An Evaluation of A Suggested Instructional Writing Model in Freshmen English Writing Classes in Iran

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ABSTRACT

The curriculum for teaching undergraduate university students in Iran majoring in English generally includes paragraph writing during the third semester and essay writing (4-5 paragraphs) during the fifth semester. In spite of their titles, the first-year 'Grammar & Writing (I & II)' courses offered in the first and second semesters cover grammar only and rarely go beyond sentence-level writing in support of the newly taught grammar. This policy has created a gap between writing and other language skills, making it difficult for these students to deal with the demanding writing tasks such as extended writing assignments and projects later in their academic or professional life. In addition, the syllabus for writing courses, offered during the second and third years, is product-based, which has deprived students of the opportunities to engage in meaningful writing activities and to receive effective and efficient feedback on their work. The current study, however, challenges the delay in teaching writing as well as the use of traditional approaches in writing classes, describing and evaluating a teaching intervention within the process genre approach in freshmen English translation writing classes.

Both quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments including pre- and post-tests, pre- and post-intervention questionnaires, timed writing tasks, semi-structured interviews, and observation notes were employed during different phases of the study to gain insights into students' engagement with this instruction, and to triangulate the data collected from different sources. The instruction for each semester (16 weeks) was designed based on a three-session (modeling, composing, and feedback) modular instructional model that focused on helping students write within four

rhetorical modes: descriptive, narrative, process, and cause and effect.

The analysis of data from different sources revealed that students made a significant development in the fluency, accuracy, and quality of their writing over the course of the study. The results also indicated a significant change in students' attitudes towards writing as well as their acquisition and use of effective writing strategies at both paragraph and essay levels. In particular, students perceived feedback, the incorporation of samples and authentic reading materials, and portfolio writing as the most successful elements of this instructional writing model.

The findings of this study highlighted the effectiveness of a writing intervention in first-year writing classes, and suggested that postponing writing instruction per se until the second year is questionable and that applying an eclectic approach to writing pedagogy may better compensate for students' needs and contextual deficiencies. In addition, the findings imply that the use of more post-product writing approaches can promote the integration of reading and writing skills and therefore support learning other language learning areas such as vocabulary, grammar, and reading. These findings could inform similar EFL contexts with respect to the consideration of a writing curriculum and pedagogy commensurate with students' real needs in academic writing.

Keywords: instructional writing model, process genre approach, curriculum design, writing pedagogy, writing assessment, feedback, portfolio writing, EFL, Iran

ÖZ

İran'da İngiliz dili eğitimi gören lisans öğrencilerinin yazma dersi öğretim programı genellikle üçüncü dönemde 'paragraf düzeyinde yazma'yı, beşinci dönemde de (4-5 paragraflık) 'kompozisyon yazma'yı içermektedir. Bu öğrencilere birinci ve ikinci dönemlerde 'Yazma ve Dilbilgisi' dersleri verilmesine karşın, bu dersler yalnızca dilbilgisi konularını içermekte ve daha çok yeni öğretilen dilbilgisi konularını destekleyen ve ender olarak cümle düzeyini aşan yazma alıştırmalarından oluşmaktadır. Bu durum yazma becerisi ile diğer dil becerileri arasında bir boşluk yaratmakta; bu da öğrencilerin daha sonraki akademik veya mesleki yaşamlarında başa çıkmak zorunda kalacakları uzun yazma ödevlerini ve projeleri, onlar için daha da zor hale getirmektedir. Buna ek olarak, ikinci ve üçüncü sınıfta verilen yazma derslerinin izlencesi ürün-odaklı olup, öğrencileri anlamlı yazma aktivitelerinden mahrum kılmakta, yazdıkları hakkında etkili ve yararlı geribildirim almalarına imkan tanımamaktadır. Bu çalışma ise, gecikmeli olarak yapılan yazma öğretimine ve yazma derslerinde geleneksel yaklaşımların takip edilmesine karşı çıkmakta olup, birinci sınıfta verilen yazma derslerinde süreç-tür tabanlı yaklaşım çerçevesinde devreye sokulan yeni bir öğretim tekniğinin yazma eğitimi ve izlencesinin geliştirilmesi açısından tanıtımını ve değerlendirilmesini amaçlamaktadır.

Çalışmanın farklı evrelerinde, öğrencilerin bu yeni öğretim tekniğini nasıl karşıladıklarına ilişkin görüşlerini elde etmek amacıyla, uygulama öncesi ve sonrasında uygulanan anketler, sınavlar, yarı-resmi mülakatlar ve gözlem notları gibi hem niteliksel hem de niceliksel veri toplama araçları kullanılmış ve çeşitli kaynaklardan elde edilen veriler çeşitleme yöntemiyle karşılaştırılmıştır. 16 haftalık

öğretim materyali, 'modelleme', 'yazma' ve 'dönüt'ten oluşan üç oturumlu birimsel bir modeldir. Bu model öğrencilerin betimsel, anlatısal, süreç ve neden-sonuç biçimlerinde olmak üzere dört yazma biçiminde yazmaya odaklanmasına yardımcı olmuştur.

Toplanan verilerin çözümlenmesi öğrencilerin yazma becerilerinin doğruluk, akıcılık ve kalite açısından anlamlı olarak geliştiğini ortaya çıkarmıştır. Sonuçlar, hem paragraf hem de kompozisyon yazma düzeyinde öğrencilerin yazma stratejileri edinmelerinin ve etkili biçimde kullanmalarının olumlu yönde değiştiğini göstermiştir. Öğrenciler, yazma öğretiminde kullanılan bu modelin en etkili öğeleri olarak, geribildirimi, örnek ve özgün materyallerin kullanılmasını ve yazma dosyası tutmayı saymışlardır.

Araştırmada elde edilen bulgular yazma öğretimini ikinci sınıfa ertelemenin tartışılır olduğunu; birinci sınıftaki yazma derslerinde uygulanan yeni yazma öğretimi modelinin ise etkili olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. İzlenecek karma yaklaşımın, öğrencilerin yazma becerisine ilişkin gereksinimlerini karşılamada ve ortama dayalı eksikliklerin telafi edilmesinde etkili olabileceği görüşü de ortaya çıkan sonuçlar arasındadır. Bulgular ayrıca yazma öğretiminde güncel yöntemlerin kullanılmasının, öğrencilerin okuma ve yazma etkinliklerini bütünleştirmelerine yardımcı olduğunu; aynı zamanda sözcük, dilbilgisi ve okuma alanlarını desteklediğini de ortaya koymaktadır. Bu çalışma İngilizce'nin öğretimiyle uğraşan benzer kurumlarda öğrencilerin akademik yazmaya yönelik gerçek gereksinimlerini karşılayacak şekilde bir yazma dersi izlencesi ve öğretim yönteminin geliştirilmesi konusunda yol gösterici olabilir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: öğretici yazma modeli, süreç-tür tabanlı yaklaşım, izlence tasarımı, yazma öğretimi, yazma becerisinin değerlendirilmesi, geribildirim, yazma dosyası, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce, Iran

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To my parents

with love and respect

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
r	Correlation Coefficient
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
ELT	English Language Teaching
EFT	Error Free T-unit
L1	First Language
GPA	Grade Point Average
M	Mean
RGS	Rhetoric Genre Studies
L2	Second Language
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SD	Standard Deviation
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SFL	Systemic Functional Linguistics
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development
WPM	Words per Minute

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with a brief background to the study and the issues concerned with English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) writing curriculum and pedagogy in Iran. The next section provides a detailed discussion of the nature of the problem under scrutiny, addressing the contextual constraints and educational policies that have led to the underestimation of writing pedagogy at different levels of education, especially at the tertiary level. After presenting the purpose of the study, the research questions that guide the design of this study are listed. The section on the assumptions gives an account of the beliefs and facts that have been taken for granted in this study. Following the discussion of the significance of the study for the Iranian and similar EFL contexts, the chapter concludes with the definition of key terms and concepts, which have been more often than not repeated throughout the study.

1.1 Background to the Study

With the emergence of new academic disciplines and rise of English language as the major medium of international communication and the language of educational and scientific scholarship, teaching English writing has also become more demanding and challenging than before. This new outlook towards the importance of writing, especially as the manifestation of knowledge and scholastic achievement at higher education and among academic circles, demands a revisiting of the approaches to learning, teaching, and assessment of writing. Writing is not only recognized as an

academic discipline, which is taught by those who can make compromises between knowledge of language and disciplinary knowledge whenever and wherever deemed necessary (Wingate & Tribble, 2012), but it is also used to learn the content of different academic subjects (Mancho´n, 2011). In other words, students have the opportunity to consciously co-construct or shape their knowledge of a specific field through 'languaging' or meaningful interaction (Swain, 2010) within the context of the written discourse.

The importance of writing as one of the fundamental language learning skills is also echoed in the decisions and policies made at different levels of education in many developed countries. For example, the financial pressure has pushed universities and colleges in European and North American countries to recruit more international and diverse student population, whose admission and success depends to a large extent on their academic writing proficiency. These institutions, therefore, are seeking new ways to support students' development of writing and, on the other hand, enhance their retention (Erling & Richardson, 2010). Even the career promotions for many college graduates might be contingent upon their writing skills (Simpson & Carroll, 1999). This is also true in the EFL contexts where writing has become a predictor for students' success in their studies, and a requirement for those who wish to pursue their graduate and post-graduate degrees in an international university outside their home countries. In addition, giving extra credibility to learning and teaching of academic writing could be attributed to the rise and impact of new technological developments on accelerating the dissemination of information among different experts from various academic disciplines, who share the same discourse community.

Historically, the methodologies for teaching writing have undergone major changes from using writing as a means of teaching grammar, and other skills or sub-skills of language learning to teaching writing as an independent skill. During the past 60 years, writing pedagogy has experienced many twists and turns from focusing on the final product to teaching specific text types supported by the genre-based approaches. The paradigm shift of 1970s, as one of these huge swings, changed the direction of writing pedagogy from an emphasis on the development of learners' textual and linguistic knowledge to teaching writing for the development of both linguistic and content knowledge. This movement was concurrent with the advent of learner-centered education in first and second writing programs.

As the result of this theoretical metamorphosis, process-based approaches to teaching writing flourished. Soon the advocates of these approaches forged practical models and guidelines for classroom uses. For example, some identifiable stages such as drafting, revising, redrafting, editing until submitting the final draft of a written work were proposed as the proper steps to follow in writing classes (e.g., Raimes, 1985; Zamel, 1982). Process-based approach to writing pedagogy brought to light the importance of teaching students cognitive strategies in order to assist them in becoming problem solvers rather than imitators of others' written texts or styles. However, this approach put a lot of emphasis on the writer of a text, ignoring the different situations that may lead to the production of different texts. These could include the variance in their audience and types of the register or social events in which that text is composed or utilized. In other words, this perspective overlooked, to some extent, the reader of the text by overestimating authorship, writers' cognitive abilities, and fluency at the expense of accuracy.

As another paradigm shift in writing pedagogy, social or genre-based approaches to teaching writing emerged with an emphasis on the purpose of communication and the social context of writing to compensate for or overcome the shortcomings of the previous product and process-based approaches. Hyland (2003) contended that genre-based pedagogies address the problems of the previous approaches "by offering students explicit and systematic explanations of the ways language functions in social contexts" (p. 18). Hyland (2003) further highlighted the importance of recognizing the social context of a text, arguing that the notion of genre:

> is based on the assumptions that the features of a similar group of texts depend on the social context of their creation and use, and that those features can be described in a way that relates a text to others like it and to the choices and constraints acting on text producers. (p. 21)

There is evidence that the priority and goal of teaching writing has changed over the last decades, from either focusing on linguistic or rhetoric development to emphasizing the latter or even both of them towards the end of the 20th century (Hartshorn, 2008). Swales' (1990) definition of genre "as a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes" (p. 58) has launched a debate among researchers and, at the same time, initiated the use of genre-based approaches in writing classes. Having focused on the purpose of a written message, genre-based proponents took into consideration the social as well as the ideological forces within a specific discourse, or what Bhatia (1993) called "conventionalized regularities in the organization of various communicative events" (p. 10). However, genre-based approaches remained fixated upon the theoretical framework such as genre definition and nature, leaving many issues regarding the feasibility and practicality of their guidelines for classroom purposes unsettled. Therefore, regardless of their popularity and even success in many contexts, it

appears that there is still a long way to go before genre-based approaches can turn into the main pedagogical approach to teaching writing or make inroads into English as Second Language (ESL) and EFL writing classes.

Apart from a lack of compromise between the theoretical underpinnings and practical guidelines of many approaches to writing pedagogy, different scholars approved of the fact that teaching writing is a complex phenomenon, and the studies carried out in this field have also acknowledged remarkable shifts concerning its dynamics (Kroll, 1990). This might be the reason for an absence of viable writing instructional models for Second Language (L2) classrooms (Silva & Matsuda, 2001). Even more general types of writing entail writers to undergo several difficult steps in order to achieve mastery or ability to undertake a comprehensible written communication with others. This is due to the effect of a large number of variables such as "the writer's purpose for writing, understanding of audience, understanding of text characteristics, and/or cultural expectations, to name a few" on learning to write (Jarvis et al., 2003, p. 378). The existence of these variables has proved writing to be the most difficult skill in ESL writing programs (Kasper & Petrello, 1998), and the most laborious and demanding skill in EFL writing classes (Zheng, 1999). Cumming (2002), too, acknowledged the complexity and variability of writing because individuals have different motivations, goals and attitudes, personal theories about language learning in general, and learning how to write in another language in particular. Cumming (2002) referred to the lack of access to the theoretical and practical guidelines of teaching writing, as well as the concrete writing instructional designs, as the reasons for teachers' failure to implement the latest trends and approaches in their writing classes. This is even noticed in some sophisticated ESL contexts such as America, where teachers might follow, for instance, the principles

of process-based writing in "the design and implementation of their FL courses, but fail to implement it more than superficially into their teaching" (Hubert & Bonzo, 2010, p. 518).

As far as EFL contexts are concerned, writing teachers have remained to a large extent indifferent or unaware of these shifts of perspective occurring in ESL settings. Even in the European EFL writing programs, teaching writing is following a different path from the North American context (Johns, 2003), and this gap seems to be widening because of the prevalence of the product or model-based approach in writing classrooms. This rift has left EFL writing teachers ill prepared to deal with new challenges and demands in the field. They mostly rely on their intuition to develop or prepare writing tasks or materials for their classes. In addition, teachers are heavily dependent on commercial or old writing textbooks, and the time and institutional constraints make it difficult for them to engage in research activities or participate in educational symposiums and/or conferences. Factors such as time constraints, lack of institutional support to train teachers, or lack of credibility for writing on the curriculum in a majority of EFL contexts have left writing teachers virtually unaware of the ongoing writing research and practice in ESL academic institutions. For example, Gramegna (2007) observed that:

> In the American Academy, where teaching English as an L2 is an issue, there are vast, ongoing research and discussions on writing, both in English as a first and second language. Unfortunately, such research does not always make it abroad and foreign EFL teachers are often not aware of it. (p. 5)

Furthermore, teaching writing in EFL contexts has invariably been ignored due to the time-consuming nature of giving feedback on students' writings and the lack of a natural need on the part of learners to write in English, as their communication is

predominantly carried out in their First Language (L1). Except for few cases, writing pedagogy in other EFL contexts has hardly gone beyond the traditional students' one-off drafts and teachers' corrective feedback (Birjandi & Hadidi Tamjid, 2012; Grami, 2010; Lee, 2011; Rahimi, 2009: Reichelt, 2009; Yang et al., 2006; Zare-ee, 2009). These common practices suggest the popularity of the traditional formed-focused and teacher-fronted approaches to teaching writing.

The practical and theoretical rifts between ESL and EFL contexts, however, is more evident in Iran where "methods of teaching writing are usually product-oriented, with the teacher presenting and focusing on different elements of English paragraphs such as topic sentences, supporting sentences, and conclusion, and evaluating students' written products" (Zare-ee, 2009, p. 50). Additionally, teaching English writing in this context is affected by lack of research and practice on teaching of L1 writing, as this ability is usually taken for granted. Similar to Japanese students (Hirose, 2003), and perhaps students in many other EFL contexts, Iranian students rarely receive any solid formal L1 academic writing because there is virtually no such a teacher trained for this purpose. Most of writing classes at junior high school and high school focus on expressive writing, entertaining ideological values and beliefs rather than developing students' knowledge of genres or text types such as explanatory, argumentative, or process writing. As Hirose (2003) also made the same observation in Japanese context, Iranian L1 writing classes concentrate on personal and emotional topics as if more complex types of writing were taken for granted. Therefore, lack of a solid background in L1 writing could push many learners to rely on their intuition or their first language while composing in English, which is linguistically and rhetorically a different language.

Considering the role and importance of English writing at tertiary level of education, this study assumes the educational system and policy at this context responsible for overlooking writing in terms of its stand on the curriculum and its ineffective pedagogy. Indeed, the use of product-based teaching methodologies and a heavy investment in grammar in writing classrooms have failed to engage learners in writing as a meaningful experience that deal with the construction of knowledge and language. By offering an overview of the philosophy of education, and, in particular, English language education from junior high school to university, the following section provides a further discussion of the plight of EFL writing in Iran.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The educational system of every context is under the influence of various factors, whose change or reform will affect, either for good or bad, the very existence of different interest groups such as religious institutions, political parties, family, and other social and cultural foundations that determine individuals' identity, beliefs, and value system. Undoubtedly, political and ideological forces have, as yet, had the upper hand and played the most vital role in inscribing the philosophy of education in a given context. According to Vygotsky (cited in Daniels, 2001, p. 5), pedagogy has never been "politically indifferent, since, willingly or unwillingly, through its own work on the psyche, it has always adopted a particular social pattern, political line, in accordance with the dominant social class that has guided its interests". The philosophy of education in Iran is, therefore, no exception as it is interwoven deeply with the ideological principles of the Islamic fundamentalists, who have ruled the country for more than three decades. Riaz (2002) contended that this philosophy, which is intertwined with individuals' thinking patterns and lifestyles as Muslims, addresses students' so-called physical and spiritual growth by entertaining their

emotions and feelings, as well as by educating them to act according to the Islamic values and ethics (cited in Eslami-Rasekh & Pryor, 2004).

