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Enhancing Descriptive Writing Skills in EFL Learners: A Comparative Study of Recasting and Summarizing Techniques

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study explores the impact of recasting and summarizing tasks on teaching descriptive writing to Iranian EFL high school learners. It examines whether these tasks can enhance the descriptive writing performance of pre-intermediate and intermediate students.

Methods: A total of 150 male and female students aged 14 to 16 in Rasht were selected through the Assessment English Test (AET) and divided into two experimental groups (recasting and summarizing) and a control group at each proficiency level. After a pre-test, the experimental groups received eight instructional sessions incorporating recasting and summarizing tasks, while the control group followed traditional instruction. Following the intervention, students completed a post-test in which they described their city.

Results: The t-tests and ANOVA analysis supported that recasting and summarizing significantly improved learners' descriptive writing skills, with variations in effectiveness observed between pre-intermediate and intermediate learners.

Conclusion: It can be concluded that both recasting and summarizing tasks led to noticeable improvements in descriptive writing performance compared to traditional methods. Furthermore, both techniques were equally effective at the pre-intermediate and intermediate levels, though the effects were more pronounced among intermediate learners. Overall, the findings highlight the pedagogical value of integrating recasting and summarizing tasks into EFL writing instruction to promote learners' descriptive writing skills.

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1. Introduction

Writing, especially descriptive writing, is a crucial skill in English language learning, enabling learners to express their ideas and thoughts clearly and effectively. However, in the Iranian EFL context, students often face difficulties due to limited vocabulary, lack of structure, and grammatical challenges (Babaee, 2015; Dastjerdi & Samian, 2011).

Iranian EFL classrooms have traditionally followed a teacher-centered approach, prioritizing rote memorization and translation over interactive, task-based learning (Rahimi & Naderi, 2014; Zhang & Rahimi, 2014). As a result, learners' writing skills, particularly in coherence, accuracy, and content organization, remain underdeveloped. Descriptive writing, which requires conveying detailed information and expressing ideas clearly, becomes especially challenging (Nasiri & Motallebzadeh, 2016).

In this context, task-based language teaching (TBLT), which incorporates meaningful and interactive tasks, has gained attention for enhancing language skills (Ellis et al., 2020; Talebinezhad & Negari, 2015). Among various tasks, recasting and summarizing have emerged as promising techniques for improving writing. Recasting, an implicit form of corrective feedback, helps learners correct mistakes by reformulating their sentences (Loewen, 2012; Sheen, 2007). Summarizing encourages learners to condense information, focus on key points, and improve structure and coherence (Soleimani & Hosseinpour, 2019; Zabihi, 2013). Despite their benefits in language acquisition, limited research has explored their combined or comparative effectiveness in enhancing descriptive writing skills among Iranian EFL learners (Birjandi & Malmir, 2019).

This gap highlights the problem: although recasting and summarizing are beneficial in oral contexts, their impact on descriptive writing is underexplored. Writing instruction in Iranian schools remains traditional and test-oriented, often neglecting task-based approaches that could foster critical thinking and creativity (Farahian & Rezaee, 2012). As a result, pre-intermediate and intermediate EFL learners continue to struggle with producing coherent and accurate descriptive texts. The object of this study to investigate whether recasting and summarizing tasks can significantly enhance the descriptive writing skills of pre-intermediate and intermediate Iranian EFL learners. By exploring these techniques, the research seeks to provide both theoretical insights into language acquisition and practical applications for improving writing instruction in Iranian classrooms.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to contribute to both theory and practice. It will expand the literature on task-based language teaching and its role in writing development, particularly through recasting and summarizing (Nunan, 2004; Willis & Willis, 2007). The research will offer insights into integrating these techniques into instruction, focusing on their effects on writing accuracy, fluency, and organization. Practically, it will provide teachers with evidence-

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based strategies and help curriculum developers design effective writing tasks (Richards, 2013). Additionally, it will benefit students by promoting active and reflective learning, helping them overcome common writing challenges and better understand language use in various contexts. Thus, this study fills an important gap in EFL writing instruction in Iran by focusing on task-based techniques for improving descriptive writing and addressing challenges faced by learners. Although previous studies have explored task-based methods, few have specifically examined their impact on descriptive writing in the Iranian context (Ahmadian & Tavakoli, 2014). To fulfill the objectives of this research, the following research questions were proposed:

1. Does the type of task (recasting/summarizing) significantly affect pre-intermediate EFL learners' descriptive writing?

2. Does the type of task significantly affect intermediate EFL learners' descriptive writing?

3. Is there a difference in the effectiveness of summarizing and recasting tasks on descriptive writing skills among pre-intermediate learners?

2. Literature Review

The cultivation of advanced writing proficiency constitutes one of the most formidable challenges in the journey of an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learner. Achieving competence requires the seamless orchestration of a complex array of skills, spanning from micro-linguistic elements like grammatical accuracy and lexical precision to macro-structural concerns such as rhetorical coherence, ideational fluency, and logical development. In response to this multifaceted challenge, pedagogical research has progressively moved beyond traditional, form-focused drills towards approaches that embed learning within meaningful communication. Foremost among these is task-based language teaching (TBLT), which posits that language is acquired most effectively when learners' attention is primarily focused on meaning and task completion (Ellis, 2017). Within this fertile pedagogical paradigm, two instructional strategies have emerged as particularly potent: summarizing, a cognitively demanding activity that engages higher-order thinking, and recasting, a subtle form of implicit corrective feedback. A critical and comprehensive synthesis of the existing literature reveals that while each technique possesses distinct strengths and targets specific components of the writing construct, their strategic integration offers the most promising path toward holistic writing development.

