptive statistics of the pre-treatment revision scores of the two groups.

Table: 1
Descriptive Statistics of the Pre-Treatment Revision Scores across Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Skewness Statistic</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Ratios</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PretestRevisionExG</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>.0333</td>
<td>.12910</td>
<td>3.873</td>
<td>.580</td>
<td>6.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PretestRevisionCG</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>.0000</td>
<td>.00000</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the above table shows, the two groups obtained very close mean scores (.03 and .0) and the skewness ratio for the experimental group exceeded 1.96. Therefore, to compare the two sets of scores, Mann-Whitney U test had to be run as the nonparametric equivalent to t-test. The following table is the output:

Table: 2
Mann-Whitney U T-Test on the Pre-Treatment Revision Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Null Hypothesis</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The distribution of pretestRevision is the same across categories of grouping.</td>
<td>Independent Samples Mann-Whitney U Test</td>
<td>.776</td>
<td>Retain the null hypothesis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

1 Exact significance is displayed for this test.

As displayed in the above table, the two groups were not significantly different at the outset in terms of their revision ability (p=.77>.05). Therefore, the researchers were left assured that the
two groups were homogenous regarding the dependent variable and any possible difference in the posttest mean scores of the two groups could safely be attributed to the effect of the treatment.

**Posttest Scores of the Experimental Group**

The inter-rater reliability of the revision posttest scores of the experimental group given by the two raters was calculated. Prior to that, the normality condition was checked:

Table: 3
Descriptive Statistics of the Two Raters' Scores Given to the Experimental Group's Posttest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RevPostExGR1</td>
<td>15.50</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.3667</td>
<td>.76687</td>
<td>1.476</td>
<td>.580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RevPostExGR2</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>1.2000</td>
<td>.64918</td>
<td>.253</td>
<td>.580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in table 3, the skewness ratio of the scores given by rater 1 exceeded 1.96; hence the normality condition was not met. Thus, the Spearman formula was utilized to establish the correlation between the two sets of scores. The table 4 shows the result.

Table: 4
Correlations of the two raters' scores given to the experimental group's Posttest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RevPostExGR1</th>
<th>RevPostExGR2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spearman's rho</td>
<td></td>
<td>.705**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>.705**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

As depicted in table 4, the correlation turned out to be significant (r=.7, p=.00<.05), hence the inter-rater reliability of the scores. As such, the mean scores given by the two raters were used for further analysis.

**Posttest Scores of the Control Group**
The inter-rater reliability of the revision posttest scores of the control group given by the two raters was calculated. The normality condition for a correlation analysis was checked first:

Table: 5
Descriptive Statistics of the two raters’ scores given to the control group’s posttest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Skewness Statistic</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Ratios</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RevPostCGR1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.6333</td>
<td>.39940</td>
<td>-.555</td>
<td>.580</td>
<td>-.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RevPostCGR2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>.6333</td>
<td>.48058</td>
<td>-.059</td>
<td>.580</td>
<td>-.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Valid N (listwise) 15

Table: 6
Correlations of the two raters’ scores given to the control group’s posttest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RevPostCGR1</th>
<th>RevPostCGR2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.831**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As table 5 shows, the skewness ratios are both less than 1.96 which ensures normality of distribution of both sets of scores. Thus, Pearson formula was used to calculate the correlation between the scores as shown in table 6:

Table 6 depicts that the correlation between the two sets of scores was significant (r=.83, p=.000<.05). Therefore, their mean scores were used for further analysis.

Testing the Research Hypothesis

To test the null hypothesis through comparing the posttest scores of the two groups a t-test had to be run. To make sure that running the parametric t-test was legitimate, the normality condition was verified:
As shown in the above table, the experimental group outperformed the control group by virtue of the mean scores (1.28 vs. .63). The distribution of scores obtained by the experimental group was skewed as the skewness ratio exceeded 1.96. Therefore, Mann-Whitney U-test was used to compare the mean scores:

The experimental group obtained a higher mean rank (19.73) than the control group (11.27). The following table shows if this supremacy was statistically significant.