This philosophy determines the roles of different stakeholders in this educational system in a rigorous top-down fashion. For example, Rizvi (1986) observed that the teachers' role in such a system is to educate students to learn how to seek the glorification of God and to act according to the Islamic principles, which is incumbent upon all Muslims to act in words and deeds as much as they can in order to help these values survive (cited in Eslami-Rasekh & Pryor, 2004). Since teaching is viewed as a sacred job in Islam and teachers are assumed to be responsible for fighting ignorance in the society rather than making money, teaching is not generally a well-paid job. Yet, teachers may rarely hold this belief themselves when individuals' economic well-being has become a strong determinant of social acceptance and survival in the new millennium. Thus, financial incentive could be considered as the teachers' main motif for professional development rather than seeking new innovative ways to enrich their classroom practice. Moreover, teachers are obliged to observe the Islamic principles in words and deeds, and give them precedence over academic goals. For example, critical thinking techniques and strategies, as the main agenda to develop students' reasoning skills in writing, are not much welcome in this educational system because they might challenge students' value system or sidetrack them from the main goals of education prescribed by the curriculum.

Nevertheless, different local and global forces have dramatically challenged this philosophy during the recent years. For example, the fact that two out of three and a half million university students in Iran are majoring in social sciences (Ghadimi,

2011) poses a threat to the state ideological system because most of texts in these fields – such as psychology, sociology, philosophy, and English literature – are written or compiled in western countries, and are available in both English and translated versions. Recently, the state authorities have ordered universities to reconsider and modify the curriculum for social sciences (Ghadimi, 2011). They have discontinued or threatened to close down many social sciences programs such as political sciences, philosophy, and sociology. These are just a few initiatives taken to intervene in order to counteract the influence of positivism, rationalism, critical thinking and reasoning practices, considered as the characteristics of Western thought and philosophy.

The trend of globalization, as an agent of change, which has promoted the worldwide integration and exchange of ideas and resources, has also affected the mission and vision of education in many contexts. An increase in the number of international universities is one offspring of this trend, which is helping the development of a unified curriculum, syllabus, and course descriptions whereby students not only can easily transfer to or further their studies in another institution, but also can share and make use of a pile of academic and educational resources regardless of their time and place constraints. The advancement of technology such as the Internet, with its online social media tools that are helping people to disseminate and share knowledge and information besides communicating with each other, has triggered new developments and appeared as another challenge to the dominant educational philosophy in contexts such as Iran, where these networking tools and information-sharing websites are censored or filtered by the state.

English language education is not an exception, either. Indeed, the government does not strongly support English language education (Haddad Narafshan & Yamini, 2011), as students start studying English three hours per week from the second year of junior high school – when they are 12-13 years old. The textbooks for this purpose are designed by and according to the Ministry of Education policies and guidelines (Atai & Mazlum, 2012). The content of the textbooks is developed to help students read and translate English texts into Persian. Since too much emphasis is placed on reading and translation skills, teaching writing, as an independent skill, is nonexistent; and students' writing in English is limited to filling in the blank spaces on grammar tests and exercises or responding to reading comprehension questions.

English teaching methodology at secondary school is based on grammar-translation and teachers at this level are trained for two years and rarely prepared to handle a class in the target language. Teaching English at high school follows the same tradition except for teachers' training, which is carried out through a four-year program. The final assessment, which is summative in nature, includes mostly a test of grammar and reading, and, in some cases, spelling and vocabulary questions or riddles are added to the test. Flowerdew (2002) also reported that students, staff, and administrators in Middle Eastern countries favored a traditional and prescriptive approach to language teaching based on teaching formal grammar. In Saudi Arabia, for example, Grami (2010) observed that the educational system is top-down and audio-lingual principles such as memorization, are prevalent classroom practices. Al-Eid (2000) and Bersamina (2009) also acknowledged Saudi students' poor English writing ability. In Egypt, Ahmed (2010) found traditional teaching and learning strategies such as authoritative class environment and rote learning responsible for students' difficulties in writing.

At tertiary level, writing is the least emphasized skill even when students major in English studies such as translation, literature, and linguistics. Learning and teaching of writing is also underestimated by its status on the curriculum, which offers paragraph writing or development form the second and essay writing from the third year. This usually creates a gap with other language learning skills or sub-skills such as reading and translation, and students may find it difficult to catch up with the demands of extensive and intensive general or academic writing tasks later in their academic or professional life.

Because of some geo-political factors, Iranian students have less exposure to second language input compared with their counterparts in other EFL contexts such as UAE, Qatar, or Turkey. However, with the rapid spread and popularity of satellite and the Internet in this country, people are feeling the need to learn and use English in their communications with the outside world. As a result, many parents are sending their kids to private language schools where more recent teaching methodologies such as 'communicative language teaching' are used (Eslami-Rasekh & Fatahi, 2008). Notwithstanding their popularity, these language schools do not capitalize on teaching writing for a number of reasons. First, majority of these schools focus primarily on speaking and listening skills because teaching reading and writing, or other academic skills, are doomed to failure, as their learning takes longer time and exerts extra pressure on the teaching staff and the school budget. In addition, practitioners and teachers in these schools are not qualified enough to be able to teach these sophisticated skills. Second, the prevalence of the 'folk theory', which associates knowing a foreign language more with its speaking than its writing, is another hurdle for teaching writing and reading skills at private language schools. Therefore, unless language learners want to take international tests of English, such

as IELTS or TOEFL, to emigrate or pursue their studies overseas, they hardly show tendency to develop their reading and writing skills.

Driven out of the above-mentioned concerns and reasons, it behooves writing teachers and researchers to challenge the existing writing curriculum and the inadequacy of writing pedagogy for undergraduate students majoring in English in this context. The purpose of this study is to address these two concerns in order to offer insights into the better planning and implementation of writing programs that cater for the real needs of students in this and other EFL classrooms.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to describe and evaluate a writing intervention in first-year EFL writing. In particular, it investigates the effectiveness of a writing instructional model within the process genre approach on the fluency, accuracy, and quality of first-year students' paragraph and essay writing during two consecutive semesters. It also explores the effect of this writing intervention on students' attitudes towards writing and their use of cognitive (process-based) and social (genre-based) writing strategies. Because writing is viewed as a comprehensive, dynamic, and multi-dimensional phenomenon in this model, the method of its inquiry takes into account both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis of different variables.

By implementing this instructional writing model, this study intends to challenge the old-fashioned writing curriculum that does not recognize the importance of writing as a crucial language learning skill in first-year classes. The implemented instructional writing model espouses teaching writing along with other skills and sub-skills as early as the first semester in order to provide evidence for re-crafting a

writing curriculum commensurate with the real needs of students in academic writing. It is hoped that the findings of this study inform writing teachers, material developers, and curriculum designers of more recent theoretical and pedagogical breakthroughs in L2 writing pedagogy. The design of this study intends to answer the following research questions through a systematic approach to the data collection and analysis:

1) How does a writing intervention within the process genre approach affect fluency, accuracy, and quality of EFL first-year students' writing at paragraph and essay levels?

2) Is there any relationship between students' writing fluency, accuracy, and quality at both paragraph and essay levels?

3) Has this writing intervention made different contributions to students at different levels of writing proficiency?

4) How do students perceive the effect of this writing intervention on their attitudes towards writing and their use of different writing strategies?

5) How do students perceive the effectiveness of different components of this writing intervention at both paragraph and essay levels?

1.4 Assumptions

It is assumed that due to the growth of communication tools, students' needs and motivations to learn English have dramatically changed in recent years. These changes are in conjunction with the social and economic status of people, which have offered them more opportunities to keep in touch with the world outside and to recognize the need for learning the language of international trade and communication. Parents can easily afford to send their children to language institutes in order to build their kids' foundation of English language for their future use or

benefit. Also, students are now more equipped and motivated to take initiatives in language learning than the previous generations. Thanks to the advent of technology-enhanced learning and the access to the Internet, students can involve in different kinds of writing genres or contribute to their learning by doing discovery-based learning online. The need to interact with others in English, especially in written form, has also been accelerated by the pushing factors of online social media networks and tools such as Facebook and Twitter. Thus, it is assumed that today's students will be willing and interested in developing different aspects of their L2 writing ability as early as the beginning of their studies.

However, it is assumed that students' previous learning experiences built as the result of their exposure to grammar-translation methodologies during high school may affect their expectation of language learning, and writing in particular, so that they may resist the contextualized learning of grammar at the onset of the study. In order to overcome this challenge, students will be helped gradually while moving from one end of the cognitive-social continuum of strategies to the other. For example, the use of students' first language at the beginning of the semester could help less confident students to sustain their motivation and engagement in the mainstream classroom activities. Collaborative activities such as group work, peer correction, and peer assessment are other supportive channels whereby students can foster positive attitudes and understanding towards different components of this intervention including drafting and revising processes. These activities are designed to create more effective readers, writers, and autonomous learners. In other words, this instructional writing model will effectively take into account students' future needs with their previous instructional background so that those with different linguistic abilities can benefit from different strategies and activities. As an example,

feedback in both languages and on different areas of students' writing ability such as fluency, accuracy, and quality will be provided to meet students' expectation of proper concentration on grammar, and, on the other hand, inculcate in them the importance of different aspects of learning to write.

As for students' English proficiency level, they are assumed to be homogeneous because students whose scores on the University Entrance Exam fall within the same range are accepted to the same university. However, the reality is that students come to university with different English language backgrounds because some might have attending private language schools or having private tutors, which could be a strong variable and a determinant of their success in their writing classes. That is, some students are more competent than their peers in terms of their L2 linguistic ability or the amount of time they spent learning English before. Therefore, the participants of this study may fall into different proficiency levels of writing and benefit at varying degrees from implementing this model. However, it is also predicted that no matter how long they might have studied English before, an overwhelming majority of them will be new to the idea of academic writing and its requirements or challenges.

Another assumption is that students demonstrate a high level of motivation for learning to write because of viewing it as a new experience. One of the main reasons for this motivation comes from the importance of writing skill for immigration purposes, a popular trend among the Iranian youth who are keen on taking international English proficiency tests that assess test takers' four main skills. Others will be also aware of the importance of writing for pursuing higher levels of education at international universities where the medium of instruction is English. The statistics for brain drain phenomenon (estimated between 150,000 to 180,000

students and educated individuals) bears this inconvenient truth out that many high school and university graduates in Iran are aspiring to study or live overseas, especially in English-speaking countries, for better job and education opportunities (WIPO, 2013). These people who leave the country annually need help with intensive writing tasks on international tests such as IELTS and TOFEL to meet the requirements of obtaining a visa to live or study in North American or European countries.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Literature on writing pedagogy bears witness to some examples of the design and implementation of instructional writing models within, for instance, process (e.g., Flower & Hayes, 1981; Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1986) and genre-based approaches in ESL contexts (e.g., Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010; Burns & Joyce, 1997; Carter, 1990; Cope & Kalantzis, 1993; Feez, 1998; Rothery, 1996; Swales, 1990), especially in the domain of English for specific purposes (e.g., Bhatia, 2004; Dudley-Evans, 1997; Hyland, 2002; Samraj, 2004). Most of these models have thus far guided the design of syllabuses, lesson plans, and instructional materials for writing programs. However, there is a dearth of research and study in Iranian context with respect to the design or implementation of instructional writing models in first-year writing classes. Studies on writing pedagogy or assessment in this context (e.g., Amirian, 2002; Abdollahzadeh, 2010; Birjandi & Hadidi Tamjid, 2012; Rahimi, 2009; Zare-ee, 2009) excluded first-year students and were carried out within the remit and affordances of the curriculum, which is not only hampering teachers' efforts to take the initiative to teach writing along with other skills from the first semester but is also making it cumbersome to conduct research on writing in first-year classes.

This study contributes to research and practice on writing pedagogy in EFL contexts, proposing an instructional writing model based on an eclectic approach to inform writing teachers of the new demands and challenges in teaching academic writing. The process genre approach to writing pedagogy engages students in different phases of implementing this model – from developing materials to providing feedback or assessing their peers' work while taking part in pair and group work activities. In addition, this designed model takes into account the cross-linguistic differences between English and Persian addressing students' deficiencies in their linguistic and rhetorical knowledge in English perpetuated by an excessive exposure to the traditional approaches to teaching writing, the inadequate time and support dedicated to teaching writing by the curriculum, and an absence of a strong body of writing teachers and effective materials. In order to address these deficiencies or have students notice these differences, they will be provided with authentic instructional materials to learn the contextual use of language and foster an understanding of English stylistic and rhetorical conventions.

The modular pattern of this instructional model discourages teachers' reliance on the single-shot writing and corrective feedback in writing classes. Instead, it supports the idea of writing as a dynamic and incremental skill requiring novice writers to draft, revise, review, work together, and read extensively. It is hoped that the findings of this study contribute to the overall quality of teaching writing in EFL contexts by informing different educational stakeholders of the significance and value of writing as one of the core skills of L2 academic literacy on the curriculum of undergraduate students.

1.6 Definition of Terms

Cognitive Theories of Composition: These theories stress general knowledge of learning to write, and they define expertise in writing as the ability to bring to a writing task strategies that guide the writing process and increase the chances for its success (Carter, 1990).

Social Theories of Composition: These theories define an expert writer as one who has attained the local knowledge that enables him or her to be considered as a member of a discourse community (Carter, 1990).

Process-based Writing Pedagogy: This approach to teaching or learning writing emphasizes "writing activities which move learners from the generation of ideas and the collection of data through to the 'publication' of a finished text" (Tribble, 1996, p. 37) as they engage in four stages of rewriting, composing/drafting, revising, and editing.

Genre-based Writing Pedagogy: Hyland (2007) defines genre as "abstract, socially recognised ways of using language" (p. 149). The pedagogy based on the principles of genre-based approaches views learning to write as a needs-oriented social activity that "requires explicit outcomes and expectations", and "involves learning to use language" (Hyland, 2007, p. 153).

Process Genre Writing Pedagogy: This approach embraces a model of writing pedagogy that involves teaching "knowledge about language (as in product and genre approaches), knowledge of the context in which writing happens and especially the purpose for the writing (as in genre approaches), and skills in using language (as in process approaches)" (Badger & White, 2000, p. 158).

T-unit: Originally, Hunt (1965) defined T-unit as "one main clause plus the subordinate clauses attached to or embedded within it" (p. 49).

Formative Feedback: It is defined as "information communicated to the learner that is intended to modify his or her thinking or behaviour to improve learning" (Shute, 2008, p. 153). Formative feedback also addresses "the dimensions of feed up, feed back, and feed forward" (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 88). This type of feedback is cyclical and multifaceted that deals with students' problems in different aspects of their writing.

Writing Fluency: Wolfe-Quintero et al. (1998) defined fluency in writing as a "measure of the sheer number of words or structural units a writer is able to include in their writing within a particular period of time" (p. 14). In this study, the total number of words students write per the time given was counted as their writing fluency score.

Writing Accuracy: Wolfe-Quintero et al. (1998) defined accuracy as "the ability to be free from errors while using language to communicate" (p. 33). In this study, accuracy was operationally defined as the percentage of error-free words per total number of words written.

Writing Quality: Writing quality is defined "as a fit of a text to its context, which includes the writer's purpose, the discourse medium, the knowledge of the audience, and so on" (Connor, 1996, p. 83). In this study, marking rubrics adapted from Ferris and Hedgcock (1998, p. 310) for paragraph and from TOEFL iBT independent writing rubrics (2011) for essay writing were used on a scale of 1 to 5 to calculate the students' writing quality. This included, but not limited to, taking into account students' content knowledge, organization of ideas or information, and syntactic and lexical diversity and complexity of their writing.

Text: Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) defined 'text' as a "communicative occurrence which meets seven standards of textuality" (p. 3). These standards

include cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationnality, and intertextuality (Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981).

Paragraph: A paragraph is defined as a "group of sentences forming a complete unit of thought and marked on a page of text by spacing or indentation" (Lackstrom et al., 1973, p. 130).

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter presents an overview of the main theoretical approaches to writing pedagogy along with their practical merits and drawbacks during the second half of the 20th century. The first section touches upon a host of issues that led to the emergence of genre-based and later to the hybrid process genre approach to teaching writing. The next section focuses on different ways of responding to students' written work including the types of feedback, manners, and its delivery language. After discussing the 'what' and 'how' questions of responding to students' writing, different approaches to writing assessment and the measurement scales and rubrics they use, as well as their advantages and disadvantages for various writing programs are reviewed. The chapter concludes with a summary of the major conceptual framework and the contribution of such a work for the Iranian EFL context.

2.1 Approaches to Writing Pedagogy

Writing pedagogy has undergone twists and turns in its development, as it has been under the influence of various theoretical and practical movements and innovations. Different contexts have made use of different approaches in their effort to best cater to the needs of their language learners, and also reacted differently with respect to the implementation of the theoretical and practical advancements in writing classes. These approaches, however, have not merely been reacting to each other. Rather, they emerged in response to the new disciplinary or professional challenges and needs. In other words, new developments have thus far flourished to complement

each other in order to better serve the real needs of writers or language learners. Genre theory, for example, has come up as the corollary of diversity in individuals' interactions, the rise of new academic disciplines, and the rapid growth of using technological means of communication, all demanding a detour to the traditional lengthy process of learning how to communicate in the written form. Similarly, the synthesis of genre with process approach, with its emphasis on taking into account both cognitive and social dimensions of learning to write, has appeared on the scene as an initiative to help language learners build their knowledge of linguistic skills and language use.