Recasting, defined as a teacher's implicit reformulation of a learner's erroneous utterance into a correct one while preserving the central meaning, is deeply rooted in cognitive theories of second language acquisition. Its efficacy is primarily theorized through Schmidt's (1990) Noticing Hypothesis, which argues that learners must first consciously notice a gap between their interlanguage and the target form for acquisition to be triggered. Recasting is posited to be an ideal catalyst for this noticing, as it provides the correct model in a communicative context without the

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disruptive and potentially demotivating effects of explicit error correction, thereby preserving the fluency and flow of writing practice (Lyster & Saito, 2010).

Empirical evidence offers substantial support for this view. For instance, Zabihi (2013) demonstrated that recasting significantly reduced grammatical errors, particularly in complex sentence constructions among advanced EFL learners, suggesting its utility as a precision tool for fine-tuning a developing linguistic system. This finding is corroborated by Mayesti's (2024) recent research, which highlighted recasting's role in enhancing grammatical accuracy in descriptive writing by encouraging learners' metacognitive engagement and self-correction.

However, a critical appraisal tempers this optimism by revealing significant contextual constraints. The very subtlety that makes recasting less disruptive also renders its corrective intent ambiguous. As Lyster and Ranta (1997) famously documented, learners often perceive recasts as mere repetition or topic confirmation rather than corrective feedback. This is especially true for pre-intermediate learners, who may lack the linguistic awareness to "notice the gap." Moreover, recasting's inherent focus is on grammatical and phonological form; it offers limited, if any, direct benefit to other crucial dimensions of writing proficiency, such as idea generation, textual organization, argumentative coherence, and lexical sophistication (Hyland, 2019). Consequently, while a powerful instrument within its domain, recasting alone presents an incomplete solution.

In stark contrast to the form-focused, reactive nature of recasting, summarizing operates as a proactive, cognitively demanding task that fundamentally engages learners with content and discourse structure. To summarize effectively, a learner must navigate a complex cognitive process involving the identification of central themes, discrimination between essential and subsidiary information, and the restatement of this content concisely and coherently in their own words. This process inherently cultivates the very skills that are central to academic writing: paraphrasing, synthesis, and the logical organization of ideas (Hirvela & Du, 2013).

A robust body of research attests to its efficacy. Khoshsima and Rabani Nia (2014) found that explicit instruction in summarizing strategies led to substantial improvements in the overall clarity and organizational framework of learners' writing. The cross-cultural and cross-contextual validity of this strategy is powerfully underscored by Numan's (2019) study with Iraqi postgraduate students, which reported significant gains not only in coherence but also in grammatical range and lexical resource, implying that the intensive linguistic reprocessing involved in summarization has wide-ranging, incidental benefits for language acquisition. This view is reinforced by Mouri (2020) and Ahn (2022), who observed that the constant rephrasing and re-contextualization required by summarizing naturally directs learners' attention to syntactic form and lexical choice, thereby improving accuracy and fluency as a byproduct of a primarily meaning-focused activity. Nevertheless, a critical examination uncovers specific limitations.

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Mallahi's (2022) research provides a crucial nuance, demonstrating that while summarizing effectively enhanced the global structure and macro-coherence of Iranian EFL learners' essays, persistent difficulties with micro-level cohesion—specifically the adept use of transitional phrases and referential devices—remained. This indicates that summarizing excels at building the "skeleton" of an essay but may require supplementary, explicit instruction to flesh it out with the "muscles and tendons" of sophisticated textual connectivity.

The clear complementarity in the strengths and weaknesses of recasting and summarizing logically points toward their integration as a superior pedagogical approach. In this synergistic model, summarizing provides the macro-level framework, cognitive engagement, and ideational substance necessary for content development, while recasting offers the concurrent, micro-level, form-focused feedback required for grammatical precision and linguistic refinement.

The study by Gholami and Zeynali (2021) provides compelling empirical support for this synergy, demonstrating that learners who experienced a combined instructional regimen outperformed their peers in all key areas of writing—fluency, accuracy, and content development—compared to those exposed to a single strategy. This suggests that the two strategies are not merely additive but are interactively potent, creating an instructional condition that more comprehensively mirrors the complex reality of skilled writing. This integrated approach aligns perfectly with a balanced writing pedagogy that seeks to attend to both the writer's need to express meaning and the reader's need for clarity and correctness (Hyland, 2019). While this theoretical case for integration is strong, a significant gap remains in directly comparing the differential impacts of these two strategies on specific proficiency levels within a single, controlled study, which is the precise gap this research aims to address. Drawing on the reviewed literature and the identified research gaps, the following hypotheses were formulated to guide the present study:

1. Recasting and summarizing tasks have no significant effect on pre-intermediate EFL learners' descriptive writing.
2. Recasting and summarizing tasks have no significant effect on intermediate EFL learners' descriptive writing.
3. There is no significant difference between the effectiveness of summarizing and recasting among pre-intermediate learners.

3. Method

3.1 Study Design

This quasi-experimental study design involved 150 Iranian pre-intermediate and intermediate students who took the Assessment of English Test (AET). At each proficiency level, participants were divided into three groups: two experimental groups (25 students each) and one control group

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(25 students). The experimental groups completed either recasting or summarizing tasks, while the control group received no treatment. All groups completed a pretest measuring writing skills. After targeted instructional interventions for the experimental groups, a post-test was administered to all groups. Statistical analysis compared mean score gains to evaluate the intervention's impact.

3.2 Participants and Sampling

The study involved 150 pre-intermediate and intermediate EFL students (ages 14–16) enrolled in high schools in Rasht, Iran. Participants included both male and female students representing diverse academic tracks, such as humanities, experimental sciences, and mathematics, to ensure variation in cognitive and linguistic backgrounds, which may influence writing development (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Dörnyei, 2007). Students were divided into groups of 25 at each proficiency level, resulting in two experimental groups (recasting and summarizing) and one control group per level. Experimental groups received instruction incorporating recasting or summarizing strategies, while the control group followed the standard curriculum without targeted intervention. All groups were taught by the same instructor using identical teaching materials and procedures to minimize instructor-related variability (Ary et al., 2018).