Table: 8
Mann-Whitney U Test on the Posttest Revision Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revision</th>
<th>Mann-Whitney U</th>
<th>Wilcoxon W</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>49.000</td>
<td>169.000</td>
<td>-.2695</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.008b</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As exhibited in table 8, the difference between the two groups' posttest revision mean ranks turned out to be significant (p=.008<.05). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected implying that the treatment could significantly improve writing revision ability of the learners by virtue of the fact that the two groups were shown to be homogeneous in terms of the dependent variable at the outset.
The effect size was estimated through the following formula, as suggested by Pallant (2007):

$$r = \frac{z}{\sqrt{N}}$$

The result of the calculation came out to be 0.49 which according to Cohen's (1988) criteria is almost a large effect size. This amount, expressed as percentage, implies that nearly 50 percent of the variation in the dependent variable was due to the independent variable.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

The current study aimed to find the impact of socio-affective strategies training through peer reviewing on writing revision ability of Iranian EFL learners. The participants of this study were selected from the intact classes and were randomly divided into two groups: control group and an experimental group. Both groups received instruction on writing and revision, but the difference between the two groups lied in the additional socio-affective strategies training that were practiced in the experimental group. The comparison of the two groups' writing revision ability after the intervention revealed that the experimental group improved their revision ability significantly more than the control group with large effect size.

This study indicated that socio-affective strategies training had a great effect on the revision ability in the second language writing. In order to explain this finding, some theoretical backgrounds exist which support the benefits of socio-affective strategies training. The positive impact of socio-affective strategies training on various skills such as reading and speaking was reported by some researchers (e.g., Fandino, 2007; Habte-Gabr, 2006; Zeynali and Pishdadi Motlagh, 2015; Zhi-Hong, 2007). The results concur with several previous types of research on learning strategies training (e.g., Bailey, 1983; O’Malley et al., 1985b; O’Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990).

The explicit instruction of socio-affective strategies which had a positive effect on writing revision ability as demonstrated in the current study supports the research by Marefat & Ahmadi Shirazi (2003). They state that instruction and use of learning strategies must be incorporated into the existing curriculum through exposing learners with plenty of opportunities to use strategies based on explicit instruction in order to increase transfer after a time interval. Oxbrow (2005) also believes that strategies training can lead to language proficiency if both students and teachers are aware of the strategies and attentively apply them in their teaching and learning.

Self-talking, as part of the treatment could lower anxiety of the learners which may have led to higher achievement. This study supports Oxford’s (1999) idea since she believes that teaching some strategies such as making positive statement and encouraging yourself which help students to reduce their anxiety will cause an improvement in learning all of the language skills, and also ‘language learners often need to find ways to keep their spirits up as they try to understand or produce the new language’ (p.165). As Oxford (1999), ‘in any of the four skills, anxiety can play a strong role, short-circuiting potential learning’ (p.164). The findings of the current study
showed that interaction and cooperation with other learners experienced by the experimental group during the treatment had a positive effect. It supports Vygotsky’s approach, as Vygotsky’s developmental theory (1986), all activities in teaching and learning are carried out through the social interaction among students and teachers.

Instruction of socio-affective strategies can promote and facilitate the process of writing skill in general and revision ability in particular by provoking learners to review their peers’ writing. In addition, affective factors are controlled through revising their peers’ works, and cooperation and interaction are created among them during the revision process. This way, teachers can foster more autonomous, sociable and responsible learners who can revise their own writing until the end of the course. Moreover, Materials developers can design materials in which the implementation of socio-affective strategies is taken into account to enhance writing and revision ability of learners. And Learners can also improve their writing skill which is still a demanding task for them by applying the socio-affective strategies in revision stage.

Based on the researchers’ experience in this project and the limitations that they faced, the following areas of research are suggested to be considered by the interested researchers in the field of socio-affective strategies, learning strategies and revision. It is, firstly, suggested that socio-affective strategies training is investigated further in comparison with the instruction of other learning strategies (e.g., memory, cognitive and metacognitive), and interested researchers can conduct a study to see which learning strategies are more effective in learners’ achievement of writing skill and/or other language skills. Moreover, other genres of writing (persuasive, descriptive and narrative) can be taken into account in the further research. Additionally, other similar studies can be conducted to incorporate gender as a moderator variable to see if instruction of socio-affective strategies has equal effect on male and female EFL learners’ writing or revision ability.

References