2.1.1 Writing as a Product (Pre-Process Approaches)

Ranging from the early traditional methods to teaching writing, such as those used to teach Latin, to product-based approaches, which were prevalent during 1950s and are still popular in many EFL contexts, these approaches could be distinguished form their successors by the huge emphasis they put on the linguistic aspects of producing a text. In general, they played down the purpose for which a text was written, the social factors involved, the reader's affordances, and a collection of other factors that make a piece of writing a meaningful, independent, and purposeful communicative message exchanged between writers and their audience.

Product-based approaches were prominent during the dominance of Audio-lingual methodology in the context of English language teaching, when writing was exploited as a means of language learning rather than as an end in itself; namely, a platform whereby teachers could teach other areas of language learning, grammar in particular. Raimes (1983b) provided a short account of the controlled-to-free approaches in teaching writing from the 1950s to 1970s during which "speech was primary and writing served to reinforce speech in that it stresses mastery of

grammatical and syntactic forms. ESL teachers developed techniques to move students towards this mastery" (p. 7). Classroom activities were limited to teaching the form and structure of language, and teachers focused on writing as a product of so-called grammar applied. In other words, the main pedagogical tasks were reduced to "fill ins, substitutions, transformations, and completions" exercises (Raimes, 1991, p. 408), with an emphasis on writing correct sentences rather than communicating thought or meaning (Reid, 1993). Writing, from this perspective, served the instruction of grammar or other language sub-skills and insisted on using correct structures, which involved students in identifying, internalizing, and executing rather than engaging them in higher levels of knowledge (Silva, 1990).

With the advent of learner-centered education and popularity of communicative language teaching methodology, criticisms were leveled against product-based approaches, arguing that viewing writing as a mere product could end up in students' "mindless copies of a particular organizational plan or style" (Eschholz, 1980, p. 24). Similarly, Silva (1990) argued against the inadequacy of the whole approach as an "exercise in habit formation" (p. 13). These approaches were also criticized for encouraging the memorization of grammatical rules and students' conscious knowledge of these rules (Jones, 1985). The application of rule-based learning reflects the dominance of behaviorism during the time when learning was considered as forming habits through the chain of stimulus-response or reinforcement rule. Reid (1984) contended that writing development in this tradition was assumed to be the result of completing separate tasks, overlooking creativity as an important element of language learning at the expense of teaching students the rules and patterns of language. This meant that the notions of readership and the reader's discourse were other neglected aspects of learning to write (Zamel, 1983).

Teachers' feedback or their response to students' produced work concentrated on correcting grammatical errors because Audio-lingualism did not tolerate the occurrence of errors (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). This feedback was consistent with helping language learners master linguistic knowledge or deal primarily with grammatical accuracy and vocabulary. Mastery in writing involved, as Pincas (1982) observed, applying several distinguishable stages such as familiarization with the form of the language, controlled writing or the practice session, and free writing or learner's independent writing. However, these stages did not account for the learners' needs in writing, nor did they consider the purpose and context of writing as other important aspects of learning to write. That is to say, they failed to attend to the social context or discourse features embedded in different texts and paid scant attention to the process students may experience preparing a piece of writing.

In general, product-based approaches failed to offer a problem-solving approach to teaching writing and viewed writing "as mainly concerned with knowledge about the structure of language, and writing development as mainly the result of the imitation of input, in the form of texts provided by the teacher" (Badger & White, 2000, p. 2). Thus, composing a text was not considered as a whole meaningful task, but as parts of words, sentences, and paragraphs strung together by the grammatical rules.

2.1.2 Writing as a Process

Process approach, as one of the offshoots of learner-centered education in second language learning classrooms, recognizes the learners' contribution to the writing process in terms of their personal and cognitive abilities and experiences. The name itself denotes the process learners undertake to develop their writing skills. Initially, process-based principles focused on L1 writing (Tribble, 1996), but later many scholars (e.g. Arndt, 1987; Raimes, 1985; Zamel, 1982) extended their application to

L2 writing classrooms. Teachers were encouraged to engage second language learners' cognitive faculties such as thinking, brainstorming, reflecting, and revising rather than their lower-level knowledge domains such as memorizing, imitating, and other rote learning techniques in writing classes.

Reacting to product-based approaches and resorting to process-based approaches did not merely occur in writing. Rather, it was viewed as a paradigm shift in our mental reasoning during the second half of the 20th century (Raimes, 1983a). As far as teaching writing is concerned, it was a shift form focus on form to focus on meaning and composing was regarded as "a non-linear, exploratory, and generative process where-by writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning" (Zamel, 1983, p. 165). Raimes (1983b) also defined writing in process-based tradition as "expressing ideas, conveying meaning" and thinking (cited in Silva, 1990, p. 15). Later, Zimmerman and Riesemberg (1997, p. 76) proposed an unorthodox view of writing as a "social cognitive process wherein writers must be aware of readers' expectations and must be willing to devote the personal time and effort necessary to revise text drafts until they communicate effectively". Yet, this social dimension of writing was considered to be different from learning to write in order to function properly in a discourse community or in a professional situation. Given that writing is a communicative activity that encodes a message to an audience, it could be argued that all types of writing serve some social purposes because they are written for an audience, whether it be teachers or other professionals.

As for research and practice on writing, the pendulum swayed in favor of expressive or individualistic types of writing along with grooming learners to engage in

cognitive strategies to help them write in unfamiliar situations they may encounter. The need for more expressive types of writing was also intensified with the advent of microcomputers and the idea of cyberspace, where "skill in developing ideas and expressing them in written form has become essential to success in not only school but also in the personal and professional world beyond" (Zimmerman & Riesemberg, 1997, p.1). Consequently, process-based models for classroom practice were flourished. Flower and Hayes (1981), for instance, proposed a model that clearly highlighted the stages of planning, drafting and reviewing in which self-regulatory strategies were treated as prominent and primary for writers to further make the role of the individual writer more conspicuous. As another example, Tribble (1996) perceived writing activities within process-based approach as the steps that guide learners from coming up with the ideas and gathering the data to finalizing a text, and summarized these steps as "prewriting; composing/drafting; revising; and editing" (p. 39). These strategies, however, were not clear-cut and inclusive. Rather, they tended to overlap during the writing process (Weiser, 1992).

Advocates of process-based approaches fell into two different camps: expressivists and cognitivists (Johns, 1990). While both groups were preoccupied with writer as the main creator of a written text, they varied in their focus of attention on how a writer might go about producing an artifact. For instance, expressivists believed in the complete domination of a writer to express their internal feelings, emotions, and thoughts in the form of diary and journal writing. By contrast, cognitivists, who formed their camp later, stressed the writer's mental process and their thinking as the main spurs behind writing. Simply put, exponents of 'expressive school' encouraged students to 'discover' themselves through language, while supporters of 'cognitive

school' "believed in a research-based, audience-focused, context-based approach to the process of writing" (Reid, 1993, p. 4-5).

Having studied this rift in depth, Graham and Harris (2000) accumulated evidence and upheld the idea proposed by some cignitivists (e.g., Zimmerman & Riesemberg, 1997), arguing that the development of writing competence relies heavily on the high levels of self-regulation. Graham and Harris (2000) believed that writing is a demanding task, which puts a lot of mental pressure on writers. Flower and Hayes (1981) referred to this mental faculty as the "monitor" which "functions as a writing strategist which determines when the writer moves from one process to the next" (p. 374). In the model proposed by Scardamalia and Bereiter (1986), monitoring the process of generating ideas in writing was underscored as the main executing factor. This was similar to what Krashen (1997) suggested as Monitor Model in language learning. Seeing writing skill as a recursive problem-solving process whereby writers can resort to meeting the cognitive and linguistic demands of composing a text, this model addressed the needs of both novice and expert writers. Although preoccupation with the mental faculties was one of the distinguishing characteristics of the process approach advocates, writing researchers are still in the dark as to the actual procedure and mechanism learners follow that could trigger their development in L2 writing.

Teachers who follow process-based writing methodology in their classes are supposed to monitor their students to ensure that they have moved through different stages of the writing process successfully and learned how to start a piece of writing and finish it according to the process-oriented principles. These teachers are therefore less concerned about the grammatical accuracy, choice of vocabulary, and

other linguistic aspects of writing. Zimmerman and Riesemberg (1997) acknowledged the role of feedback, modeling and tutoring in developing writing abilities in language learners. Zamel (1982) also maintained that learners could achieve the discovery and creation of meaning through generating, refining, and revising their ideas while cooperating with their teachers. What's more, proponents of the process-based approaches were more concerned with linguistic skills than linguistic knowledge such as knowledge about grammar, and regarded learning to write as an unconscious process developed by practice and teacher's help (Badger & White, 2000).

The teachers' feedback not only addressed the surface errors and grammatical accuracy, but also took into account the quality and the development of writers' ideas, as well as the elements of coherence, organization, and the unity of their work. In contrast to product-based approaches, the composing task was viewed as a cyclical and creative process in which both teachers and learners were involved in creating meaning while attending to errors was pushed to the final stage of editing. Moreover, the purpose of composing changed dramatically from writing as an element of reinforcing language and grammar learning to a meaningful act of expressing oneself through the process of communicating with others.

However, writing practitioners and researchers expressed reservations about relying too much on this approach, especially as far as teaching academic writing at higher levels of education is concerned. Chief of these is overestimating the importance given to the steps writers go through to finalize a text, and placing less emphasis on the purpose of writing or diversity of text types. For example, Horowitz (1986b) argued for the inadequacy of the process-based pedagogy in preparing university

students for the types of writings required of them in their field of studies. Petraglia (1999) also questioned the prescriptive process of taking a fixed route to writing. By the same token, Kent (1999) rejected the orthodoxy of "a repeatable process that can be employed successfully during every writing situation" (p. 2). This is at odd with the reality that both individuals and situations in which they communicate in are unique. In other words, the idea that there are only some steps to fulfill before learning to write would limit writing to the classroom context, ignoring various types of writing learners have to deal with later in their personal or professional life (Russell, 1999). Therefore, although process-based approach to teaching writing celebrates the role of writer, individualism and creativity in writing (Muncie, 2002a), these features are perceived as another downside of this approach as far as writing for academic purposes is concerned because personal opinions or individualistic types of writing are only rarely dealt with at tertiary level of education (Bartholomae, 1985).

As another shortfall, process-based pedagogy in writing classroom does not provide learners with sufficient input to enhance their awareness of the linguistic and social conventions surrounding different types of text (Badger & White, 2000). Bizzell's (1992) insistence on glorifying the discourse, community, and knowledge in writing classes stemmed from the same concerns teachers overlooked while applying instructional models. Like speakers, writers are also expected to take their readers' needs, hopes, fears and wants into account while writing; they should play different roles and adopt different identities in various social situations. Taking a more extreme side, Tribble (1996) argued that process approach ignored both reader and writer because of its failure to give a realistic account as for the kinds of writing, the amount of information, and time learners need to compose a text.

Because of their obsession with generating and organizing of the ideas, process-based approach proponents tend to overlook the form or linguistic component of a written message. This approach seems to underestimate certain types of academic writing tasks such as intensive writing tasks on high-stakes proficiency exams which expect test takers to produce a text within a certain time; hence, product-based in nature. In order to fulfill the requirements of writing tasks on these exams, test takers need to develop a sufficient knowledge of the world, a good command of lexicon, and an understanding of discourse conventions related to that rhetorical mode or text type. These could be stockpiled by reading about the topic or immersing in a social situation such as an academic discipline in which writers can accumulate enough information about the topic. Moreover, Muncie (2002b) argued that using a process approach to teaching writing, because of undertaking multiple drafting and revisions, seems to benefit learning vocabulary and sophisticated grammatical structures which would help learners write and read more effectively. However, this approach has, as yet, failed to propose an agenda with respect to the development of vocabulary building strategies required for composing texts, especially as far as teaching writing to lower level learners is concerned. Instead of relying on an input-rich environment of learning such as providing learners with reading or sample materials to develop the breadth and depth of their vocabulary, learners are therefore heavily dependent on their intuition and teacher's feedback.

Still, Reid (1984) referred to another main drawback of process-based approach; namely, neglecting variations in writing due to "differences in individuals, writing tasks, and situations; the development of schemata for academic discourse; language proficiency; level of cognitive development; and insights from the study of contrastive rhetoric" (cited in Silva, 1990, p. 16). Hyland (2003) contended that

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advocates of process approaches have "little to say about the ways meanings are socially constructed; they fail to consider the forces outside the individual which help guide purposes, establish relationships, and ultimately shape writing" (p. 18). Hyland (2003) also asserted that there is little evidence on the success of using this approach in improving L2 writing.

The above-mentioned drawbacks and concerns, coupled with contrastive rhetoric studies that have attempted to "look for patterns across text genres in a given culture" (Connor, 2002, p. 506), have pushed for advocating more social rather than individual types of writing. Giving credibility to different writing types and styles as the result of rising new academic disciplines, the rapid growth of technology, and the influence of global communication should be also acknowledged in the acceleration of the shift towards the social end of the spectrum in writing research and practice.

2.1.3 Genre Approaches (Post-Process Movement)

Since 'genres' and 'text types' are generally used interchangeably (Stubbs, 1996), prior to discussing genre as well as different genre-based approaches or schools to teaching writing the idea of 'text' and the relationship between genres and text types are explained in the following section.

2.1.3.1 Text Types and Genres

Halliday and Hasan (1976) defined a text as a semantic unit that is realized through sentences. Texts are created into meaningful units with sentences establishing relations and connection with prior and current sentences or texts. Beaugrande & Dressler (1981) maintained that a text is "a communicative occurrence" (p. 3), which meets seven standards of textuality. 'Cohesion' and 'coherence' were ranked as the first and second standards of textuality. Hatim and Mason (1997) defined a cohesive text as:

A text is cohesive in the sense that the various components of the surface text (the actual words we see) are mutually connected within a sequence of some kind. In terms of both lexis and grammar, that is, the surface components depend upon each other in establishing and maintaining text continuity. (p. 15)

Traditionally, cohesion and coherence were considered as two textual elements that contribute to the quality of a piece of writing. Werlich's (1976) definition of a text seems to be affected by these two standards of textuality. Werlich (1976) referred to a text as "an extended structure of syntactic units such as words, groups, and clauses and textual units that is marked by both coherence among the elements and completion" (p. 23). Werlich (1976) distinguished text from non-text, which "consists of random sequences of linguistic units such as sentences, paragraphs, or sections in any temporal and/or spatial extension" (p. 23). A number of studies (e.g., Ferris, 1994; Hasan, 1984; Liu & Braine, 2005; Nassery, 2013; Zhang, 2000) found positive correlation between the use of cohesive devices by students and quality or good writing. In particular, Nassery (2013) found that Iranian undergraduate university students who studied in an English-medium context wrote more coherent and cohesive texts in English than Persian because teaching these elements of text quality is generally neglected in Persian composition classes. Likewise, Halliday and Hasan (1976) viewed cohesion as one of the important elements that involves in the creation of a text or what connects sentences in a text. In the same vein, Van Dijk (1977) defined coherence as the structure of a text or the way sentences are ordered in a text.

As the third and fourth standards of textuality, Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) referred to 'intentionality' and 'acceptability' as the standards of users or readers rather than text-related ingredients. They refer to the extent to which the reader understands the intention or goal of the writer and consequently accepts a text as

coherent or logical entity. According to Hatim and Mason (1997), "intentionality involves the text producer's attitude that the text in hand should constitute a cohesive and coherent whole and that it should intertextually link up with a set of socio-textual conventions recognizable by a given community of text users (p. 19)". Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) emphasized the role of readers in filling the gaps between ideas or elements of a text in their justification of the difficulty of coherence as well as writing quality. Nunan (1993) also contended that the role of readers in recognizing the logic between the ideas is important.

As the fifth standard, 'Informativity' "concerns the extent to which the occurrences of the presented text are expected vs. unexpected or known vs. unknown / certain" (Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981, pp. 8-9). This specifically addresses the content of a text, which is also one of the determinants of the quality of a written text. Furthermore, the writers' world knowledge, their audience or readers, and their familiarity with the social situation in which they communicate seem to affect this content. The sixth standard of textuality is called 'situationality', which deals with the social and pragmatic context of a text or the extent to which a text is pertinent to a situation of occurrence (Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981). 'Intertextuality', as the last standard, refers "to the relationship between a given text and other relevant texts encountered in prior experience." (Neubert and Shreve, 1992: 117). Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) contended, "The production and reception of a given text depends upon the participants' knowledge of other texts" (p. 182). This is important as far as writing quality is concerned because writers may draw on other texts and tropes such as intertetual figures to negotiate the meaning in a written text.

Writing quality may also be affected by the topic of a written text, writers' writing proficiency, and their educational background (Reid, 1993). These variables along

with cultural differences has some implications for an L2 input-poor context such as Iran where students may adapt or transfer different linguistic, rhetoric, and discourse features and conventions from their L1 (DePalma & Ringer, 2011). Because Persian prose is affected by oral discourse and poetry (Baleghizadeh & Pashaii, 2010), L2 Iranian writers may fail to follow the linear organization of English written discourse (Connor, 1996; Kaplan, 1966) if they suffer from a low L2 proficiency level. This suggests that failing to recognize the importance of cross-linguistic differences in today's English language classrooms can inhibit students' adaptation of their previous knowledge and make them fall back on their underdeveloped L1 rhetorical knowledge. Unequivocally, English and Persian languages have less common ground on cultural, rhetorical, linguistic, and pragmatic accounts. As far as rhetorical differences, for instance, are concerned, they have their roots in different traditions of oral and written discourse (Baleghizadeh & Pashaii, 2010).