A purposive sampling method was employed, selecting students based on their performance on the Assessment English Test (AET) to identify pre-intermediate and intermediate learners. Purposive sampling was preferred over random sampling because it allows for the deliberate inclusion of learners meeting specific proficiency criteria, which is essential for investigating differential effects of instructional interventions (Etikan et al., 2016). This method also ensures that results are relevant to the target learner population and reduces potential confounding factors related to varying English proficiency levels. By including a balanced representation of genders, academic disciplines, and proficiency levels, the study aims to provide generalizable insights into the effectiveness of recasting and summarizing tasks across diverse high school EFL learners.

3.3 Data Collection Tools and Procedures

3.3.1 Proficiency Test

To ensure participant homogeneity, the Assessment of English Test (AET) was administered prior to the study. The AET evaluates multiple writing components, including topic development, organization, vocabulary range, and grammatical accuracy. The test duration was 1.5 hours, and students were assessed under standardized conditions. Using the AET allowed the researchers to select pre-intermediate and intermediate learners deliberately, ensuring that differences in writing performance could be attributed to the instructional interventions rather than initial proficiency disparities (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Dörnyei, 2007).

3.3.2 Pretest and Posttest

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Both the pretest and posttest involved a 60-minute essay on the topic "Describe your city." The pretest established baseline writing proficiency, capturing each student's ability to generate content, organize ideas, and apply grammatical and lexical knowledge. After eight instructional sessions, the posttest, with the same prompt, measured learners' progress in descriptive writing. Using identical prompts for pre- and post-tests minimized variability due to topic familiarity while allowing for direct comparison of improvements in writing skills.

3.3.3 Treatment Procedures

Students in the experimental groups received explicit instruction in either recasting or summarizing tasks across eight 90-minute sessions, while the control group received traditional instruction without targeted strategies. Each treatment was structured to develop specific writing skills:

- **Recasting:** Instruction focused on word choice, sentence variety, sensory and descriptive details, figurative language, and self-editing strategies. Learners were encouraged to notice errors and self-correct through guided feedback and peer discussion, following principles of implicit corrective feedback (Lyster & Saito, 2010).
- **Summarizing:** Instruction targeted identifying main ideas, paraphrasing, condensing content, organizing ideas logically, and maintaining grammatical and lexical accuracy. Learners practiced synthesizing information concisely while preserving clarity and coherence, fostering both linguistic proficiency and critical thinking skills (Khoshsima & Rabani Nia, 2014; Mouri, 2020).

In both experimental groups, each session included guided practice in word and sentence substitution, followed by 30-minute timed writings to apply the target strategy independently. Across the eight sessions, students wrote essays on four thematic prompts: mother, best friend, object, and favorite food, with 75 minutes allocated per essay to produce complete compositions. This approach ensured that learners received repeated, scaffolded practice across diverse topics, enhancing generalizability and internalization of the strategies (Ahn, 2022; Numan, 2019).

3.4 Rationale and Critical Considerations

The combination of structured instruction, repeated practice, and feedback aimed to maximize skill transfer from the classroom to independent writing tasks. Using multiple topics and timed essays also mirrored authentic writing conditions, reducing the risk of performance being influenced solely by familiarity with a single prompt. Additionally, integrating both linguistic-focused recasting and cognition-focused summarizing allowed the study to critically examine which component—accuracy, content, or organization—benefits most from each intervention.

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3.5 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical procedures in SPSS (version 27). Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, minimums, and maximums, were calculated to summarize participants' writing performance across the three groups (control, summarizing, and recasting) at both pre-intermediate and intermediate proficiency levels. Prior to conducting inferential tests, the normality of the data distribution for both pretest and posttest scores was checked using the Shapiro-Wilk test, confirming that all data sets were normally distributed. Levene's test was also conducted to ensure homogeneity of variances across the groups.

Following assumption testing, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare pretest scores among the three groups, ensuring that the groups were comparable in terms of writing proficiency before the intervention. To address the research questions, paired-samples t-tests were used to examine improvements in writing skills within each group over time, and post-hoc Scheffé tests were applied to identify significant differences between the experimental and control groups after the intervention. Finally, a two-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the effects of task type (summarizing vs. recasting), proficiency level, and their interaction on posttest writing scores. The significance level for all analyses was set at $p < .05$, and partial eta-squared values were reported to indicate the effect sizes of the interventions.

4. Results

To examine the effects of the intervention, descriptive statistics were calculated for both pretest and posttest scores across different groups and tasks. These statistics provide an overview of central tendencies and variability, allowing for a preliminary comparison of performance before and after the intervention. Table 1 summarizes the means and standard deviations for each group and task, offering insight into potential patterns or trends in the data.

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Table 1. Descriptive statistics of pretest and posttest scores by task type and proficiency level

Proficiency level			N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pre-Intermediate	Pretest	Control	25	13.84	1.90	10.00	17.00
		Summarizing	25	15.00	2.19	11.00	19.00
		Recasting	25	14.36	2.27	10.00	18.00
		Total	75	14.40	2.15	10.00	19.00
	Posttest	Control	25	13.92	1.95	10.00	17.00
		Summarizing	25	16.28	2.07	12.00	19.00
		Recasting	25	15.56	1.78	13.00	19.00
		Total	75	15.25	2.15	10.00	19.00
Intermediate	Pretest	Control	25	14.16	1.77	11.00	17.00
		Summarizing	25	14.68	1.99	11.00	19.00
		Recasting	25	15.12	1.78	11.00	18.00
		Total	75	14.65	1.87	11.00	19.00
	Posttest	Control	25	14.28	1.64	11.00	17.00
		Summarizing	25	17.36	1.62	14.00	20.00
		Recasting	25	17.28	1.62	13.00	20.00
		Total	75	16.30	2.16	11.00	20.00

