According to Table 9, the one-way analysis of variance revealed that there was not any significant difference among the groups concerning their scores on complexity considering F = 0.19 , P = 0.90 > 0.05. To find out the significant difference in the participants’ performance on posttest oral speech complexity among the four groups, another ANOVA was run, the outcome of which is shown in Tables 10 and 11.

Table 10: Descriptive Statistics on Posttest Complexity for the EXG1, EXG2, EXG3, and CONG

|  | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean | Minimum | Maximum |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| EXG1 | 20 | 44.24 | .87 | .19 | 43.83 | 44.65 | 42.38 | 45.56 |
| EXG2 | 20 | 43.25 | .98 | .44 | 42.15 | 44.01 | 40.12 | 46.75 |
| EXG3 | 20 | 42.63 | .93 | .20 | 42.19 | 43.07 | 40.83 | 44.53 |
| CONG | 20 | 42.93 | .97 | .21 | 42.48 | 43.39 | 41.22 | 44.44 |
| Total | 80 | 43.22 | 1.39 | .15 | 42.91 | 43.53 | 40.12 | 46.75 |

Table 10 indicated that mean scores among the four groups under study were different, showing that the groups had different performance on complexity on the posttest stage.

Table 11: ANOVA Test of Posttest Complexity

| Between Groups | 29.69 | 3 | 9.89 | 6.05 | .00 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Within Groups | 124.25 | 76 | 1.63 |  |  |
| Total | 153.95 | 79 |  |  |  |

Based on the information in Table 11, the ANOVA analysis indicated significant differences in the complexity scores of the participants among the four groups (F = 6.05 > 1.00; P = 0.00 < 0.05). Thus, it can be concluded that the task variation was effective on the improvement of oral speech complexity in the participants of different groups examined in this study. Accordingly, the null hypothesis that suggested there was not any significant difference in the oral speech complexity scores of EFL learners treated by task variation was rejected. In addition, to indicate the place of differences among the groups statistically, a Post Hoc test was conducted. Its results were illustrated in Table 12.

Table 12: Post Hoc Test on Complexity for the EXG1, EXG2, EXG3, and CONG

| (I) Task variation | (J) Task variation | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. | 95% Confidence Interval |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| EXG1 | EXG2 | 1.15\* | .40 | .04 | .00 | 2.31 |
| EXG3 | 1.60\* | .40 | .02 | .45 | 2.76 |
| CONG | 1.30\* | .40 | .00 | .14 | 2.46 |
| EXG2 | EXG1 | -1.15 | .40 | .04 | -2.3 | -.00 |
| EXG3 | .44 | .40 | .74 | -.70 | 1.60 |
| CONG | .14 | .40 | .98 | -1.00 | 1.30 |
| EXG3 | EXG1 | -1.60 | .40 | .02 | -2.76 | -.45 |
| EXG2 | -.44 | .40 | .74 | -1.60 | .70 |
| CONG | -.30 | .40 | .0.90  | -1.45 | .85 |
| CONG | EXG1 | -1.30 | .40 | .00 | -2.46 | -.14 |
| EXG2 | -.14 | .40 | .98 | -1.30 | 1.00 |
| EXG3 | .30 | .40 | .90 | -.85 | 1.45 |

According to Table 12, the level of significance between EXG1 and EXG2 were shown as 0.04 which was lower than 0.05. This indicated that the two groups were significantly different after the treatment. Also, the level of significance between EXG1 and EXG3 was shown as 0.02 which was again lower than 0.05. This indicated that the two groups were significantly different after the treatment. As for a comparison between EXG1 and CONG, the level of significance was 0.00 which was again lower than 0.05 and indicated that the two groups were significantly different after the treatment. However, it was revealed that levels of significance between EXG2 and EXG3 and also between EXG2 and CONG were higher than 0.05, showing no significant difference after the treatment. In addition, as for EXG3 and CONG, the level of significance was 0.09. So it can be concluded that the two groups did not show any significant difference after the treatment. Considering the mean scores of the four groups, it can be concluded that the first experimental group which has been treated by way of three different tasks, by having the highest mean score has outperformed the other three groups.

**5. Discussion**

The main point that this study explored was to investigate the effects of task variation on two components of accuracy and complexity of Iranian intermediate EFL learners’ oral speech. For this purpose, eighty EFL learners were randomly assigned into four comparison groups, each comprising twenty participants. The research questions of this study separately asked whether the employment of task variation would have any effects on Iranian intermediate EFL learners’ accuracy and complexity. In accordance with these research questions, two null hypotheses were also proposed stating that using task variation would have no impact on EFL learners’ accuracy and complexity in oral speech.