Moreover, familiarity with different text types or genres could affect learners' writing quality (Connor, 1990). The term genre has been defined differently among researchers and linguists. Perhaps as the most cited definition, Swales (1990) considered genres as goal-oriented communicative events. Martin (2009) viewed genre from a pedagogical perspective as "a recurrent configuration of meanings" and regarded culture from a social perspective "as a system of genres" (p. 13). Bearing these definitions in mind, writing in genre-based tradition is more of a purposeful phenomenon than what the conventional approaches proposed because it sees writing as a human's response to a situation using language as a social medium. This goal-oriented social perspective to writing can also help students foster a capability to deconstruct academic texts in their disciplines for their linguistic and rhetoric

awareness, with their teachers helping them move from one Vygotskian zone of proximal development to another (Daniels, 2001).

The post-process movement began when process-based approach to teaching writing was criticized for its indifference to cultural and social pluralism, as well as for its mission to serve the ideology of capitalism and materialistic philosophy by emphasizing the precision and clarity of a logical system in writing (Kaplan, 1988). The post-process theories and practices might not have followed each other chronologically, but emerged as a group of social-oriented theories that have flourished as more individualistic-based approaches to writing and language learning fell out of favor. Some scholars (e.g., Atkinson, 2003; Matsuda, 2003) did not renounce the use of process approaches in writing classes, but they asserted that teachers should pursue other ways to cope with the new challenges posed by an increase in the scope of social communication and interaction.

The individualistic or cognitive-based and social approaches to writing pedagogy could form two opposites (see Figure 1) rather than two bins in which we can throw everything. In other words, they shape a continuum on which other approaches or methodologies such as strategy instruction, explicit error correction, and contrastive rhetoric establish themselves as post-process approaches (e.g., Hubert & Bonzo, 2010). Over time, however, the pendulum has changed its position and swung from one end of this spectrum towards the other.
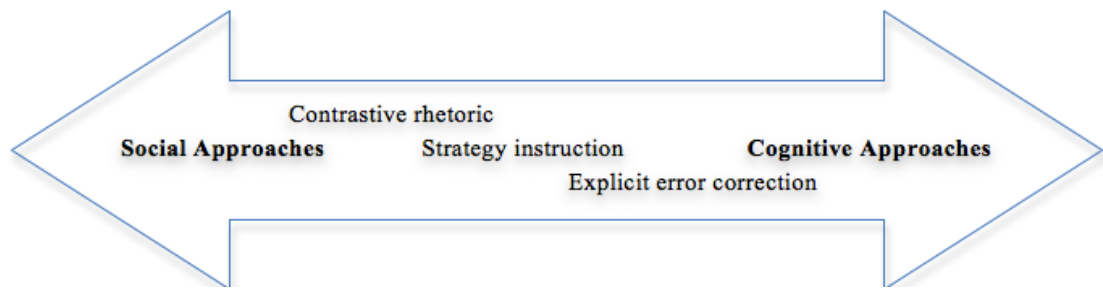
Figure 1. The continuum of cognitive-social approaches to writing pedagogy

Rodgers (2001) recognized the emergence of social or genre-based approaches to teaching writing "as one of the major trends in the new millennium" (cited in Derewianka, 2003, p. 133), whereas Johns (2002) called it a paradigm shift in education. This trend was in conjunction with the diversity and pluralism in professions and communicative acts, demanding students to learn how to write different text types or genres such as lab reports, business letters, and narratives. Students were also required to learn how to make decisions about what rhetorical or linguistic aspects they should adhere to for each text type or genre (Hyland, 2003). This means that teachers should analyze their students' needs in terms of the genre or text type they have to deal with in their academic or their future professional life, and then tailor their course objectives or instruction to accommodate these needs.

The main spur behind the appearance of genre-based approaches on the scene of language pedagogy could be imputed to the popularity of the notion of communicative competence (Hymes, 1972) in the 1970s, which has led to a crucial change in language education. Later, Canale and Swain (1980) proposed a model for the communicative competence, which consisted of grammatical, discourse, sociolinguistic, and strategic competencies (cited in Hornberger & McKay, 2010). In addition, Hyland (2004) attributed the emergence of genre-based approaches in

writing classrooms to the influence of communicative approaches to language teaching with their emphasis on language teaching as a meaningful and purposeful enterprise. This new focus on communicative aspect of language learning attracted the attention of teachers to raise students' awareness of the social aspect of language use in order to help them become members of their discourse community, here their academic discipline or professional field.

Proponents of genre-based approaches draw on the findings of sociolinguistics in language learning by adhering to the social orientation of language and advocating explicit instruction of the discourse features and rhetorical conventions of a discipline, profession, or workplace. The rationale behind teaching different writing modes – such as descriptive, narrative, and cause and effect – is to provide students with the means of dealing with the situated text types such as reading or writing biographies and description of people, events, and places. Even, teaching academic writing to nonnative students based on genre-based approach can familiarize them with the forms and functions or linguistic and rhetorical conventions writers use to communicate with their readers (Reid, 2001).

As another theoretical contribution, genre-based approaches draw on Bakhtin's (1986) idea of dialogic nature of writing, viewing writing as a negotiated communicative act between writers and readers, which could be used to increase the potential of arousing expectations in learners and enhancing their anticipations of what they read (Epstein-Jannai, 2005). Similarly, genre-based instruction subscribes to Vygotsky's notion of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) in promoting scaffolding, which is a strategy to support a cohort of learners to interact and learn from each other while engaging in collaborative activities such as pair and group

work, peer-correction, or peer-assessment (Daniels, 2001). Feez (2002) also contended that the theoretical basis of genre pedagogy could be traced back to what is called collaborative learning because language learning, especially learning to write, involves a process of social construction of knowledge through scaffolding and joint construction:

> Scaffolding occurs when the teacher contributes what learners are not yet able to do alone or do not yet know. Teachers adjust, and strategically diminish, their contribution, supporting learners as they progress towards their potential level of independent performance. Joint construction occurs when the teacher and the learner share the responsibility for functioning until the learner has the knowledge and skills to perform independently and with sole responsibility. (p. 57)

While both product and genre-based approaches focus on the development of learners' linguistic competence, genre approaches view writing differently from one social context to another. Differences in the purpose of writing, the subject of writing, and patterns of organization have led to the establishment of different types of genre (Badger & White, 2000). In addition, learning to write through genre-based approach is more complicated than what seems to be a habit-formation enterprise. Johns (2002) maintained that genre "has become a term that refers to complex oral or written responses by speakers or writers to the demands of a social context" (p. 3). In their attempt to synthesize the best approach to teaching writing, Badger and White (2000) commented on the main negative and positive aspects of genre approaches as follows:

> The negative side of genre approaches is that they undervalue the skills needed to produce a text and see learners as largely passive. More positively, they acknowledge that writing takes place in a social situation, and is a reflection of a particular purpose, and understand that learning can happen consciously through imitation and analysis. (p. 157)

In spite of their shortcomings and similarities with product-based approaches, EFL writing can benefit from genre-based approaches because learners in such contexts are deprived of accessing to sufficient L2 input and authentic instructional or learning materials; the very problem that may force learners to transfer linguistic, rhetorical, or socio-cultural elements from their L1 to their L2 writing. For example, Burke (2010), who studied the writing identity of Korean students in the USA, found out that the undergraduates' writing was still under the influence of Korean discourse at lexical and grammatical levels. Burke (2010) suggested the explicit discussion of the dominant L2 discourse in writing classrooms to raise students' awareness of English discourse features and its relationship with the other elements of writing. Kim and Kim (2005) also observed that genre approaches suited Korean students because of exposing them with more L2 input, which is traditionally lacking in such contexts. Thus, incorporating genre-based elements into writing programs can word off the negative transfer of writers' L1 linguistic patterns and rhetorical styles resulting from different linguistic, cultural, and social background. For example, Ahmed (2010) reported that socio-political factors such as authoritative class environment and lack of accountability, and socio-cultural factors such as the previous educational background, lack of reading habit, L1 interference, lack of creativity and critical thinking, and rote learning were the main reasons for Egyptian students' difficulties in essay writing. This would imply that an environment rich in authentic materials could allow students to better interact and manipulate L2 input, and as a result enhance their understanding of marriage between the form and function of language.

Although L1 transfer could not be limited to L1 interference only, researchers vary in their stand regarding its effect on L2 writing performance. Uzawa (1996), for

instance, argued that learners at different proficiency levels, except for some individual differences, transfer their L1 writing strategies to their L2 writing composition. The L1 transfer coupled with variables such as learners' L2 level of proficiency and composing experience in English were found to influence the quality of students' essay writing in English (Kubota, 1998). However, Sasaki (2000) disagreed with the role of transfer, arguing that writing expertise and L2 proficiency, accumulated over time, were accounted for the main differences between the skilled and unskilled L2 writers. Thus, while learners can benefit from having access to their L1 world knowledge and strategies, they might easily get sidetracked and entrapped in linguistic, rhetorical, and stylistic conventions of their first language. Even drawing on the theories of L1 learning has been viewed with reservation in genre-based teaching. Silva (1993), for example, faulted L2 writing specialists who base their practice and theory on mono-cultural, ethnocentric and monolingual L1 composition theories. Reviewing 72 reports and studies on the differences and similarities between L1 and L2 writing, Silva (1993) concluded that while L1 and L2 might have some common grounds, they differ from each other in many other aspects. However, while employing the principles of genre-based approaches can hinder students' unnecessary transfer from their L1, teachers should respect what learners bring to the learning process in terms of their beliefs and attitudes towards the target language, their prior knowledge, and other socio-cultural attributes.

Familiarizing students with L2 stylistic or rhetorical conventions can help them understand that some of their problems in writing have nothing to do with their incompetence, but may refer to the differences between two languages (Leki, 1991). Scarcella and Oxford (1992) maintained that learners' cultural background could have an effect on the rhetorical organization of their writing, but attributed the degree

of this influence to several factors such as their L1 writing proficiency, their L2 proficiency, and their age. For example, Japanese and Taiwanese writing styles were noticed to be different from the English style (Hayashi, 2004). In order to militate against students' use of their L1 rhetoric conventions, Zhu (2005) provided Taiwanese and Chinese students with sample texts and encouraged them to move from reading to writing to help them distinguish between different writing genres in English. Thus, one of the benefits of genre-based instruction is its potential for teaching integrated skills. Grabe (2001) considered this skills integration as a way to enhance learners' development in different areas of language learning. Reading, for example, can expand and broaden students' content knowledge, use of vocabulary, and syntactic flexibility, which in turn support both reading and writing skills (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). The indispensable relationship between reading and writing skills could also affect the quality of learners' writing, as they are armed with more ideas, concepts, and vocabulary to deal with different topics in writing classes (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996).

However, there seems to be disagreement among writing practitioners and teachers with regards to the real benefit of genre-based approaches for all contexts and all types of learners. For example, because genre-based approaches entail learners to immerse in the real contexts and situations in which genres are explored, their use in some input-poor EFL contexts might be questionable because of the difficulty in securing this input-rich environment. In addition, genre-based pedagogy capitalizes heavily on the purpose and the rhetoric development of writing, which might suit more proficient or competent learners. Bruce (2008), however, recommended applying genre-based principles to even lower level learners because they need to develop their discourse competence required to decipher academic texts. Bruce

(2008) noted that the impetus behind teaching academic writing to the freshmen is to help them acquire "the ability to integrate a wide range of different types of knowledge in order to create extended written discourse that is both linguistically accurate and socially appropriate" (p. 1). Pilegaard and Frandsen (1996) further distinguished these extended social genres, or the whole texts such as novels and science books developed and used for a specific purpose, from cognitive genres, or the texts that quite often refer to smaller chunks of text types like narrative, expository, and argumentative used to build bigger texts of social genres. In other words, cognitive genres can function as the stepping-stones for mastering social genres. This dichotomy might suggest that there should be a different path to learn to write in each category. Cognitive genres, for example, could be best learned by a trade-off between process and genre-based approaches in a hybrid fashion.

Genre-based approaches have also been criticized for dampening language learners' creativity by emphasizing the use of modeling and sample materials as the departing point from process-based approaches. However, it could be argued that while genre approaches do not reject the idea of creativity and innovation in writing, they use modeling predominantly for the initial stages, when students need to know the textual regularities of different genres or text types. This could be the reason why Bakhtin (1986) believed that "genres must be fully mastered to be used creatively" (p. 80).

Notwithstanding the influence and benefits of genre-based instruction in writing programs, Badger and White (2000) questioned the proponents of genre approaches for their failure to offer an obvious theory of learning, arguing that "the use of model texts and the idea of analysis suggest that learning is partly a question of imitation

and partly a matter of understanding and consciously applying rules" (p. 156). Also, genre approaches have been neglected in some contexts because of their similarities with traditional product-based approaches, and the belief that they might be a revival of these approaches in their emphasis on modeling and imitation. However, genre approaches appear to be rich in their theory of learning as they mainly benefit from the principles of social constructionism. Indeed, genre-based pedagogy "follows modern theories of learning in giving considerable recognition to the importance of collaboration, or peer interaction, and scaffolding, or teacher-supported learning" (Hyland, 2007, p. 158). Similarly, Feez (2002) asserted that genre pedagogy enjoys a solid theoretical background, as it follows social constructionism by giving credence to the collaborative learning and scaffolding. Hyland (2007) further argued that writing in this tradition is considered as a social activity and needs-oriented, which demands explicit instruction and language use.

Although there are reports concerning the success of genre-based instruction for non-native English speakers (Derewianka, 2003; Henry & Roseberry, 1998; Hyon, 2001; Mustafa, 1995) and for EFL learners (Kim & Kim, 2005; Matsuo & Bevan, 2002), there exist some methodological issues associated with their practical use in EFL writing. Bawarshi (2003), for example, suggested that teachers who wish to exploit genres in their classrooms should focus on motivating and challenging genres while taking into account situations and purposes of their use as well as students' needs in a given context. Moreover, genres might not suit every context of learning or writing, demanding teachers to modify and adapt them according to the situation and context of their use. As a result of these theoretical and practical disagreements among different scholars and teachers, three distinguishable schools of genre-based approaches in writing pedagogy have branched out since the coinage of the term: the

Sydney School, the English for Specific Purposes (ESP), and the New Rhetoric group (Hyon, 1996).

2.1.3.2 The Sydney School

The adherents of the "Sydney School" (e.g., Christie, 1991; Hyland, 2003) draw on Halliday's (1994) Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) or the interface areas between language and context of use such as rhetorical features, grammar, and lexicon for pedagogical purposes (Christie & Martin, 1997). Proposing practical guidelines and models for language teaching in some countries, the Sydney School is known for dealing mostly with primary, secondary, and adult immigrant learners (Derewianka, 1990). Language teachers in South Africa, USA, Italy, Hong Kong, Australia, UK, China, Canada, Sweden and Thailand were also reported subscribing to the use of these models in developing instructional materials or designing syllabi and curricula (Derewianka, 2003). Some of these instructional models, for example, were designed in a way to divide each lesson into a sequence of stages such as context and text exploration, joint construction of a text, and the independent construction of a text (see Butt et al., 2001; Derewianka, 1990; Martin, 2009). As their main characteristics, these models support attending to form, the explicit instruction of grammar, and the joint analysis of sample texts to enhance learners' noticing of the linguistic and discourse features of a genre.

Due to the flow of illiterate immigrants and asylum seekers to a country such as Australia, the Sydney School has espoused the literacy programs to accelerate the pace of language learning for this group of learners. Martin (2009) maintained that genre-based literacy programs focus on "grammar as a meaning-making resource" and "text as semantic choice in social context" (p. 11) to help learners see how language works and, as a result, read and write more effectively. Martin (2009)

asserted that the distinctive features of literacy programs correspond with the underpinning of genre theory in Hallidayan paradigm that depicts:

> an outline of how we use language to live; it tries to describe the ways in which we mobilize language – how out of all the things we might do with language, each culture chooses just a few, and enacts them over and over again – slowly adding to the repertoire as needs arise, and slowly dropping things that are not much use. Genre theory is thus a theory of the borders of our social world, and our familiarity with what to expect. (p. 13)

However, Sydney School has invested more specifically in primary and secondary school education because adult language learners and writers' goals for language learning are more socially oriented. That is, while these types of learners also need to develop the content and language of their writing, more than any other age groups they need a rationale for their involvement in learning activities. Therefore, they can perform much better if given an orientation of the social context and the purpose for learning a specific genre, as they seem to be more self-motivated than, for example, secondary school children. Therefore, because of their emphasis on the linguistic features of a text and the way different types of texts are constructed or composed, the proponents of this genre school are indifferent to social-based issues such as when, where, and how to choose and respond in one genre out of a pool of other genres. This concern with the linguistic aspect of different genres, therefore, has led to the establishment of other genre schools in different contexts, which might be more effective in meeting the real needs of novice and adult learners in writing.

2.1.3.3 The English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

Although ESP is also a linguistic-oriented genre school, its proponents virtually view genre as a purposeful and communicative entity. Different models based on the principles of this genre school were developed for teaching writing in different

disciplines. Swales (1990), for example, proposed the most practical framework for genre analysis and learning, known as 'moves analysis', informing writers of figuring out how to produce and publish a paper in their own discipline. In the context of English Language Teaching (ELT), Dudley-Evans (1997) suggested a three-stage model for writers to analyze, practice, and produce a text. Other influential figures (e.g., Bhatia, 2004; Hyland, 2002; Samraj, 2004) also patented their own models to guide writing teachers in designing syllabus and lesson plans, as well as in developing learning tasks and materials for different disciplines at higher education. While research and practice in this area is still ongoing, majority of these attempts have not addressed novice learners' writing.

As their point of departure with Sydney School, promoters of ESP school emphasized learners' knowledge of textual features of the genres used in their profession at the expense of the embedded discourse conventions in different texts (Bhatia, 2008). This problem, as Bhatia (2008) argued, might have to do with the teachers and discourse or genre analysts who underestimate the complexity and 'interdiscursivity' nature of professional genres, professional practices, and disciplinary cultures. That is, texts in different professions follow different discourse features that make their use and interpretation demanding, difficult, and in some cases like legislative discourse, even controversial. Therefore, analysis or interpretation of professional written and spoken discourse demands the integration of both text-internal and text-external aspects of language use. This includes taking into consideration features of the text, genre, professional practice, and professional culture, which establish what some critics would call interactive patterns of 'interdiscursivity' (Bhatia, 2008, p. 165).