For the pre-intermediate group, pretest scores showed the control group (M = 13.84, SD = 1.90) had slightly lower means than the summarizing (M = 15.00, SD = 2.19) and recasting (M = 14.36, SD = 2.27) groups. These minor baseline differences are typical in quasi-experimental designs. After the intervention, the control group's posttest scores remained nearly the same (M = 13.92, SD = 1.95), suggesting traditional methods had little effect. In contrast, the summarizing (M = 16.28, SD = 2.07) and recasting (M = 15.56, SD = 1.78) groups showed notable improvements, with summarizing yielding the highest gains. The summarizing group's posttest scores ranged from 12.00 to 19.00, indicating widespread progress, while the recasting group improved similarly but to a slightly lesser extent. These results suggest that both summarizing and recasting tasks significantly enhance pre-intermediate learners' descriptive writing skills. Figure 1 illustrates pretest performance.

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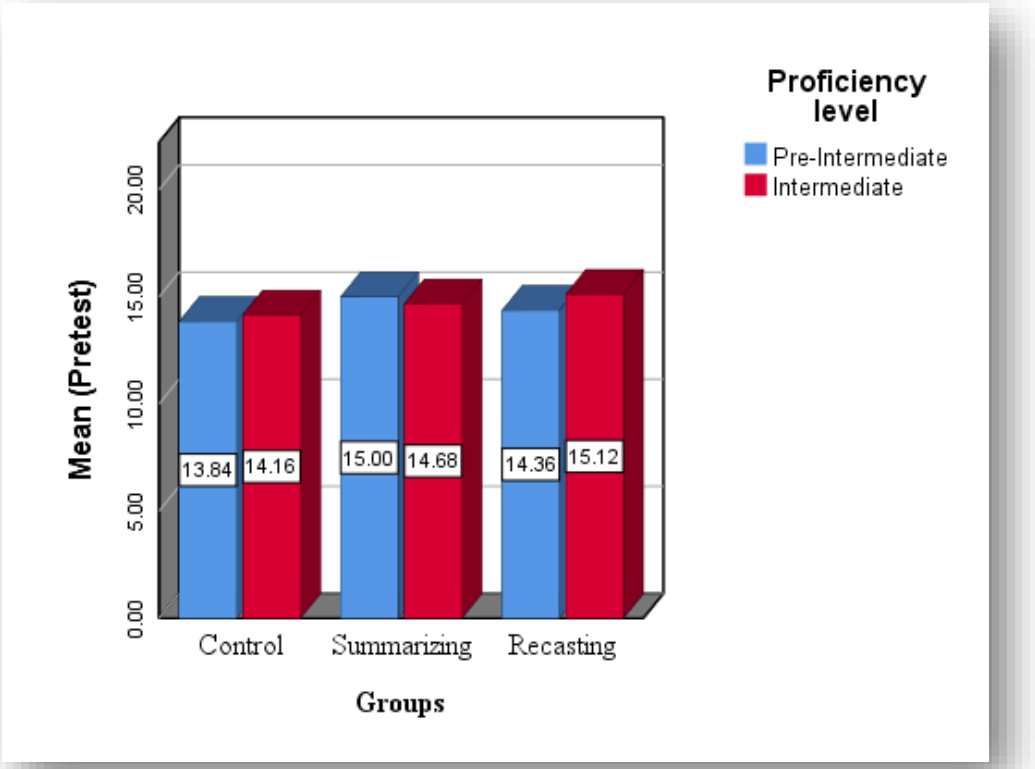


Figure 1. The participants' performance in the pretest

In the intermediate group, pretest scores were higher and more uniform: control (M = 14.16, SD = 1.77), summarizing (M = 14.68, SD = 1.99), and recasting (M = 15.12, SD = 1.78) groups had similar means, indicating comparable writing proficiency before intervention. Posttest results showed the control group's scores remained stable (M = 14.28, SD = 1.64), suggesting traditional instruction had little impact. Meanwhile, the summarizing group improved notably to 17.36 (SD = 1.62), and the recasting group to 17.28 (SD = 1.62), demonstrating both tasks' effectiveness, with summarizing slightly superior. Posttest scores ranged from 14.00 to 20.00 for summarizing and 13.00 to 20.00 for recasting, indicating broad improvement. Figure 2 shows pretest performance.

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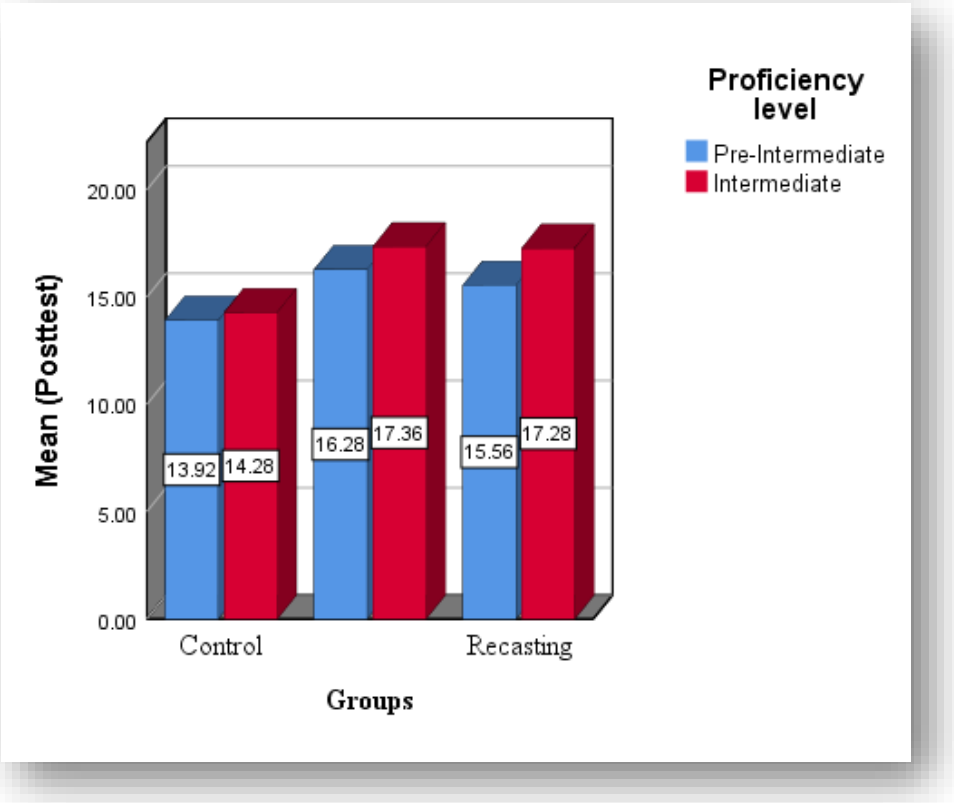