The statistical analysis related to accuracy results show significant differences in the groups’ achievement in accuracy after they received treatment (Table 6). It was inferred that there were significant differences among the groups’ oral accuracy scores instructed by various tasks. It was then concluded that task variation was effective on the EFL learners’ accuracy in oral speech. Accordingly, the null hypothesis of accuracy was rejected. To represent the significant levels of differences among the posttest scores of EXG1, EXG2, EXG3, and CONG, a Post Hoc test was run to calculate the differences (Table 7). Based on the statistical analyses obtained from the Post Hoc results, it was shown that there were significant levels of differences among the groups after the treatment fulfillment. It was inferred that the EXG1, treated through a variety of three tasks involving dialogue completion, group dialogue, and dialogue unscrambling, had the highest performance of the three groups (EXG2, EXG3, and CONG) on the component of accuracy in oral speech. A variety of three tasks, through which the EXG1 was treated, resulted in higher achievement in the participants’ speech accuracy. There were also significant differences between EXG2 and CONG as well as between EXG3 and CONG, indicating that the groups were significantly different after being treated by their required tasks.

The data obtained from the relevant statistical procedures on oral speech complexity, concerning the second hypothesis, revealed that task variation was effective on the improvement of the speech complexity in EXG1, EXG2, EXG3, and CONG, treated by various tasks. Worded differently, the results of the statistical analyses on complexity (Table 11) conducted on the posttest scores of the groups (EXG1, EXG2, EXG3, and CONG) showed significant differences in their performance on complexity. These findings indicated the efficacy of task variation on the intermediate EFL learners’ achievement in oral speech complexity. The results of the Post Hoc test, conducted on the posttest complexity scores of EXG1, EXG2, EXG3, and CONG (Table 12), showed that there existed significant difference between EXG1 and EXG2, EXG1 and EXG3, as well as, EXG1 and CONG. indicating that the groups were significantly different after the treatment. It was shown that the EXG1, treated by a variety of three tasks including dialogue completion, group dialogue, and dialogue unscrambling, outperformed the other groups in terms of complexity achievement.

The finding of the study show that exposing the learners to various tasks supplies them with the situation to get more deeply engaged in the process of meaningful learning. This study showed that the nature of the tasks that L2 learners were engaged in prepares them to prioritize different aspects of language. It is discussed that L2 learner's performance differs from task to task. In other words, different task types will yield to different kinds of production by L2 learners. Therefore, a particular type of task that a learner is asked to perform will also result in variation. This kind of variation, which is due to task differences, is called "task-induced variation" by Ellis. He argues that this is best considered as a blanket term to cover the variability evident when learners perform different tasks (Ellis, 1994:135). This idea is also confirmed by Tarone (1982, 1983, 1985, 1988, 1990), who argues that as second language learners perform different tasks, their production of some grammatical, morphological, and phonological forms will vary in a particular manner. Accordingly, this study recommends employing task variation in EFL contexts where learners have limited opportunities to use the target language outside the classrooms. Likewise, the study proposes that using task variation in conversation classes is effective for intermediate-level learners, helping them enhance their complexity and accuracy in oral speech.

The findings of this study seem to be in line with the results achieved by Birjandi and Alipour, (2010), Munirah and Muhsin (2015), Safari Vesal, Safari Vesal, and Tavakoli (2015) Seifoori and Goudarzi (2012), Teng (2007), and Witton-Davies (2016), through which they examined EFL learners’ speaking accuracy and complexity through a variety of task-based instruction and reported effective results in learners’ improvement in these two components. The findings of the current study, however, as far as the complexity results are concerned, are not consistent with what Shoarnaghavi, Seifoori, and Ghafoori (2014) reported in that the two variety of tasks examined did not result in the participants’ enhancement in speech complexity, saying that there were not any significant differences in the performance of the groups on oral speech complexity. Moreover, the results of this study are not found to be consistent with Rahimpour and Mehrang’s (2010) findings on the impact of two varieties of task structure on the performance of Iranian EFL learners with regard to speech accuracy and complexity. The results of their study showed that the two varieties of task structure did not have any effect on the accuracy and complexity of oral performance.