In order to be aware of various discourse conventions of professional texts, learners or writers need to immerse in that discourse community, which seems to be more useful for graduate and post graduate students than novice writers. Moreover, implementing the practical guidelines of ESP in novice writers' classrooms requires trained teachers who are aware of the challenges and rewards of engaging learners in the disciplinary texts. In an illuminating study, Kay and Dudley-Evans (1998) ran a workshop with several teachers from different countries teaching at different levels of education and summarized the pros and cons of genre-based pedagogy in the ESP and Sydney School traditions. On the positive side, Kay and Dudley-Evans (1998) concluded that the genre-based approach is "empowering and enabling, allowing students to make sense of the world around them and participate in it, and be more aware of writing as a tool that can be used and manipulated" (p. 310). On the flip side, however, they expressed their concern regarding falling of this approach into the hands of the unimaginative teachers who might de-motivate students by failing to help them delve into the world surrounding the disciplinary texts.

2.1.3.4 The New Rhetoric Group

This genre school was first promoted by scholars such as Grabe and Kaplan (1996) and Bazerman (1997), who viewed genre "as the motivated, functional relationship between text type and rhetorical situation" (Coe, 1994, p. 195). Devitt et al. (2004) proposed guidelines for analyzing genres from this perspective, which included collecting genre samples, identifying the scene and situation where it might be used, and analyzing specific patterns used to represent that scene and situation. In a recent line of research, Johns (2008) argued that principles of the New Rhetoric Group take into account both cognitive and social aspects of writing ability helpful for novice writers or first-year university students. In addition, researchers and practitioners in this camp have adapted, as one of their theoretical backbones, the guidelines

established by Activity Theory (Russell, 1997). Having conducted genre analysis to understand the relationship between students' writing activities and the external social forces and factors, Russell (1997) concluded that the cognitive and social dimensions of learning to write are inseparable.

Activity Theory, which is originally attributed to Vygotsky's psychological theory, attempts to bridge the gap between individuals' cognition with social intercourse (Russell, 1997). In other words, social and cultural signs and artifacts mediate in order for humans to make sense of the objects in an environment. Based on this theory, subjects deal with an object to achieve their goals in a given social context. The implication of this theory to writing pedagogy would be analyzing not only the context where a text is used for, but also the context where learning is taking place, suggesting that learning and teaching processes are context-based and needs-oriented, as are the meaning of words. Carter (1990) also referred to the notion of expertise in writing and pictured it on a cognitive–social continuum, or the spectrum of the local-general knowledge, where students first develop their linguistic, cognitive, or general knowledge before they journey towards fostering local or content knowledge. Furthermore, the concept of expertise blends the general principles of knowing how to deal with the textual and overall know-how of writing skill with the sociolinguistic and contextual knowledge of writing.

With the growing popularity of sociocultural research in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) studies, many writing scholars have taken into account the Activity Theory as their theoretical backdrop of their work because it accounts for the contextual forces in analyzing genres and supports students' resort to various sources and strategies in writing (Lei, 2008). Freedman (1999) also maintained that

at the center of Rhetorical Genre Studies (RGS) is the idea that genres are best understood not so much as text types to be defined by their textual regularities, but as typified actions in response to recurring social contexts. However, the textual regularities are not overlooked; rather, they are seen as symptoms or traces of socially constructed responses to socially constructed patterns or typified situation types (Freedman, 1999). Applying the principles of such a social-based approach to teaching writing can help students "access and participate effectively in academic situations by identifying the assumptions and expectations regarding subject matter, their roles as writers, the roles of readers, and purposes for writing that are embedded in the genres" (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010, p. 196). In addition, students can act as researchers or ethnographers by interviewing their teachers and professionals in the field, as well as by examining the academic context and texts to learn about the criteria and expectations of achieving success and somehow ambiance surrounding their discipline (Hyland, 2007; Johns, 1997).

As far as the pedagogical implications in these three genre-based schools are concerned, they vary in their focus and the type of materials their advocates might employ in their classrooms. Compared to other genre-based camps, the guidelines of Rhetorical Genre Studies are more socially oriented and pedagogically friendlier to the classroom practice. As an example, Bawarshi and Reiff (2010) proposed a five-staged process to the acquisition of a genre: selecting and gaining access to a scene, observing it wholly, identifying and describing the situation, and identifying the genre in the scene. While engaging in these stages and in particular analyzing authentic texts and academic genres in different situations, students can also learn how to use language appropriately instead of transferring linguistic and rhetorical conventions from their first language. Similarly, Beaufort (2007) proposed a model

for novice writers to make them capable of writing for and in different situations. This model consists of five knowledge domains of "discourse community, subject matter, genre uses, rhetorical situation, and writing process knowledge" (Beaufort, 2007, p. 19). These areas could offer students essential conceptual tools to write different texts in different contexts and across different disciplines.

As an implied difference between these three genre-based schools, advocates of the New Rhetoric group espouse the role of disciplinary identity as one aspect of genre mastery. Disciplinary identity aims to empower writers in their profession or field of study by granting them linguistic pride and competence. Because genres are supposed to be more than merely linguistic patterns, this identity is accompanied by gaining a new expertise and adding an extra specialty, besides other specialties individuals may have (Dressen, 2008). In addition, Bazerman (1997) believed that genres are more than merely different patterns of thought:

> Genres are not just forms. Genres are forms of life, ways of being. They are frames for social action. They are environments for learning. They are locations within which meaning is constructed. Genres shape the thoughts we form and the communications by which we interact. Genres are the familiar places we go to create intelligible communication action with each other and the guideposts we use to explore the familiar. (cited in Dressen, 2008, p. 236)

Despite the fact that these three genre-based schools follow the same tradition of the post-process era and are socially oriented, Flowerdew (2002) contended that ESP and the Sydney school are more linguistic-oriented in their approach by moving from the situation towards the rhetorical and lexico-grammatical realization of a genre. However, the New Rhetoric Group concentrates more on the situation, "the attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviors of the members of the discourse communities within which genres are situated" (Flowerdew, 2002, p. 91). In addition, these genre schools

vary in their methodology. While the former schools are concerned with functional grammar, the "New Rhetoric methodology, by contrast, tends to be more ethnographic than linguistic" (Flowerdew, 2002, p. 91). Drawing on this discrepancy, Bruce (2008) mentioned two important ethnographic activities for novice writers based on the proposed methodology of the New Rhetoric group. Bruce (2008) suggested that learners can interact with experienced writers, teachers, and successful fellow learners as well as gather and analyze texts from their field to learn about the purpose, specialized content knowledge, and the vocabulary embedded in these types of texts along with other linguistic and non-linguistic elements.

Flowerdew and Wan (2010) observed that the supporters of the Sydney School and ESP have much more in common than the proponents of the New Rhetoric group. Flowerdew and Wan (2010) maintained that an obsession with the linguistic aspects of genres would be deterministic and simplistic. The New Rhetoric, as Hyon (1996) believed, is more action and context-oriented. The exponents of this camp believe that the linguistic-oriented approaches have overlooked the potential for creativity within genres due to overestimating the importance of the form-function equation. Alternatively, they emphasize the fluidity of genres and the notion of intertextuality or the overlapping genres. This is the reason why the advocates of this camp hesitate to propose clear-cut and linear pedagogical guidelines for writing classes. Instead, they support individual creativity and conscious-raising activities in teaching genres. They also prefer to employ ethnographic methods and its instruments including observation, interviews, and examining the artifacts of the community as the most discussed research and pedagogic techniques to find out about the activities and

patterns, ideas, attitudes, norms, and behavior of the discourse community concerned with a genre (Flowerdew & Wan, 2010).

In another line of comparison, Johns (2011) drew the distinction between genre acquisition and genre awareness, arguing that the former is practiced by ESP and the Sydney School practitioners, which demands the explicit instruction of specified text types while the latter, which is based on the ideas of New Rhetoric, focuses on figuring out the relationship between different text types, their rhetorical purposes, and the situations or contexts in which they function. This suggests that since genres are socially constructed, they should be regarded as dynamic, flexible, and evolving entities. In other words, the advocates of the New Rhetoric group underline learning transfer from old knowledge to the new tasks and situations, which is ideologically opposed to any "accommodationist" or "assimilationist" views toward genre acquisition (Johns, 2011, p. 65). Finally, this group advocates a more critical view towards teaching genres by encouraging learners to develop a problem-solution attitude towards writing activities and classroom practices, albeit its usefulness for more advanced learners or students majoring in literature or social sciences such as philosophy and psychology.

2.1.4 Process Genre Approach (A Hybrid Approach)

Product-based approaches failed to perpetuate their presence in writing classes any longer because of their focus on promoting rote learning and linguistic knowledge of learners at the expense of other aspects of learning to write. On the other hand, although process-based approaches championed learners' pre-knowledge and cognitive skills in writing, they treated writing as a deterministic and fixed process, and as a result, fell short of providing learners with sufficient input and ways to improve their linguistic knowledge. As far as genre-based approaches are concerned,

they value social context of writing as well as conscious instruction of form and structure, yet they might disregard learners' active participation and creativity because of supporting modeling in writing. To overcome some of the deficiencies attributed to different approaches to writing, several suggestions have been thus far made. White and Arndt (1991), for example, proposed group work and conference sessions as solutions for giving learners sufficient input. Others such as Carter (2003) recommended providing samples before or after students' production of their texts to help them have an idea of the task requirements. However, hammering an eclectic approach or handpicking the best strategies of each approach to forge an integrated approach could be an alternative to cater for the needs of today's generation of language learners, who need to deal with different writing tasks during their academic or professional life.

Bearing in mind the implications of each approach for teaching writing, this hybrid approach can select elements from different approaches to compensate for the deficiencies of the previous approaches. As the harbinger of this approach, Tribble (1996) maintained that an effective approach to teaching writing should place emphasis on the knowledge of content and context, or genre awareness, an understanding of the writing process and linguistic skills or steps learners go through to finalize a piece of writing, and knowledge of the language system or linguistic knowledge. Herter (1998) also considered a writing program the most effective when it blends feedback, workshop, and portfolio with a focus on teaching the whole language and advocating process-based approach to writing development in a synergistic environment of peer or group work. Out of this necessity, Badger and White (2000) suggested a model to teaching writing in which teachers, peers, and the exemplars of the target genre could help students build their knowledge of a genre

through the process of planning, drafting, and publishing while keeping an eye on the

purpose, situation, and other contextual elements surrounding a genre. Such a model,

as Badger and White (2000) predicted, would entail incorporating the insights of

product, process, and genre approaches. Simply put, a writing program based on this

eclectic approach:

> recognizes that writing involves knowledge about language (as in
> product and genre approaches), knowledge of the context in which
> writing happens and especially the purpose for the writing (as in genre
> approaches), and skills in using language (as in process approaches)
> writing development happens by drawing out the learners' potential (as
> in process approaches) and by providing input to which the learners
> respond (as in product and genre approaches. (Badger & White, 2000,
> p. 6)

In this approach, learners are provided with models before or after their guided

production of texts in order to enhance their "consciousness and sensitivity to the

forms and functions of language" (Carter, 2003, p. 64). Kim and Kim (2005), who

offered an overview of genre-based writing for Korean EFL students, concluded that

the genre approach "works best when it is joined with the process approach" (p. 38).

In support of this approach, Bruce (2008) referred to the potential of using genre

knowledge as the building block of an instructional writing model and the process-

based stages as the cognitive activities for students to develop their writing

competence. This blended approach, therefore, could serve all types of learners and

their different needs in learning to write. For example, some learners may suffer

from lack of sufficient access or exposure to L2 input, whereas others may need to

improve their linguistic knowledge or even their language skills such as reading. As

such, learners can have access to different sources of input from the sample texts and

from their teacher or peers' feedback. They can also benefit from consciousness-

raising activities to fill in the holes in their linguistic knowledge (Badger & White,

2000). Cognitive strategies in this eclectic model would act as the toolkit students can utilize when encountering difficulties in dealing with out-of-class assigned writing topics. Some of these strategies are common between reading and writing, whereas others such as planning and goal setting, adopting an alignment, making connections, and revising are specific to writing.

Fusing the process strategies into a genre-based instruction would ensure that students acquire sufficient strategies to write short essays or papers and learn how to practice writing at home. In addition, the genre loop of this combination could help students bypass the trap of negative transfer from their L1 (Odlin, 1989). However, developing the textual and contextual knowledge, among the necessary types of knowledge required to build a discourse competence in a genre-based approach, is easier said than done. This demands a rigorous pedagogy that can prepare novice writers to make use of different types of knowledge in different contexts through "organization of syllabus, materials and methodology that integrates multiple knowledge areas" (Bruce, 2008, p. 169).

2.2 Responding to Students' Writing (Feedback)

Students generally look forward to receiving teacher feedback on their writing (Leki, 1991). Teachers, too, feel accountable to give feedback on students' work and may feel their mission unfulfilled without it. However, teachers are torn between reading students' writing for its message, hence a dialogical written text for the intended audience, and reading students' writing for its linguistic components. Factors such as sufficient time at their disposal, their sense of professionalism, their beliefs about language learning, and their pedagogical content knowledge will to a large extent determine the manner, language, and type of teachers' feedback.

Although feedback could be given on either content or language, be categorized as direct or indirect, or be classified in its form of delivery such as oral and written, oftentimes many teachers and students tend to associate feedback with corrective feedback or responding to students' grammatical errors in writing. While research and practice in this field is still ongoing (Ellis, 2009; Ferris, 2004; Gue´nette, 2007), there is controversy over the positive effect of this type of feedback on improving L2 students' writing. Truscott (1996, 1999), for instance, sparked a round of debate on the efficacy of corrective feedback, arguing that grammar correction is useless and a bad idea to be practiced by teachers because students might avoid taking the risk of writing more complex sentences or become discouraged to write at all. Truscott (1996, 1999) contended that there would be no guarantee that students who receive corrective feedback demonstrate better accuracy in their future writing, but he concluded that teachers should be the final arbiters to make decisions about their classroom policies and practices.

Ferris (1999), however, rejected the idea of eliminating corrective feedback as a pedagogical practice and pleaded for restraint over the elimination case and further research and inquiry. Ferris and Hedgcock (1998) maintained that favoring no feedback policy might have a negative impact on students' motivation for writing. Ferris (2004) also blamed the flaw in the design of the previous research on corrective feedback for their results on the ineffectiveness of corrective feedback. Similarly, Russell and Spada (2006) suggested the existence of various confounding or moderated variables, which could have affected the results of studies against the role of corrective feedback in students' development in writing. Ferris and Roberts (2001), who carried out experimental studies on the impact of corrective feedback, found out that students who received explicit or implicit feedback significantly

outperformed their counterparts in the control group and placed more value on their teacher's feedback. Other alternatives such as online feedback or a blending of online with face-to-face response were also recommended (Shi & Guardado, 2007). Having studied the effect of online feedback, Tuzi (2004) found out that while students undertook more revisions at larger chunks such as paragraphs and improved the quality of their ideas after receiving online or E-feedback, they preferred oral to online feedback.

Due to the frequent meetings and exchanges between teachers and students, feedback can function as an affective and emotional bond, conveying a message to students that their teachers dedicate time and effort to help them move their learning forward. Therefore, abolishing a practice on the grounds that some studies showed little significant results on its effectiveness would be somehow a hasty conclusion and a pedagogical malpractice. Indeed, the notion of feedback is in conjunction with the developmental and dynamic nature of learning to write in another language. Larsen-Freeman (2006) also referred to the new shift of perspective in language pedagogy that recognizes the development of learner language not as staged-like or linear but as a complex pattern, which is dynamic and cumulative. The implication of this perspective for writing teachers is that the feedback may not address students' errors in one area, but improve other areas of their language learning. Also, this new outlook suggests that teachers should arm students with necessary strategies that engage their affective, cognitive, and social faculties in their quest for mastering academic writing. For example, while it is true that students might at times feel frustrated about their performance, teachers should ensure that students do follow-up revisions to overcome their difficulties in writing. Likewise, teachers' feedback

should be tailored to students' immediate needs and focus on more treatable than untreatable errors (F. Hyland, 2003; Ferris, 1999).

Muncie (2000) argued that the place of feedback in process writing is unchallenged, and learners should be encouraged and guided to analyze this feedback themselves in order to appreciate its benefits. In addition, Bitchener and Knoch (2009) found that written correction feedback offered in any format is useful and students who received it improved the use of rule-based features in their writing. Having accepted the effective role of corrective feedback, Ellis (2009) offered teachers a variety of options to correct students' linguistic errors. Drawing on Ellis' classification, Kozlova (2010) situated this corrective feedback within a problem-solving framework. Corrective feedback intervention was also found to have short-term positive effect on raising students' awareness of linguistic features in their writing (Gue´nette, 2007). Other scholars (e.g., Chandler, 2003; Fathman & Whalley, 1990) reported that feedback on grammar and content, given simultaneously or alone, had positive impacts on students' rewriting. As another combination, oral feedback or conferencing along with written feedback was reported to significantly affect students' use of grammatical features in their new writing (Bitchener et al., 2005).

However, learners' perceptions of and outlooks towards feedback might differ from each other or their teacher. Some learners would like to receive help from their teachers; therefore they look forward to receiving this feedback because it engages them in testing their hypotheses when composing a text (Shin, 2008). Others might prefer a discovery approach to learning and, as a result, demonstrate less inclination or pay attention to teachers' comment on their papers (Gue´nette, 2007). Yet, the extent to which students' response to their teachers' corrective feedback can inform

them of making better pedagogical decisions might depend on learners' factors and variables such as their level of proficiency, literacy skills, learning styles, and degree of motivation, just to name a few (Hyland, 2003).