Figure 2: The participants' performance in the posttest

Descriptive statistics showed that both summarizing and recasting tasks significantly improved learners' descriptive writing at pre-intermediate and intermediate levels, with summarizing slightly more effective for pre-intermediate students.

4.1 Inferential Analysis

Following the descriptive analysis, inferential statistics tested the research hypotheses. One-way and two-way ANOVAs and t-tests were used to assess whether group differences were statistically significant. Prior to these tests, the Shapiro-Wilk test checked for normality assumptions. Significance values ($p > .05$) indicated data were normally distributed. Table 2 presents Shapiro-Wilk results for pretest and posttest scores across groups (control, summarizing, recasting) and proficiency levels.

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Table 2. Test of normality

Proficiency level		Groups	Shapiro-Wilk Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre-Intermediate	Pretest	Control	.947	25	.219
		Summarizing	.959	25	.394
		Recasting	.948	25	.223
	Posttest	Control	.952	25	.282
		Summarizing	.934	25	.108
		Recasting	.939	25	.143
Intermediate	Pretest	Control	.929	25	.082
		Summarizing	.963	25	.470
		Recasting	.936	25	.122
	Posttest	Control	.926	25	.070
		Summarizing	.951	25	.267
		Recasting	.936	25	.117

The Shapiro-Wilk test confirmed normal distribution of pretest and posttest scores across all groups and proficiency levels. For the pre-intermediate level, pretest p-values were .219 (control), .394 (summarizing), and .223 (recasting); posttest p-values were .282, .108, and .143, respectively. At the intermediate level, pretest p-values were .082 (control), .470 (summarizing), and .122 (recasting); posttest p-values were .070, .267, and .117, respectively. Since all p-values exceeded .05, normality assumptions were met, supporting the use of parametric tests. Levene's test assessed variance homogeneity, confirming equal variances across groups with non-significant results ($p > .05$), validating parametric comparisons. Detailed results appear in Table 3.

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Table 3. Test of homogeneity of variances

Proficiency level			Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Pre-Intermediate	Pretest	Based on Mean	.696	2	72	.502
		Based on Median	.548	2	72	.580
		Based on Median and with adjusted df	.548	2	70.570	.581
		Based on trimmed mean	.687	2	72	.506
	Posttest	Based on Mean	.342	2	72	.711
		Based on Median	.255	2	72	.776
		Based on Median and with adjusted df	.255	2	68.923	.776
		Based on trimmed mean	.337	2	72	.715
Intermediate	Pretest	Based on Mean	.158	2	72	.855
		Based on Median	.150	2	72	.861
		Based on Median and with adjusted df	.150	2	68.097	.861
		Based on trimmed mean	.159	2	72	.853
	Posttest	Based on Mean	.036	2	72	.964
		Based on Median	.012	2	72	.988
		Based on Median and with adjusted df	.012	2	69.224	.988
		Based on trimmed mean	.044	2	72	.957

At the pre-intermediate level, Levene's test showed non-significant p-values for both pretest and posttest scores, indicating homogeneous variances across control, summarizing, and recasting groups. This homogeneity confirmed the groups were comparable in score variability and justified using ANOVA to compare group means.

4.2 Results of One-Way ANOVA

Table 4 presents the ANOVA results comparing writing skills among the control, summarizing, and recasting groups at both pre-intermediate and intermediate levels, for pretest and posttest conditions.

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Table 4. Results of ANOVA for differences in writing skills between the groups

Proficiency level			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Pre-Intermediate	Pretest	Between Groups	16.88	2	8.44	1.858	.163
		Within Groups	327.12	72	4.54		
		Total	344.00	74			
	Posttest	Between Groups	73.14	2	36.57	9.715	.000
		Within Groups	271.04	72	3.76		
		Total	344.18	74			
Intermediate	Pretest	Between Groups	11.54	2	5.77	1.680	.194
		Within Groups	247.44	72	3.43		
		Total	258.98	74			
	Posttest	Between Groups	154.10	2	77.05	28.919	.000
		Within Groups	191.84	72	2.66		
		Total	345.94	74			

At the pre-intermediate level, the pretest showed no significant differences among control, summarizing, and recasting groups ($p = .163$), confirming comparable writing skills before intervention. However, the posttest revealed a highly significant difference ($p < .01$), indicating that summarizing and recasting tasks had a meaningful impact on learners' writing compared to the control.

Similarly, at the intermediate level, pretest scores showed no significant group differences ($p = .194$), ensuring comparability. Posttest results were highly significant ($p < .01$), with a larger F-value than the pre-intermediate level, suggesting the tasks had an even stronger effect on intermediate learners.