Therefore, the findings of this study, being in line with those of the studies mentioned above, can be a good justification for putting more emphasis on teaching two components of accuracy and complexity of oral speech through task variation in EFL classes. As it can be inferred from the results of this study, a variation of three tasks like dialogue completion, group dialogue, and dialogue unscrambling can be more effective than a single type of task such as dialogue completion, dialogue unscrambling, or group dialogue in developing accuracy and complexity in EFL classes.

The greater accuracy in the performance of the first group treated through different task types can be interpreted in terms of Long's view (1985) that different tasks will lead learners to stretch their interlanguage resources. The accuracy can also be interpreted in terms of Givon's (1985) pragmatic and syntactic modes demanding learners to use greater syntactic resources and abilities which will lead to an increase in grammatical accuracy. The accuracy can also be attributed to the load of attention paid by the learners to the different tasks than paid to just one task. The better performance in various task types can also be attributed to Tarone (1979), claiming that language varies with a subtle shift of situation, just as a chameleon changes as its surroundings change. She proposes that the interlanguage of L2 should be viewed as a variable system, a system that changes when a linguistic environment changes.

**6. Conclusion**

This study attempted to investigate the effectiveness of task variation of TBLT approach in enhancing accuracy and complexity of Iranian intermediate EFL learners’ oral speech. The findings of the study indicated that employing various tasks in the form of task variation produced positive effects on the learners’ two features of accuracy and complexity based upon their performance on their oral posttest. Their effects, however, were shown to be different from each other, depending upon the type of task variation. Relying on the results of this study, it was revealed that the first experimental group who was treated through a variation of three tasks, i.e., group dialogue, dialogue completion, and dialogue unscrambling, outperformed other groups in terms of accuracy and complexity.

Relying upon the results of the present study, the following pedagogical implications can be drawn. The findings of the current study can be of interest to learners, language teaching decision makers, and syllabus designers. The findings of this study are useful for EFL learners who have limited chance for improving accuracy and complexity of the target language outside classrooms. Being involved in task-based instruction involving task variation prepares learners to practice oral speech in the context of the various speaking tasks, encouraging them to focus on the accuracy in the initial stage of the task (pre-task stage), next on fluency and spontaneous speaking during performing the task, and then reflect and acquire more skills at the post-task stage. Learners, in this way, are given wider chance to improve conversation management with their usual focus on grammar and vocabulary. Supplying learners with various tasks increases their chance and creates them the situation to get more deeply engaged in the process of meaningful learning. Likewise, the findings of the current study are beneficial to language teaching decision makers as stakeholders in the field of language teaching. In fact, utilizing a variety of speaking tasks of (i.e. dialogue completion, group dialogue, and dialogue unscrambling) can provide tremendous opportunities for learners to enhance their accuracy and complexity of speech compared to traditional language teaching methods. EFL teachers are needed to focus on the implementation of various tasks through which they can provide further chance to their learners to pay more attention to the simultaneous enhancement of the two components of oral speech, i.e., accuracy and complexity in students. Exposing students to various tasks in oral speech features allows teachers to create more opportunities for eliciting further characteristics from their candidates’ speaking abilities so that teachers can identify their learners’ weaknesses and strengths in speaking and inform them of ways of overcoming shortcomings in their speaking ability. Task variation is more likely to allow candidates to manifest their best levels of speaking abilities than the contexts where the students are taught through a single task. This idea is supported by Skehan (1998b) claiming that as learners pay attention to one aspect of a demanding task, they find it difficult to attend to another aspect. Moreover, the findings of this study may be beneficial to syllabus designers to incorporate task variation of TBLT approach into the language methodology and to encourage language teachers to draw the learners’ attention to the two essential features of speaking skill i. e., accuracy and complexity while completing tasks. As a result, massive and considerable improvement on the learners’ oral speech can be observed.

The present study was conducted to eighty intermediate EFL learners incorporating a variation of three tasks. The future studies of similar nature are proposed to incorporate other levels of proficiency including pre-intermediate and advanced candidates. Given the design of the current study, three various tasks were chosen as independent variables to serve the purpose of the research work. It is suggested that the future researchers incorporate some more tasks of similar nature which are applicable to spoken language. Certain limitations were involved in the present study. One limitation was that the study was conducted with a small size of population including Iranian intermediate-level EFL learners studying English at the Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon branch. The study should involve more participants at different proficiency levels in order to generalize the results for larger groups. Another limitation of the present study was that it incorporated an unequal number of both genders. Thus, for other researchers, equal number of both genders may be considered in order to make broader generalization about the results.

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