Similarly, researchers vary in their views as for what aspects of students' writing teacher feedback should address. Brown (1994) believed that feedback is given to prevent fossilization of errors, and it should encompass both cognitive and affective aspects. McGarrell and Verbeem (2007) also stressed that feedback should address the communicative aspects of learners' writing through an inquiring stance and formative assessment, which would lead to negotiating of meaning, encouraging and motivating students' engagement for more revisions and refinement of their compositions. McGarrell and Verbeem (2007) counted several positive characteristics of formative feedback and its impact on enhancing students' motivation to perform better on, for instance, process writing with multi-drafts and revisions.

Research in Vygotskian sociocultural perspective suggests that feedback should fall within the learners' next zone of proximal development rather than being offered randomly (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994; Swain & Nassaji, 2010). Although it might be difficult to exactly pinpoint the next level of learners' development, more experienced teachers, who are somehow familiar with their students' level of proficiency and learning needs, can effectively dovetail the quality and quantity of their feedback to this implied level. Another line of research that has its root in sociocultural studies and Vygotskian notion of ZPD concerns the impact of peer feedback, which has recently gained momentum because of its potential to affect students' writing ability in a stress- and anxiety-free situation. Although peer groups

may not trust each other's knowledge and ability in giving feedback on their fellows' writing (Zhang, 1995), peer feedback could be an effective and strong option for teachers, mainly because of its positive affective characteristics of being less authoritarian and threatening (Rollinson, 2005). While Zhang (1995) reported that ESL learners overwhelmingly voted for teacher's feedback as their favorite type of feedback, Jacobs et al. (1998) suggested that peer and self-directed feedback could be other alternatives to respond to the learners' written work.

Offering learners the opportunity to correct or review their peers' work can turn them into critical readers and self-reliant writers, provided that the physical setting of the classroom is adequately receptive, and students are mentally prepared for this purpose. This could save teachers more time and energy to concentrate on other important issues, or support weaker students who need more help and attention. Ashwell (2000) believed that learners should be capable of understanding and interpreting the intended feedback, indicating that teachers, especially in EFL contexts, should spend some time training and preparing their students to analyze the received feedback. Munice (2000) also reported that peer feedback could affect students' development of writing if offered during preparing mid-drafts, accompanied by the teacher's feedback during the final draft.

Indirect feedback such as underlining without giving the correct form of errors is another type of feedback useful especially for more advanced students (Chandler, 2003), who can better monitor their learning and are generally better equipped with the effective strategies to prevent their errors from resurfacing in their next writing. However, this may not suit novice writers who are unfamiliar with teachers' meta-language and the technicalities of giving feedback, or those who have a low English

proficiency to figure out how to eliminate their errors, each may be related to a different aspect of language learning. Ferris (2006) maintained that indirect corrective feedback might fit responding to learners' writing because it draws students' attention to reflect and find solutions for their problems.

Another factor affecting teachers' feedback is the quantity and quality of their pedagogical content knowledge. As one of the ingredients of this knowledge, teachers' ability to give quality feedback could apprise students of their gain and level of achievement, as well as the quality of their performance (Parr & Timperley, 2010). Reportedly, in many cases, teachers' written comments address students' errors at the surface level rather than dealing with the quality of their ideas or content of their artifacts (Connors & Lunsford, 1993). There are also mismatches between what teachers believe about giving feedback and their actual practice, a gap they may or may not be aware of. Therefore, more ethnographic studies might be carried out to investigate the philosophies and motives behind such beliefs (Lee, 2009) because raising teachers' awareness of their actual practice would help them not only to give feedback routinely as part of their professional authority in the classroom, but also to attend to its real impact on students' writing development. Suh (2010) argued that teachers should also attend to 'what' and 'how' questions of giving feedback, which include informing students of the real purpose of giving feedback and the areas they should value more when they write. Kubata and Lehner (2004) believed that responding to students' writing is a highly sensitive issue due to the danger of imposing a hegemonic knowledge on them. From an ethical perspective, teachers therefore should not limit themselves to a single approach to error correction only because it is the most comfortable one for them, nor should they judge students'

ideas or content of their writing based on their family, cultural, or even educational background.

Responding to learners' strengths and teachers' use of affective comments and praising phrases like "very good" (Suh, 2010; Wong & Waring, 2009) has been another source of debate among writing scholars. Although feedback in the form of negative comments could divert learners' attention from actively focusing on class activities or the input, the overuse of complimentary phrases may, on the other hand, rob them of the learning opportunities in some situations. This means that teachers should exercise tact to give authentic and meaningful feedback tuned to learning objectives or goals. A better policy might be adapting a balanced delivery of criticism and praise, as sugaring the pill to "help the bitter pill of criticism go down" (Hyland & Hyland, 2001, p. 208).

The language of feedback delivery has remained another source of controversy among different teachers and researchers. While the use of L1 might decrease learners' opportunities to learn a second language effectively, it could play a supportive role in giving off feedback on their development (Cook, 2001; Nation, 2003). In other words, the use of learners' first language is beneficial when explicating a challenging grammatical point or giving instructions on assignments, especially in situations where the focus is on the language usage rather than language use. This applies, for example, to commenting on students' performance (Atkinson, 1993; Cook, 2001), or tackling the meaning-based issues that normally come up during the course of instruction in the classroom (Nation, 2003). Having provided several benefits of exploiting students' L1 as an efficient teaching strategy, Nation (2003) warned teachers against its overuse because it could deprive learners of

sufficient L2 input and other effective learning opportunities.

In Iranian EFL writing, there is scarcity of research conducted on the role of feedback as a key component of English writing pedagogy and on the most effective type of its delivery. Among few studies, Rahimi (2009), who studied various sources of errors in students' writings, referred to the L1 transfer as the first source of their errors because of the differences between Persian and English languages. The popularity of Grammar Translation methodology and students' conscious application of grammar rules in language learning was found to be another reason for low accuracy in students' writing (Rahimi, 2009). In addition, Iranian input-poor context and students' lack of access to native speakers of English are missing channels of feedback, which in many areas leave teachers the only arbiter of language use and usage. This further stresses the significance of feedback in helping students improve their accuracy in writing. However, this channel of support is sometimes blocked due to the highly crowded classes and teachers' lack of enough time to provide sufficient feedback on students' papers (Rahimi, 2009).

The literature on feedback also highlights the fact that learners have different preferences, beliefs, styles, and habits in language learning, and in particular, in learning to write in a second or foreign language. This, therefore, demands teachers' commitment to taking various forms of feedback into consideration while addressing this diversity in their writing classrooms. Because incorporating feedback as one of the basic components of any writing instruction, especially in EFL contexts, can offer students opportunities to improve their writing, it should be included as an important pedagogical loop in teacher training and education programs. Indeed, feedback could hamper learners' efforts in learning and de-motivate more novice

writers if provided by ill-trained or inexperienced teachers.

2.3 Assessment of Writing

Assessing or evaluating learners' writing is an indispensable ingredient of any writing program because effective teaching and assessment usually go hand in hand. Assessing the effectiveness of a writing instruction on learners' writing development is also a part of teachers' reflective practice. Literature on writing assessment gives evidence of three most crucial aspects of writing ability: fluency, accuracy, and complexity. Some scholars also included quality as another aspect of writing ability (Sasaki, 2000). However, these constructs are multidimensional, dynamic and interactive, and it would be simplistic to assume that these components function independently from each other. Therefore, assessing a piece of writing may change from one rater to another because of the constraints imposed on individuals by the social contexts surrounding the target language (Larsen-Freeman, 2009), as well as the purpose and context of assessment. In support of the difficulty of assessing writing, Hamp-Lyons (1995) acknowledged that:

> writing is a complex and multifaceted activity. When we assess writing, we engage in another complex and multifaceted activity: judging another person's text. Into that text has gone not only that person's grammatical ability, their reach of word knowledge and control, their sense of what a unified subject is, their factual knowledge about the subject, but also their understanding of the world and their place in it, their exploration of ideas, and their feelings. How shall we judge all this? (p. 759)

Even skilled teachers vary in their use of criteria when it comes to assessing learners' writing and this variability, which might originate from various pedagogical practices, has led to the disagreements on the establishment of testing benchmarks for writing assessment (Cumming, 2001). In conjunction with this concern, Worden (2009) suggested reevaluating assumptions about assessing writing forms and

philosophies to better address the challenges of teaching writing in the classroom. That is, teaching activities should be modified to effectively match assessment approaches or vice versa. In other words, Worden (2009) suggested that teachers should train learners to attend to the rhetorical aspects of writing and assess whether students know, for example, the purpose for which and the audience for whom they are writing. However, the criteria academicians employ and their expectations seem to be more convergent in assessing academic writing than in other areas.

Hamp-Lyons (1995) maintained that the nature and type of writing assessment scales or criteria depend to a large extent on the context of their use. Given that, some contexts may demand a holistic form of scoring for assessing placement or proficiency tests while others may be in favor of using multiple traits assessment for research purposes or for summative assessment of their learners' writing. Although holistic scoring is typically impressionistic and therefore inappropriate to offer constructive feedback on students' writing, it could be useful in some cases because of being more in lockstep with students' expectations and their anticipation to see only one score or grade on their paper. Furthermore, a holistic rubric will best suit the research purposes because most of the time researchers are not concerned with showing students their weaknesses or strengths. Teachers, however, can exploit this type of assessment to inform students of the fact that writing is a dynamic and complicated skill used for meaningful and real purposes, which cannot easily be broken into different parts. In believing so, the quality score should be a must in genre-based approaches to teaching writing because it could demonstrate students' content knowledge as well as their reading ability. Therefore, measuring writing quality includes, but not limited to, focusing on students' use of vocabulary, their

syntactic diversity, their content knowledge, and their knowledge of L2 rhetoric organization and discourse.

On the other hand, there is controversy over the use of rubrics in writing assessment. Wilson (2006), for example, claimed that the very idea of rubrics in its attempt to be norm-referenced is problematic and reductionist because the quality of a piece of writing is more than the sum of all parts listed under the rubrics developed or adapted by writing teachers or raters. Wilson (2006) observed that writing pedagogy and assessment do not develop side-by-side, and recommended teachers to use alternatives or rethink rubrics for their classroom use. In other words, rubrics in writing assessment, as Rezaei and Lovorn (2010) observed, will not be efficient unless they are designed locally, topic-specific, analytic, and accompanied by effective samples used by trained teachers. Wilson (2007) even found that using rubrics might provide disservice to students due to its narrow picture of what good writing is. As Rezaei and Lovorn (2010) maintained:

> Like any tool, improper use is sometimes worse than not having used the tool at all. In the same way, using a rubric may not necessarily be better than not using one. The history of writing assessment shows that achieving high reliability in writing assessment is not easy, and we should be careful not to sacrifice validity to achieve higher rates of reliability. (p. 30)

The development or use of rubrics for assessing writing depends on a user's amount of training, or even their linguistic knowledge. Wolfe (1997), who carried out a study on scorers and the way they evaluated essays, found out that the power of evaluation is correlated positively with teachers' proficiency level and reading ability so that more proficient teachers focused on the evaluation process rather than making judgments about learners' writing. Furthermore, the question of classroom teachers

as the rater of their learners' writings is another unsettled argument in assessing writing: while some scholars believe that teachers should not mark their students' papers because of the likelihood of having bias either for or against their students, others believe that this familiarity might be a positive factor. That is why multiple judgments are deemed preferable to reach a final score (Hamp-Lyons, 1990) provided that the necessary resources and funding are available.

As to the interface between teaching and assessment approaches, it could be argued that tests designed according to the principles of genre approach are by far the most valid, practical, and reliable ones because they incorporate different types of activities teachers employ to evaluate their students' development and their subsequent needs (Weigle, 2007). Genre-based assessment is valid in that it takes into account whatever students have studied or have been taught; it is also reliable because a consistency could be ensured by matching what students do in their informal assessment such as portfolio writing or their homework practices with what they practice in the classroom or on final exams. The practicality of genre-based assessment, however, depends on the teachers or contexts. Other factors such as interactivity, authenticity, and the washback effect beneficial to all educational stakeholders for their accountability value (Bachman & Palmer, 1996) are of prominent importance in assessing students' learning when applying genre-based approaches to teaching writing.

Perhaps the most effective approach to assessing writing is to test some objectives formally and some informally. For example, Weigle (2007) provided several reasons for in-class assessment as a strong option for many teachers. At the first place, this form of assessment is more pragmatic because it prepares students for their mid-term

or final exams, requiring them to answer some questions in paragraphs or essays. In addition, it gives students the opportunity to write essays similar to more proficiency-based exams such as TOEFL iBT, which asks them to read and then write or to listen and then write in an online and timed situation (Cumming et al., 2005; Weigle, 2002). Such tests would enhance authenticity (Cumming et al., 2005) and activate students' background or prior knowledge (Weigle, 2002), helping them invest more on their composing skills than their memories. Because students cannot access resources outside class when taking in-class tests, such an assessment can also help teachers assess their own instruction based on the outcomes of these tests. Another reason for using these tests is psycholinguistic: class assessment can give way to the amount of students' automatized knowledge of language since some assessment tasks evoke implicit while others reveal explicit knowledge (Ellis, 2005).

Still, another unsettled issue in assessing writing is the type of assessment and marking. One typical form of assessment is holistic marking which is "based on the marker's total impression of the essay as a whole" (Coombe, 2010, p. 183). It is impressionistic, global, quick, and reliable as long as it involves two or more raters, but it could be unreliable if carried out under time constraints and by inexperienced teachers. Another drawback associated with the holistic marking is its lack of rigor to provide washback, as well as diagnostic information on students' strengths and weaknesses in writing.

By contrast, analytic marking emphasizes different aspects of writing ability such as content, organization, grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary (Hamp-Lyons, 1991). These types of marking scales provide students with a profile of their problems and strengths in writing. They are also valuable for inexperienced teachers in terms of

saving them a lot of frustration and uncertainty as to how to go about assessing their students' writing. For example, Jacobs' et al. (1981) scale, as one of the most well-known analytic writing scales for English as a second language composition profile, focuses on different aspects of writing such as content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. However, these scoring or marking scales may not suit every writing program, especially when it comes to teaching genres. By the same token, Hamp-Lyons (2011) believed that there is "no agreement on whether holistic or analytic/multiple-trait scoring results in the more valid representation of what goes on in a text, nor on what are the salient dimensions of writing in specific contexts" (p. 4).

Reliability of rating or raters is another area of concern among writing teachers and researchers (Hamp-Lyons, 2007), which could be one of the justifications for using analytic rubrics in writing assessment. East (2009) contended that reliability is a major concern in cases when "we want to ensure that writers in a second or foreign language receive valid scores that adequately reflect their writing proficiency" (p. 89). Although East (2009) developed an analytic scoring rubric for writing, his scale was too detailed, idealistic and full of nuts and bolts. In some cases, the analytic rubrics underestimate the teacher's decision-making and judgment abilities. Oftentimes, they are also too artistic and therefore fail to take the contextual factors such as the purpose or the audience of writing into account. For example, assessment rubrics for an IELTS essay is different from assessing an essay used for research purposes because the researchers are generally interested in the development factor rather than with a student's acceptance or rejection to an academic program.

What seems to be the most effective and efficient means of gauging language learners' performance in writing is still unknown, and there is optimism that technology intervenes to help teachers with this challenging task. Hamp-Lyons (2011) believed that we are "moving beyond paper and pen, but are still not quite sure where we are moving to" (p. 3). Calling for alternatives to the traditional approaches in writing assessment, Hamp-Lyons (2002) referred to the potential of portfolio writing as one of the recent developments in teaching and assessing of writing. Hamp-Lyons (2002) maintained that there exists "little disagreement that the last 15 years of the twentieth century turned the attention of writing assessment specialists and many other educators to portfolios as a fruitful form of assessment" (p. 10). The idea of portfolio writing as the amount of written or reading materials students produce or read, and as a tool for assessing learners' progress was initially introduced in first language contexts (Weigle, 2002). Later, however, portfolios made inroads into second or foreign language learning classes. Paulson, Paulson and Meyer (1991) defined a portfolio as:

> a purposeful collection of student work that exhibits the student's efforts, progress, and achievements in one or more areas. The collection must include student participation in selecting contents, the criteria for selection, the criteria for judging merit, and evidence of student self-reflection. (p. 60)

Portfolios are classified into three types: showcase, collection, and assessment. As the name itself indicates, a showcase portfolio displays the best work produced by students, whereas a collection portfolio functions as a repository that encompasses everything students have produced. An assessment portfolio, on the other hand, is used for both formative and summative assessment of students' writing performance and development (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996). However, the borderline between these

three types is not clearly defined, and they tend to overlap (Montgomery & Wiley, 2008). Portfolio writing is consistent with the philosophy behind the process-based approach to teaching writing because of its emphasis on the delayed assessment of students' development in writing, and the revision of students' earlier draft after receiving feedback from their teacher (Duff & Hornberger, 2008; Weigle, 2002). Richard-Amato (1996) proposed the use of conferencing to review students' portfolios in order to identify their weaknesses and strengths. In this way, students can receive more feedback for further revision of their work. Therefore, with an emphasis on students' reflection on their own writing or monitoring their own learning, the absence of portfolios in a writing program may hamper students' effective learning of process-based strategies such as revisions and editing. Moreover, portfolios are of the utmost importance in genre-based instruction because they could contain authentic sample materials on different genres, rhetorical modes, or text types; hence function as a source of authentic L2 input (Hamp-Lyons & Condon, 2000).

Portfolios could be used as an alternative to the traditional impromptu type of writing (Weigle, 2002). They can provide teachers with essential information on their students' ability in gathering or developing materials, reading, commenting, or reflecting on these materials, as well as keeping track of their vocabulary, useful expressions, or even their errors. That's why Hart (1994) believed that a "portfolio documents learning over time" (p. 24). Portfolios can also boost students' self-esteem, motivation, and authority over their learning (Hirvela & Pierson, 2000). That is, better performance can give learners a sense of proud and achievement (Richard-Amato, 1996), which, in turn, will keep them motivated and on the track.