4.3 Results of Multiple Comparisons Using Scheffé Test

Table 5 presents Scheffé post hoc test results comparing mean posttest scores across groups (control, summarizing, recasting) at both proficiency levels. This test identified which specific groups differed following the significant ANOVA findings.

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Table 5. Multiple comparisons Scheffé test (for the posttest)

Proficiency level	(I) Groups	(J) Groups	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Pre-Intermediate	Control	Summarizing	-2.360*	.548	.000	-3.73	-.98
		Recasting	-1.640*	.548	.015	-3.01	-.26
	Summarizing	Control	2.360*	.548	.000	.98	3.73
		Recasting	.7200	.548	.427	-.65	2.09
	Recasting	Control	1.640*	.548	.015	.26	3.01
		Summarizing	-.720	.548	.427	-2.09	.65
Intermediate	Control	Summarizing	-3.080*	.461	.000	-4.23	-1.92
		Recasting	-3.000*	.461	.000	-4.15	-1.84
	Summarizing	Control	3.080*	.461	.000	1.92	4.23
		Recasting	.080	.461	.985	-1.07	1.23
	Recasting	Control	3.000*	.461	.000	1.84	4.15
		Summarizing	-.080	.461	.985	-1.23	1.07

*. The mean difference was significant at the 0.05 level.

At the pre-intermediate level, significant differences were found between the control and task-based groups. The summarizing group outperformed the control group with a mean difference of -2.360 (p = .000, 95% CI: -3.73 to -0.98), and the recasting group also exceeded the control with a mean difference of -1.640 (p = .015, 95% CI: -3.01 to -0.26). However, the difference between summarizing and recasting was not significant (mean difference = 0.720, p = .427), suggesting both tasks were similarly effective. At the intermediate level, both summarizing (-3.080, p = .000, 95% CI: -4.23 to -1.92) and recasting (-3.000, p = .000, 95% CI: -4.15 to -1.84) groups significantly outperformed the control group. No significant difference was found between summarizing and recasting (mean difference = 0.080, p = .985). This confirms both tasks effectively improved writing skills at both levels, with summarizing showing a slightly stronger effect for pre-intermediate learners, and both tasks equally strong for intermediate learners.

4.4 Results of Paired Samples t-Test

Table 6 shows paired samples t-test results comparing pretest and posttest scores within each group (control, summarizing, recasting) at both proficiency levels. This test examines whether writing skills improved significantly over time within each group, relating directly to the study's aims.

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Table 6. Paired samples t-test

				Mean difference	Std. Deviation	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-Intermediate	Control	Pretest Posttest	-	-.080	.400	-1.00	24	.327
	Summarizing	Pretest Posttest	-	-1.280	2.227	-2.87	24	.008
	Recasting	Pretest Posttest	-	-1.200	1.892	-3.17	24	.004
Intermediate	Control	Pretest Posttest	-	-.120	.525	-1.14	24	.265
	Summarizing	Pretest Posttest	-	-2.680	.802	-16.70	24	.000
	Recasting	Pretest Posttest	-	-2.160	.850	-12.69	24	.000

For the pre-intermediate control group, the comparison of pretest and posttest scores showed no significant improvement (mean difference = -0.080, SD = 0.400, t = -1.00, p = .327). This indicated that without task-based interventions, writing skills did not improve significantly.

The pre-intermediate summarizing group showed a significant improvement (mean difference = -1.280, SD = 2.227, t = -2.87, p = .008), confirming the effectiveness of summarizing. Similarly, the pre-intermediate recasting group also improved significantly (mean difference = -1.200, SD = 1.892, t = -3.17, p = .004), showing recasting's positive impact. At the intermediate level, the control group again showed no significant change (mean difference = -0.120, SD = 0.525, t = -1.14, p = .265). However, both the summarizing group (mean difference = -2.680, SD = 0.802, t = -16.70, p = .000) and the recasting group (mean difference = -2.160, SD = 0.850, t = -12.69, p = .000) demonstrated highly significant improvements, indicating strong benefits from these interventions for more proficient learners.

Overall, paired samples t-tests revealed that summarizing and recasting significantly enhanced writing skills at both proficiency levels, while the control group showed no significant gains. For pre-intermediate learners, both tasks were equally effective, and improvements were even greater for intermediate learners, highlighting the value of task-based approaches.

4.5 Results of Two-Way ANOVA

Table 7 presents the two-way ANOVA results examining the effects of group, proficiency level, and their interaction on posttest scores. The between-subjects effects test reveals how these factors contribute to variance in writing performance.

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Table 7. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Posttest

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Groups	215.680	2	107.840	33.549	.000	.318
Proficiency level	41.607	1	41.607	12.944	.000	.082
Groups * Proficiency level	11.573	2	5.787	1.800	.169	.024
Error	462.880	144	3.214			
Total	38083.000	150				
Corrected Total	731.740	149				

a. R Squared = .367 (Adjusted R Squared = .345)

The analysis revealed that both task type (recasting vs. summarizing) and proficiency level significantly affected posttest descriptive writing scores. Task type accounted for 31.8% of the variance, indicating a large effect, while proficiency level accounted for 8.2%, a moderate effect. The interaction between task type and proficiency was not significant, showing that task effectiveness was consistent across proficiency levels. Together, these factors explained 36.7% of the variance in posttest scores.

Regarding hypothesis testing, for pre-intermediate learners, both summarizing and recasting tasks led to significant improvements in descriptive writing skills ($p < .01$), with ANOVA confirming differences between the control and experimental groups. Thus, the null hypothesis stating no task effect was rejected. Similarly, for intermediate learners, both tasks significantly enhanced writing skills ($p = .000$), and ANOVA results supported the effectiveness of task-based interventions at this level, leading to rejection of the null hypothesis.