However, portfolios could be time-consuming (Montgomery & Wiley, 2008), especially if teachers fail to provide students with clear guidelines on how to use them efficiently and effectively. Another concern stems from a lack of consensus among teachers as to the format and design of portfolios (O'Malley & Valdez Pierce, 1996). For example, students might have no clue about the amount of materials they have to collect or staple to their portfolios, and in many cases they may end up garnering too much reading materials if the purpose is not clearly explained (Brown, 2004).) Teachers were also warned against students' collaborative work in gathering information for their portfolios, which not only would make their assessment thorny but could also promote the culture of academic dishonesty among them (Brown, 2004).

2.4 Summary

This brief review of literature, which could help take stock of where we stand regarding teaching and assessment of writing, acknowledges the fact that not only is writing a challenging and complex skill, but it is also an ignored skill on the curriculum in many educational contexts. The complexity of writing derives from a host of textual and contextual or social factors that interact to make a piece of text a meaningful communicative activity. Learning to write, especially for academic purposes, is also an evolutionary and developmental process demanding a considerable amount of time and effort to learn how to put together different components, at linguistic and discourse levels, to compose a purposeful written message. Notwithstanding the difficulty of becoming a writer in another language, there is an absence of consensus among writing researchers and teachers on the most effective teaching methodology or instructional model to teach writing.

The rise of new disciplines at higher education, and consequently the diversity in discourse communities, has also posed new challenges to teaching L2 writing and its place on language learning curricula. The establishment of English as a lingua franca or a means of international communication and access to scholastic resources is another driving force to produce competent writers in English at higher education institutions. Additionally, a rapidly increasing EFL diaspora who wish to pursue their post-secondary degrees or immigrate to North American and European countries for better life or professional opportunities has turned writing into one of the game-changing language skills on internationally recognized English language proficiency tests. Although different genre-based approaches have mushroomed to respond to these challenges, there exist many variables involved in the success of these approaches in a given context. As an example, contextual factors, in particular curriculum priorities and exam-oriented pedagogy have contributed to a lack of leverage to implement these approaches or even more recent developments in writing research and practice in EFL contexts.

Teaching English writing in Iran, for example, has hardly gone beyond form-focused and product-based impromptu type of writing, which has failed to produce effective writers. Research that specifically addresses writing interventions or the use of post-product approaches to teaching writing in first-year writing classes is nonexistent. Previous studies (e.g., Abdollahzadeh 2010; Birjandi and Hadidi Tamjid 2012; Rahimi 2009), which have been mostly conducted within the remits of the curriculum, have examined the role of corrective feedback, the use of writing strategies, assessment strategies etc. in second-year or third-year writing classes. In other EFL contexts, the use of eclectic approaches, such as process genre approach, were theoretically embraced (Deng, 2007; Gao, 2007; Kim & Kim, 2005; Min,

2009), yet there is scarcity of research examining their effectiveness or describing and evaluating their actual implementation.

The present study aims to bridge the gap in the existing literature on writing pedagogy in EFL contexts regarding the implementation of post-product eclectic approaches in freshmen writing classes. In an attempt to put forward evidence for the potential re-crafting of a writing curriculum and pedagogy for first-year undergraduate students majoring in English translation, this study investigates the effectiveness, as well as the rewards and challenges involved, of implementing a teaching intervention on their writing performance. This intervention takes the form of replacing the traditional 'Grammar and & Writing (I & II)' courses that focus on sentence level grammar and vocabulary with a modular process genre instructional model to teaching writing. The instruction based on this model focuses mainly on a visible pedagogy that engages students in their learning through incorporating a formative feedback mechanism, pushed output practice, and collaborative learning activities. The following chapter elaborates on the design and dynamics of the implementation of this initiative in first-year EFL writing in Iran.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to present a detailed description and rationale of the research method exploited in this study to answer the research questions. The first section touches upon the design of the study including the type of research, the actual intervention, the context of intervention, and the participants. After describing the instructional model and materials, the assessment and scoring procedure to chronicle changes in different aspects of the participants' written work is reviewed. This section is followed by a list of research questions that guide the design of this study. After providing a description of variables, data sources, and data collection procedures to collect the required data during each semester, the chapter ends with a description of the method of data analysis and a discussion of several limitations of the study.

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a pre-test, intervention, and a post-test design to investigate the effect of an instructional writing model on writing development of a sample of first-year undergraduate students during two consecutive semesters. This intervention concerned the implementation of an instructional writing model within the process genre approach to teaching paragraph writing during the first semester and essay writing during the second semester. The same participants participated in both semesters, and the same procedure was followed. The instructional materials, tasks

and activities, and different tests during both semesters were prepared by the instructor/researcher.

The design of this quasi-experimental study follows the principles of The One-Group Pre-test-Post-test Design in which "a single group is measured or observed not only after being exposed to treatment of some sort, but also before" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, p. 271). The participants were administered the same pre- and post-intervention tests or instruments, and they were treated equally in terms of having the same instructor, instructional materials, the amount of contact time, etc. on different occasions throughout the study. This design also enjoys some of the principles of a Timed-Series Design that "involves repeated measurements or observations over a period of time both before and after treatment" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, p. 279). An extensive amount of data were elicited from the participants in order to have enough evidence to attribute the participants' improvement from the pre-test to post-test to the effect of the treatment while, at the same time, to reduce, eliminate or otherwise justify the impact or the presence of the confounding variables throughout different stages of the study (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006).

In addition, this study shares some of the characteristics of action research in its rationale to locate and ameliorate a real-world language problem within its unique context. In doing so and instead of discovering something new, the design of the study attempts to increase, as Barritt (1986) suggested:

> awareness for experience which has been forgotten and overlooked. By heightening awareness and creating dialogue, it is hoped research can lead to better understanding of the way things appear to someone else and through that insight lead to improvements in practice. (p. 20)

Some of these features include the immediate need to carry out this type of research, which usually aims "to solve problems of local concern" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, p. 579). Furthermore, this study was conducted by an instructor/researcher who knew the context well, could make decisions about the data collection and analysis instruments, and incorporate his "opinions" as part of the collected data (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, p. 579). However, there are some threats to the internal and external validity of the results of the study due to familiarity of the researcher with the purpose of the study and the risk of bias, as a problem more often than not associated with these types of research. In order to minimize the effects of these threats and militate against the effect of confounding variables, an endeavored was made to generate a wealth of data and exploit a variety of data collection and analysis instruments.

Among the threats to the internal validity were history, location, and data collector's bias that were reduced by administering to the participants the same instruments at the same time, the same place, and by the same person. Also, the 'testing effect' or the students' opportunity to practice the pre-test was minimized or even eliminated by the fact that topics of these tests were not discussed in the class, students' pre-test papers were not returned to them, and they received no feedback whatsoever after assessing their papers. Indeed, students were informed that both pre-tests and post-tests were administered to learn about their needs and expectations of the course, as well as to design lesson plans and instructional materials that could better meet those needs. Students were not also required to write at least in the paragraph and essay formats for any other concurrent courses taken during those two semesters. Although students were offered reading comprehension and listening and speaking courses, they were not required to complete writing tasks for these courses, as their writing

was limited to answering reading comprehension questions at sentence level. Another measure to control the threats to internal validity was keeping the same number of participants for both semesters, and to exclude all failed, transferred, new students or those who attended private language schools or lived in an English-speaking country before attending university. Similarly, the threats of regression, attitudes of participants, and implementation were reduced by choosing "The One-Group Pre-test-Post-test" design (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, p. 271) that included comparing students' performance at the beginning with their development at the end of the study. In other words, participants were not handpicked from a group but included everybody who took the offered courses 'Grammar & Writing (I & II)' during two consecutive semesters. Moreover, with the exception of adding portfolio writing in the second half of the study, the data collection instruments remained unchanged during the course of the study.

Although it would be to some extent unethical to select a "no feedback" group or a control group without any treatment (Ferris, 2004), the main reason for excluding a control group in this study might not refer to satisfying the ethical requirements, but to the nature of this study and the curriculum constraints. At the first place, since this study dealt exclusively with first-year students who were not, at the time of this study, offered any writing courses during their first and second semesters of their studies, a policy more or less shared by similar EFL contexts (He, 2009), it was then highly unlikely to assign any control group in this study. An attempt, however, was made to compare these students with the second- and third-year students. Yet, this effort failed during its initial phase because it was difficult to control the impact of many confounding variables such as different teachers, different levels of linguistic proficiency, and age, just to name a few.

As for the method of data collection and analysis, this study follows mixed method research, which includes both collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data consists of closed-ended information while qualitative data includes open-ended information (Creswell, 2007). In such research, the quantitative data such as tests and questionnaires are administered and analyzed first and then the qualitative data are exploited to clarify and explain the quantitative findings (Dörnyei, 2007). The main advantage of this type of research is that "researchers are better able to gather and analyze considerably more and different kinds of data than they would be able to using just one approach" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, p. 16).

Both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and analysis were exploited to obtain sufficient information from students while engaging in different learning strategies. Some of these instruments were used at a regular interval in order to ensure that students had enough time to deal with the instructional materials, as well as to effectively examine the effect of the writing intervention on the participants. Likewise, the diversity of data collection and data analysis instruments enhanced the possibility to conduct an in-depth analysis and obtain insights into students' practice. This also offered an opportunity to triangulate the results of different instruments, and also to maximize the reliability of interpreting the results (Patton, 2002). These measures were taken to justify that the likely significant differences observed from comparing the results of different tests or instruments would be to a large extent attributed to the effect of the intervention rather than to the interference of some other confounding variables.

3.1.1 Context of the Study

This research was conducted in the Department of English Translation, Faculty of English Language and Literature, at Karaj Azad University, in Iran. At the beginning

of the Fall Semester 2010, the instructor/researcher discussed the purpose and procedure of research with the dean of the Faculty of Education and the head of the English Translation Department, and obtained their consent to carry out this study in that department. As a graduate of that university, the researcher was familiar with the general atmosphere, the educational and social background of the students, lecturers, the curriculum and syllabus of English Translation department. This saved a lot of time and energy needed to get to know the context of the study.

This university, according to its website, is among the top universities in Iran and a majority of students who enroll at this university generally come from affluent families. Most of them commute from Tehran or the adjacent towns and the rest live away from their families in dormitories or rented flats. Each year, more than one hundred students enroll in English translation program, which aims to prepare students to become English translators or interpreters. Although this recruitment is carried out via the university entrance exam, this exam does not exclusively test students' English language proficiency. Rather, students have to deal with other subjects such as Persian literature, Arabic language, and Islamic Teachings besides responding to the questions on English grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension.

Upon their enrolment to the program, students are seated at the same class and take the same courses, without undergoing any screening process in terms of being assigned to different English proficiency levels. The department may give some students extra credits based on the results of their entrance exam, but it has been observed that the entrance exam can hardly function as a placement test. In addition, except for few international universities, the medium of instruction in other higher

education institutions in Iran is Persian. Therefore, establishing a preparatory school where students can study English for a while to become prepared to enter their programs seems unnecessary. Moreover, students are not required to submit any certificate of nationally or internationally recognized tests of English proficiency in order to enroll in English majors.

The curriculum for undergraduate students in the translation department is almost similar to the one used by other universities, including state universities, where the researcher studied as a student of English Language and Literature during the 1990s. The undergraduate program comprises of approximately 140 credits. According to the curriculum, students have to take about 120 credits in English or about English (see Appendix A), and the rest on general courses such as Persian literature, Islamic teachings and ethics, and history. As far as the instructional materials are concerned, instructors may use their discretion to develop their own syllabus and materials, or otherwise use the commercial textbooks. However, for fist-year classes, the department advises instructors what to teach and how to go about the instruction because new or less experienced instructors are generally assigned to teach these classes.

3.1.2 Participants

The participants of this study were 84 first-year undergraduate students of English Translation who took 'Grammar & Writing (I & II)' courses during two consecutive fall and spring semesters of the academic year 2010-2011. In spite of their names, the writing part of these courses has nothing to do with teaching writing, at least at the paragraph level or other longer pieces of writing. Instead, both courses deal primarily with teaching grammar in an explicit and traditional approach, mostly in students' first language. In some cases, students are required to write sentences or clauses in

support of the newly learned grammatical points, as it is conventionally believed that students learn grammar better if they situate it into the context of sentences.

Participants were all Iranian, and they spoke Persian as their first language. Around 85% of all participants were female, a common phenomenon in today's Iranian universities where girls have outnumbered boys in many fields of studies, especially in social sciences. The average age range of the participants was 22.7 for the first semester, and 23.2 for the second semester (Table 1). Students met for two sessions (2 × 90 minutes) per week. Out of the overall weekly time, one session was spent on teaching writing within the process genre-based approach, and the other session was allocated to teaching grammar based on the original curriculum for which students were assigned the grammar textbook *Understanding and Using English Grammar* (Azar & Stacy, 2009) for both semesters. The assessment of the course was based on the covered grammar content (50%) as well as paragraph writing (50%).

Table 1. Participants of the Study by Gender and Age

	First semester		Second semester	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Gender	15.3%	84.7%	15.3%	84.7%
Age	22.8	22.6	23.3	23.1

The English language proficiency of the students was assumed to be at the same level, but they varied with respect to their previous instruction and the amount of exposure they had to English. In this study, the pre-test administered at the start of each semester was considered as the placement test to determine students' writing ability. In other words, students' quality or holistic score of their writing was calculated to determine their writing proficiency level. Based on the results of these

tests, students were grouped into three levels of beginner, elementary, and intermediate during both semesters (Table 2). The identity of all participants remained unknown throughout the study, and they could, as some of them did, withdraw or refuse to answer any question they had no idea about during interviews or on different data collection instruments such as the questionnaires.

Table 2. Participants of the Study by Writing Proficiency Level

Level	Quality Score	First semester		Second semester	
		No.	%	No.	%
Beginner	1	33	39.28	19	22.6
Elementary	2 & 3	33	39.28	45	53.5
Intermediate	4 & 5	18	21.42	20	23.9

3.2 Instructional Model and Materials

The instructional materials used in this study bore out the way language and, in particular, learning to write is viewed in the process genre-based approach. There is no doubt that teachers' attitudes towards language learning determine the type of instructional materials, tasks, assessment, and follow-up activities students may engage in or out of the classroom. For example, if teachers believe that meaning is formed in students' minds, then, they should encourage students to produce it out using elicitation strategies or tasks during different phases of instruction. On the contrary, when they believe meaning is contextual and embedded in the society or situated within the discourse community, teachers should encourage students to act as ethnographers and locate it beyond their minds (Johns, 1990). As these two perspectives could be applied to teaching writing, both cognitive and social strategies to language learning were taken into account during the first and second semesters, respectively.

Concerning the components of a writing program or syllabus, Bruce (2008) proposed that if "the discourse competence level of the writers is relatively low, it is proposed that cognitive genres should be the central focus and should provide the basis for syllabus units of such a course" (p. 115). Bruce (2008) justified that the cognitive model "first provides the basis for the selection of authentic texts (usually segments of texts) that have a common core of features that are not necessarily centered around any disciplinary topic, features that can be deconstructed and analyzed" (p. 122). In the same way, paragraph development in this study was considered to offer a cognitive framework for students to build a foundation for learning the general writing strategies so that they can write texts longer than paragraphs such as essays in the second semester, when they are expected to gradually develop an understanding of the disciplinary knowledge and texts.

Another rationale for teaching paragraph first was the fact that paragraphs are the building block of texts in English. While each paragraph supports an idea rather than a genre, it may not be impossible to find a paragraph that is written in a specific genre or rhetorical mode such as persuasive or argumentative. Thus, students need to be trained how to answer exam questions, which may deal with different text types such as compare and contrast, definition, and argumentative writing. They also needed to learn them as transitional genres that would be later developed into essays or longer texts during the later semesters or coming years.

The idea of incorporating the process loop into this model was to train students to learn how to gather information or ideas they might need for the timed writing tasks. Worden (2009) suggested that teachers of writing dedicate more time to pre-writing than revising in order to prepare students to perform more effectively on the timed

writing tasks. Along the same vein, the mechanism of process writing would work only at pre-writing stage for such exams, and therefore the tools of assessing process writing such as portfolio writing could not be subjected to the timed writing assessments. This is also true about the assignments such as take-home exams that deem inappropriate for this purpose.

Although the notion of process is to a large extent concerned with learning how to write through some painstaking steps, genre pedagogy lends itself better to the task of materials development, or the collection of raw materials essential for the actual writing activities. Developing or designing materials for each session may not seem an easy job, especially if the resources are tight, but materials development is an inevitable component of an instruction because conventional textbooks fall short of meeting the requirements of genre-based approach (Bruce, 2008). Commercial materials have been reported to overlook the real needs of learners or users (Thornbury & Meddings, 2001), contain theoretical and practical flaws (Allwright, 1981; Hutchinson & Torres, 1994; Sheldon, 1988), be irrelevant for the purpose they were produced for (Tomlinson, 2008), or cripple teachers' creativity and students' opportunity for language use (Ur, 1996). In addition, majority of the developed writing books, especially in EFL contexts, are still product or model-based and oftentimes do not live up to the claims they make; hence incompatible with more recent pedagogical strategies or practices. As such, instructional materials at both paragraph and essay levels were developed by the instructor/researcher and were distributed to students as handouts; however, students also collaborated with this process by collecting materials for their writing logs and portfolios.

3.2.1 Instructional Materials at Paragraph Level

Instructional tasks and materials prepared for the first semester addressed mainly four rhetorical modes: descriptive, narrative, process, and explanatory (cause and effect). According to Tardy (2012), investing in teaching text types lends support to genre-based perspective in L2 writing because it emphasizes building different types of knowledge including rhetorical, linguistic, discursive and subject-matter knowledge. Descriptive and narrative texts were selected because traditionally they represent more general types of writing, whereas process and cause and effect texts designate more academic types of writing. This order was also aligned with the aim of study during each semester, focusing first on building general and then local or social aspects of learning to write. Students were informed that each paragraph type would be representative of larger text types they might need to read or write about during the second semester. Materials used for the first semester also aimed to familiarize students with process-based writing strategies such as brainstorming, drafting, revising, and rewriting, with a priority given to linguistic accuracy, generating ideas and developing, and supporting a single idea for writing a paragraph (see Appendix B).