When comparing summarizing and recasting, no significant differences were found for pre-intermediate learners ($p = .427$), as supported by both post-hoc Scheffé tests and two-way ANOVA results. This indicated equal effectiveness of the two tasks, and the null hypothesis of no difference was supported. The same pattern was observed for intermediate learners, with non-significant differences between tasks ($p = .985$), and proficiency level did not affect task effectiveness. Hence, the null hypothesis was also supported at this level.

4.6 Results of Hypothesis Testing

RQ1: Does the type of task (recasting/summarizing) have any statistically significant effect on pre-intermediate EFL learners' descriptive writing skill?

H01: The type of task (recasting/summarizing) does not have a statistically significant effect on pre-intermediate EFL learners' descriptive writing skills.

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To address the above research question, the results of the one-way ANOVA and paired samples t-tests for pre-intermediate EFL learners were used (Tables 4 & 6). The mean difference between the pretest and posttest scores for the summarizing group was -1.280, with a t-value of -2.87 and a significance level of .008. This result indicated that there was a statistically significant improvement in descriptive writing skills for learners who engaged in summarizing tasks ($p < .01$). The mean difference for the recasting group was -1.200, with a t-value of -3.17 and a significance level of .004. This also showed that there was a statistically significant improvement in writing skills ($p < .01$). Similar to summarizing, the negative mean difference suggested that recasting tasks led to a significant enhancement in descriptive writing skills. Moreover, based on ANOVA results, statistically significant differences were found between the control and the two experimental groups. Therefore, both recasting and summarizing tasks have a significant effect on pre-intermediate EFL learners' descriptive writing skills. This finding rejected the first null hypothesis and indicated that different types of tasks can lead to high improvements in pre-intermediate EFL learners' descriptive writing skills.

RQ 2: Does the type of task (recasting/summarizing) have any statistically significant effect on intermediate EFL learners 'descriptive writing skill?

H0 2: The type of task (recasting/summarizing) does not have a statistically significant effect on intermediate EFL learners' descriptive writing skills.

For the intermediate EFL learners, the paired samples t-tests results (table 6) showed that for summarizing group the mean difference between the pretest and posttest scores was -2.680, with a t-value of -16.70 and a significance level of .000. This result was highly significant, which suggested that summarizing tasks have a statistically significant effect on improving intermediate EFL learners' descriptive writing skills. The mean difference for recasting was -2.160, with a t-value of -12.69 and a significance level of .000.

In addition, the results of one-way ANOVA (Table 6) showed that there was a statistically significant difference between the control and the experimental groups. This indicated a significant improvement in writing skills, similar to summarizing tasks, and confirmed that recasting tasks also effectively enhance intermediate EFL learners' descriptive writing skills. Thus, both types of tasks (recasting and summarizing) have a significant effect on intermediate EFL learners' descriptive writing skills, which show that these instructional methods are effective in improving writing proficiency at this level as well.

RQ3: Is there any statistically significant difference in the effectiveness of summarizing and recasting tasks on improving descriptive writing skills among pre-intermediate EFL learners?

H03: There is not any statistically significant difference in the effectiveness of summarizing and recasting tasks on improving descriptive writing skills among pre-intermediate EFL learners.

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The analysis of the third research question and hypothesis revealed findings based on the post-hoc Scheffe and two-way ANOVA results (Tables 5& 7). The post-hoc Scheffe test results revealed a non-significant mean difference of 0.720 between the summarizing and recasting groups ($p = .427$), with a 95% confidence interval that ranged from -0.65 to 2.09. This indicates that the two tasks did not produce significantly different effects on pre-intermediate learners' descriptive writing skills. The non-significant result suggested that both summarizing and recasting tasks were similarly effective, meaning that one task was not superior to the other in enhancing writing skills at this proficiency level.

Additionally, the results of two-way ANOVA (Table 7) showed that the relevant interaction effect between groups (task type) and proficiency level (pre-intermediate) was not statistically significant, as indicated by the p-value of .169 for the groups and proficiency level interaction. This suggested that the effectiveness of summarizing versus recasting tasks does not significantly differ based on proficiency level. Since the interaction effect was not significant, it could be concluded that the effectiveness of these tasks does not significantly differ between pre-intermediate and intermediate levels. Therefore, the third null hypothesis (H03) was supported, which posits that there is no statistically significant difference in the effectiveness of summarizing and recasting tasks among pre-intermediate EFL learners.

5. Discussion

The results of this study underscore the effectiveness of recasting and summarizing tasks in enhancing descriptive writing skills among Iranian EFL learners, contributing to existing literature on these strategies. The findings indicate that both strategies, implemented with pre-intermediate and intermediate learners, significantly improved various aspects of writing, including content development, organization, grammatical accuracy, and fluency. The study's outcomes suggest that these two approaches, although distinct in their focus, can complement each other in promoting comprehensive writing skills in the EFL classroom.

Both recasting and summarizing tasks led to considerable improvements in students' writing performance when compared to the control group, which followed traditional instructional methods. This is consistent with the work of Zabihi (2013), who found that recasting effectively enhanced grammatical accuracy in advanced EFL learners, and Khoshsima and Rabani Nia (2014), who demonstrated that summarizing tasks significantly improved the content and organization of students' writing. The results of this study extend these findings by showing that recasting and summarizing are also effective for learners at the pre-intermediate and intermediate levels, not only in improving grammatical accuracy but also in enhancing content structure and coherence.

The impact of summarizing on writing skills was particularly prominent in this study. Summarizing tasks required students to synthesize complex ideas and present them concisely,

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which promoted deeper cognitive engagement with the material. This process encourages students to distill the most important information, fostering better content organization. As Khoshsima and Rabani Nia (2014) and Mallahi (2022) highlighted, summarization can significantly improve writing organization by helping students structure their ideas logically and clearly. This study similarly found that students who participated in summarizing tasks were better able to organize their thoughts and present them coherently in their descriptive writing. Summarizing encourages learners to focus on key ideas, which enhances both comprehension and expression, particularly in descriptive contexts.

Moreover, summarization tasks were found to be especially effective for improving content organization. Learners who engaged in summarizing tasks structured their descriptions in a more organized manner, identifying and emphasizing the most important elements. This aligns with the findings of Numan (2019), who argued that summarizing encourages greater clarity and coherence in academic writing. Students in the summarizing group demonstrated the ability to break down the complexity of their writing tasks, presenting their ideas in a more structured and effective manner. However, while summarizing tasks were effective for content organization, some students struggled with maintaining cohesion in their writing. As Mallahi (2022) noted, summarization can sometimes result in difficulties with linking ideas smoothly, as students may become focused on content reduction and lose sight of the overall flow of the text. In this study, some students faced challenges in creating seamless transitions between ideas, indicating that summarization, while improving organization, may require additional instruction on cohesion strategies, such as the use of transition words and cohesive devices.

In contrast, the recasting strategy proved particularly effective in improving students' grammatical accuracy, supporting findings from Zabihi (2013) and Mayesti (2024). Recasting, by reformulating incorrect language forms into their correct versions, allows learners to notice and internalize language structures without interrupting the flow of their writing. This non-intrusive form of corrective feedback enables students to focus on the meaning of their writing while still learning the correct grammatical structures. The recasting group in this study showed notable improvements in accuracy and fluency, demonstrating the effectiveness of this feedback strategy in refining learners' language skills. The non-intrusive nature of recasting allows students to continue expressing their ideas without frequent disruptions for error correction, which is particularly important in maintaining fluency in writing. This finding aligns with previous studies, such as Lyster and Saito (2010), which emphasized the benefits of implicit feedback for improving both fluency and accuracy in second language writing.

Interestingly, the intermediate-level students showed greater improvement in their writing compared to the pre-intermediate group, especially in terms of grammatical accuracy. This result suggests that students with a more developed understanding of language structures may benefit

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more from recasting and summarizing tasks, as they are better equipped to apply feedback and strategies effectively. Ahn (2022) observed a similar trend in his study, noting that more advanced learners are better able to utilize feedback to enhance their writing skills. The cognitive demands of summarization may be more suited to intermediate learners, as they have a stronger grasp of language structures and can engage more deeply with the material.

Moreover, the lack of significant difference between the two experimental groups—those engaging in summarizing and those engaged in recasting—suggests that both strategies can be equally effective in improving writing skills, albeit in different ways. Summarizing tasks are primarily focused on content generation and organization, helping students synthesize and structure their ideas, while recasting focuses more on grammatical accuracy and fluency. This finding supports the idea that a dual approach to writing instruction can address both content and language form, offering a more holistic method for improving writing proficiency. Gholami and Zeynali (2021) emphasized that combining cognitive strategies, such as summarization, with linguistic strategies like recasting, can provide learners with a well-rounded toolkit for developing their writing abilities.

The results of this study also suggest that integrating both summarizing and recasting tasks in tandem could potentially maximize the benefits of both strategies. For example, teachers could combine summarization tasks with recast feedback to help students not only organize their thoughts effectively but also receive constructive feedback on their grammatical structures. This approach would allow students to improve both the clarity and accuracy of their writing, fostering more well-rounded writers. Integrating both strategies would offer a comprehensive approach to writing instruction, addressing the cognitive and linguistic aspects of writing in a balanced and effective manner.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlights the efficacy of both recasting and summarizing tasks in improving the descriptive writing skills of Iranian EFL learners. These results support the integration of both strategies into EFL classrooms, where teachers can adopt a more comprehensive, balanced approach to writing instruction that addresses both cognitive and linguistic challenges. Actually, by combining both strategies, instructors can provide a comprehensive writing curriculum that enhances both the content and accuracy of students' written output, ultimately leading to more proficient EFL writers.

6.1 Pedagogical Implications

This research presents several key educational implications. Firstly, it emphasizes the value of integrating both summarizing and recasting activities into writing instruction to enhance students' writing abilities. Summarizing encourages learners to engage in critical thinking by organizing

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ideas and synthesizing information, essential skills for creating cohesive and logically structured texts. In contrast, recasting focuses on linguistic accuracy, helping students refine their grammar and vocabulary use, thereby improving fluency and correctness. Used together, these tasks provide a more comprehensive method for developing writing skills.

Moreover, the discovery that both task types are equally beneficial across various proficiency levels suggests that educators don't need to strictly match tasks to students' language levels. Instead, instructional decisions should be guided by the specific goals of the writing curriculum. For instance, summarizing might be more effective for enhancing content-related skills, while recasting may serve learners who require targeted linguistic support. Employing a mix of both techniques enables instructors to address the cognitive and language-oriented dimensions of writing in a balanced way.

6.2 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Despite its contributions, this study has certain limitations. It was carried out with Iranian EFL learners, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to learners from different cultural or linguistic contexts. Future studies should replicate this research in a variety of educational settings to determine if the results hold true across diverse learner populations.

Additionally, this research focused exclusively on descriptive writing. Therefore, the outcomes might not be applicable to other writing genres, such as argumentative or narrative forms. Further investigations could explore the influence of summarizing and recasting tasks in different writing styles to assess their broader applicability. Longitudinal studies tracking student progress over extended periods would also offer more comprehensive insights into the sustained impact of these strategies on writing development.

Another limitation lies in the study's use of posttest scores as the sole measure of progress. Future research should incorporate both summative and formative assessments to provide a fuller picture of learners' writing growth. Moreover, gathering qualitative data—such as student interviews or analysis of writing samples—could yield deeper understanding of learners' engagement with these tasks and the specific techniques they use to enhance their writing.

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