3.2.2 Instructional Materials at Essay Level

The pedagogical guidelines of the Rhetorical Genre Studies were followed to design the instruction, instructional materials, and instructional activities, at essay level because they are more socially oriented and student-friendly than other genre schools. Devitt et al. (2004) proposed guidelines for writing classes consisting of stages such as collecting samples of a genre, identifying the situation where that genre is employed, and analyzing the patterns and their interrelationships with the scene or situation of their use. Students were also encouraged and provided with instructions and topics to search and develop materials for their own portfolios. For

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example, several samples were demonstrated to guide them on how to summarize, paraphrase, or comment on the collected texts. It was expected that engaging students in these activities would offer them the opportunity to analyze or deconstruct the texts for their structure, patterns, lexicon, and other textual elements crucial for enhancing their linguistic, and rhetorical knowledge.

Introducing portfolio writing and engaging students in the process of searching for sample texts and reading on their own was to motivate them to become autonomous learners. Holding students accountable and involving them in their education could be only realized by creating in them a need and guiding them to satisfy that need more independently. This is echoed in what the American well-known lecturer, Dale Carnegie (1936), once said in his famous book *How to Win Friends & Influence People*:

> There is only one way under high heaven to get anybody to do anything. Did you ever stop to think of that? Yes, just one way. And that is by making the other person want to do it. Remember, there is no other way. (p.18)

Students were encouraged to visit the library, search on the Internet, and interview professionals or experts in the field, such as their lecturers, to learn how to become ethnographers and develop the content of their portfolios. In this way, they could enhance their meta-cognitive strategies, know the expectations of their major or future profession and their lecturers, and set more realistic goals and objectives for each course. Furthermore, they were offered the chance to benchmark their own personal theories or beliefs about learning a second language against more effective strategies such as increasing their contact with the target language and its different elements.

The materials prepared for the second semester extended the types of paragraphs students were exposed to and practiced during the first semester (see Appendix C). The main focus during this semester was on writing 4-5 paragraph essays. However, students were free to deviate from this traditional format by writing more paragraphs and selecting headings or sub-headings for their paragraphs to appear more academic. For example, they could divide their descriptive essays into sections such as an introduction, the character's early life, education, career, awards, ideas, and legacy.

3.2.3 The Designed Instructional Model

In this model, instruction for each semester (16 sessions) was designed based on a three-session module ('modeling', 'composing', and 'feedback') in which the process and genre elements were integrated in a way to bolster students' ability to write within four different rhetorical modes (see Appendix D). The first session, or modeling session, consisted of 'Rhetorical mode presentation', 'Analyzing samples', 'Follow-up tasks', and 'pre-writing activities, followed by 'Drafting' as an out-of-class activity. During this session, some time was allocated to teaching the structure and organization of paragraphs or essays during the first and second semesters, respectively. Then, students were given an orientation to a rhetorical mode, the rationale behind its use, and the occasions when they might encounter or use it. Students were then handed out samples or models to showcase a real-world example of the addressed rhetorical mode to help them deconstruct these texts for their linguistic and rhetorical elements. Sufficient time was provided to discuss students' questions and problems. Towards the end of this session, a writing prompt was presented within the reviewed rhetorical mode and students were encouraged to brainstorm, pool ideas, and take notes for the development of its first draft at home. This part functioned as the joint construction phase in a genre-based teaching cycle

because the whole class participated in generating and sharing of ideas and students had access to different resources while drafting at home (Rothery, 1996).

The second session, or composing session, comprised of 'Peer-correction & reviewing', 'Revising', and 'Timed independent writing', followed by teacher's 'Correcting and returning papers' stages. After writing the first draft of their paragraphs or essays, students came to the class, formed groups of 3 to 4 members and worked together to review and correct their work. Apart from peer correcting and having the opportunities to learn from their peers' writing styles, students could build camaraderie with their classmates and find ways to study together in or outside the classroom. Group work was a strategy used to help students even up their writing levels through scaffolding. Following this collaborative work, students rewrote the corrected versions of their texts in their logs or portfolios. In some cases, students were given time to review their errors once more and review the sample materials as a preparation for an in-class timed quiz or independent writing. This session concluded with administering a timed independent writing within the same rhetorical mode but on a different topic, and students were given 25 minutes for writing a 100-word paragraph and 50 minutes for writing a 250-word essay. The purpose of these timed writings was to keep track of students' writing development, to provide feedback on their performance, and to keep them motivated (Black & William, 1998; Cauley & McMillan, 2010). They also served the purpose of in-class practice and formative assessment (Weigle, 2007). Students' papers were assessed and returned during office hours so that they could review the teacher's feedback before attending the next class.

The last session of the module, or feedback session, dealt with 'Whole-class feedback', 'Workshop (Revising)', 'Rewriting', and individual feedback or teacher-student 'Conference session' stages. This session was mainly dedicated to the whole-class feedback, which sometimes took half or more of the class time, followed by students' in-class revising and working in groups and pairs to discuss their errors and problems with each other or their teacher. Although this collaborative work varies from the notion of writing workshop in its purpose and scope, the workshop incorporated in this model offered students the opportunity to have a hands-on experience of editing and revising skills, as two important process-based writing strategies (Calkins & Martinelli, 2006). A pre-prepared list of students' common errors or writing problems was addressed during this session. Students were then given time to rewrite their work and were scheduled conference sessions for additional help and feedback. In some cases, they could review more samples on the topic of the quiz; otherwise, the samples were distributed for further practice and reading.

However, the type and nature of feedback, as well as its quantity and quality, varied from the first to second semester. While this feedback focused predominantly on four to five components of students' writing such as grammar, vocabulary, content, organization, and mechanics during the first semester, teacher's response followed a different path in the second semester. In other words, it was more holistic and general to give students the opportunity to read and then write, without being concerned about their errors. Put simply, the first semester focused more on accuracy, whereas the second semester was concerned with developing students' content knowledge and fluency, leaving the accuracy as the last priority on the agenda. Students were, therefore, encouraged to work harder, cover more materials,

and become more self-regulated because correcting and providing feedback on essays, sometimes as long as 500-600 words, within a short period of time was a difficult and overwhelming task.

Notwithstanding their failure for a lack of social interaction ingredient (Johnson et al., 2003) and impeding students' creativity and interest in writing (Hillocks, 2003), the rationale for teaching 4-5 paragraph essays to first-year students in this context was to reduce the gap between EFL and ESL contexts as far as writing pedagogy is concerned. Not only do the middle school children as old as eighth graders in ESL contexts are introduced to the format of the five-paragraph essay, but they are also required to write balanced research papers, requiring them to attend to the elements of rhetorical features, writing for an audience, writing with a purpose, etc. (cited in Huang, 2007). Therefore, introducing essay writing during the second semester should not be interpreted as a hasty pedagogical decision for two major reasons. Firstly, five-paragraph essay is an easy and widely used model for beginners to develop their writing skills (Johnson et al., 2003); secondly, their formulaic nature is easy to teach and form, having turned them into the dominant teaching strategy for developing writing over the second half of the 20th century (Hillocks, 1995).

3.3 Assessment and Scoring

Different researchers (e.g., Cumming et al., 2005; Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005; Hartshorn, 2008; Larsen-Freeman, 2006, 2009; Ortega, 2003) have employed different types of measurement to account for the rate of development in learners' writing. Literature on writing abounds with studies on measuring fluency, accuracy, complexity, and quality as the main aspects of writing ability. However, different approaches to quantifying their values have been reported. Moreover, there has been controversy among many researchers whether quality of a piece of writing can

include complexity, or it should be regarded as an independent component. Sasaki (2000), for example, considered complexity and quality as the same constructs while fluency and accuracy were taken as two different aspects of writing.

In this study, both in-class and out-of-class assessment strategies were employed to assess students' writing development. Also, fluency, accuracy, and quality were considered as the critical components of students' writing development. However, while the former two values may stand as discrete components, quality, which refers to the overall impression a piece of writing could leave on a rater, seems to be also affected by fluency and accuracy constructs. For example, if a text is well organized, but the number of errors is high, these errors will affect its quality or overall impression on the reader or rater writing. Similarly, if a student writes a well-structured essay of 180 words, rather than meeting the word limit requirement of 250 words, the writing quality will suffer because fewer words than expected were used to elaborate on the topic. This is because writing quality, in addition to the subjective impression of a written text, is viewed as a whole if not the sum of all parts involved in making a text a quality piece of writing.

Wolfe-Quintero et al. (1998) defined fluency in writing as the "rapid production of language'' (p. 117), or as "a measure of the sheer number of words or structural units a writer is able to include in their writing within a particular period of time" (p. 14). This definition has been the most common measurement in the literature, though some researchers (e.g., Chandler, 2003; Chenowith & Hayes, 2001) used only the length of time to write a text as a measure of fluency. In this study, the total number of words per the time given was counted as writing fluency score. Mathematically, then, $F = \left(\frac{\text{the number of words written}}{\text{per time given}}\right)$, where the amount of time given would be

different for paragraph (25 minutes) and essay (50 minutes) writing. For example, if a student writes a 125-word paragraph, his or her fluency score will be calculated as

$F = \left(\frac{125}{25}\right) = 5$ words per minute (WPM); that is, a rate of writing 5 words per minute.

Measuring accuracy, however, is more problematic due to the uncertainty in categorizing errors and disagreement over the types of errors counted in writing, or even in the oral production of language. Wolfe-Quintero et al. (1998) reviewed 39 studies to examine accuracy, fluency, and complexity measurements and their correlation with L2 writing proficiency. While many of these studies recommended the error free T-unit ratio (EFT/T), or the total number of error-free T-units per total number of T-units in a given piece of writing (Hartshorn, 2008), in this study another simple approach was followed to measure the accuracy of students' paragraph and essay writing because of the problems associated with the definition and nature of T-unit. For example, it could be argued that T-unit does not suit measuring the accuracy of novice writers' composition because, in some cases, their sentences could hardly be categorized as clear clauses and T-units. In addition, Wolfe-Quintero et al. (1998) stated that different researchers perceived the T-unit differently. The literature also contains many conflicting interpretations of T-unit due to the difficulty of recognizing fragments, run-on sentences, and ambiguous sentences, as well as the absence of writers to clarify their awkward sentences or expressions. Thus, accuracy was operationally defined as the percentage of error-free words per the total number of words written. Mathematically, then, $A = 1 - \left(\frac{\text{the number of errors}}{\text{the number of words written}}\right)$. As an example, if a 125-word paragraph includes 15 errors, its accuracy score will be counted as $A = 1 - \left(\frac{15}{125}\right) = 88$; this means that 88% of this paragraph is error-free or accurate.

Therefore, it seems more reasonable, at least for research purposes, to focus on the various types of errors and what to count as an error rather than the approach to counting them. In this study, therefore, all types of errors were considered to have the same weight and were not classified into minor and major errors. For example, if a sentence is ambiguous with two misspelled words, the unclear meaning will be counted as one error and the two misspelled words as the other two errors; other types of errors, if there is any, will be treated equally. Three categories of errors – grammatical, lexical, and mechanical – were considered into which different types of errors could fall (adapted from Hartshorn, 2008) (see Appendix E). Table 3 gives some different types of errors counted in this study along with their examples; however, this could not be an inclusive taxonomy of errors, and there will be more types of errors if the teachers are involved in giving feedback on more academic types of writing.

Table 3. Different Types of Errors

Erroneous sentences	Type of errors
Some people are disagree with this idea.	Insertion
They think it make them beautiful.	Subject-verb agreement
I think because I born in Iran.	Omission
english language is international.	Capitalization
Rich countries rape poor countries.	Word choice
People تلف their time with TV.	First language
They teached me good things.	Verb form
I like TV it is good for my family.	Run-on sentence
if they fail again.	Incomplete sentence
I know diffrent countries.	Misspelling
TV could had expect educate for children.	Awkard wording (meaning)
TV has some effects in our mind.	Proposition
I think English language is language of peace.	Article
We country is big.	Possessive

Note: The examples are taken from students' paragraphs and essays.

The quality of students' writing, however, was assessed according to the rubrics adapted from previous research or international testing systems. This study deployed both analytic and holistic rubrics for assessing students' writing quality. Marking rubrics adapted from Ferris and Hedgcock (1998, p. 310) for paragraph (see Appendix F) and from TOEFL iBT independent writing rubrics (2011) for essay writing (see Appendix G) were used on a scale of 1 to 5 to calculate the students' writing quality. The assessment and correcting process of students' written work were carried out immediately after each exam or test, before students find a chance to revise their texts or add and drop anything to or from their work. To account for reliability and the rater's bias, a colleague randomly checked half of students' pre- and post-test papers at both levels, for which the Kappa coefficient was .87, indicating a good agreement.

3.4 Research Questions

This two-semester long study was guided by the following research questions:

1) How does a writing intervention within the process genre approach affect fluency, accuracy, and quality of EFL first-year students' writing at paragraph and essay levels?

2) Is there any relationship between students' writing fluency, accuracy, and quality at both paragraph and essay levels?

3) Has this writing intervention made different contributions to students at different levels of writing proficiency?

4) How do students perceive the effect of this writing intervention on their attitudes towards writing and their use of different writing strategies?

5) How do students perceive the effectiveness of different components of this writing intervention at both paragraph and essay levels?

3.5 Description of Variables

This study deals primarily with two types of variables: dependent and independent. Dependent variables include the fluency, accuracy, and quality of students' writing, which were measured by examining students' writing papers. The other two dependent variables, students' acquisition and use of writing strategies, and their evaluation of this writing intervention were examined by consulting the results of their responses to the questionnaires and interviews, as well as the data collected from observation notes and students reflective comments. On the other hand, the only independent variable was the intervention, which included implementing the process genre-based instructional model in a first-year EFL writing class. It was expected that the higher the students' scores on the dependent variables, the more successful they would be and, therefore, the effect of independent variable on the

dependent variables will be more significant. In addition, the correlation between the dependent variables will be examined to find out about the likely interrelation among them.

3.6 Data Sources

The required data for this study were obtained from various sources. Except for adapting several items on the questionnaires from previous studies, the other instruments consisted mainly of primary sources developed by the instructor/researcher. Primary sources were used to make sure that the contextual and theoretical requirements of the study were satisfied. Data sources during the first semester consisted of pre- and post-tests, pre- and post-intervention questionnaires, timed in-class writing quizzes, observation notes and students' reflective comments, and interviews. The same instruments, except for students' writing logs that were replaced by portfolios, were used during the second semester (Table 4).

Table 4. Data Collection Instruments in the Order of Administration

First semester		Second semester	
Pre-test		Post-test	
Pre-intervention questionnaire		Pre-intervention questionnaire	
Timed quizzes	Descriptive	Timed quizzes	Descriptive
	Narrative		Narrative
	Process		Process
	Cause & effect		Cause & effect
Observation notes & students' reflective comments		Observation notes & students' reflective comments	
Post-intervention questionnaire		Post-intervention questionnaire	
Post-test		Post-test	
Interview		Interview	

3.7 Method of Data Collection

Both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection were utilized to obtain data on the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variables and to better account for and interpret the results of the study. Quantitative methods of data collection included experimentations such as pre- and post-tests, timed-writing tasks, and surveys such as pre- and post-intervention questionnaires, whereas qualitative methods consisted of observations (made during the class and conference sessions with students) and students' reflective comments in their writing logs and portfolios, and interviews. Although there are advantages and disadvantages regarding the use of each data collection instrument, they were used together to reduce the likely downsides of each besides attempting to triangulate the data and reduce the likely effects of confounding variables.

3.7.1 Data Collection Instruments

The following sections present a detailed description of each type of instrument used at different phases of the study. It is worth noting that the instruments such as pre- and post-tests used for the same purpose are described together.

3.7.1.1 Pre- and Post-Tests

A pre- and post-test with exactly the same instructions and prompt, which asked students to write at least one paragraph, were administered to students at the beginning and end of the first semester to know where they stand with respect to their ability in paragraph writing (see Appendix H). Similarly, a pre- and post-test with the same prompt and instructions, which required students to write a 4-5 paragraphs essay, were administered at the beginning and end of the second semester to gauge students' ability in writing texts longer than a paragraph (see Appendix I).

Although the prompts of these tests were selected from familiar topics, they addressed a different rhetorical mode from those covered in the class.

3.7.1.2 Pre- and Post-Intervention Questionnaires

The pre- and post-intervention questionnaires for the first semester aimed to find out about students' needs, their knowledge and use of writing strategies, their habits, expectations and attitudes towards English writing in general and paragraph writing in particular. These surveys were the same in terms of the number of items, layout, and instructions. However, the post-intervention surveys did not include questions on the students' demographic background information. As a self-assessment tool and to develop their awareness of dos and don'ts of English writing, students could also become aware of their own knowledge and needs in writing as they moved down the list of items on the surveys. Except for a few items adapted from previous studies on EFL writing (e.g., Abdollahzadeh, 2010; Chuo, 2007; Lee, 2009; Petric & Cza´rl, 2003), the instructor/researcher developed the questionnaires.

The questionnaires were designed and prepared in English, but translated in Persian to ensure that students understand each item under each different category. Concerning the internal reliability of these instruments, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was analyzed for this purpose. This value was .84 for the first semester questionnaire while the questionnaire at essay level demonstrated a lower value (.61) because it included a small number of items, as the attempt was made not to repeat the items from the questionnaire at the paragraph level. In addition, the items on both questionnaires were designed in a way to inform and also complement the questions on the interviews. The first part of the questionnaire at paragraph level included a demographic section to elicit background information on the participants' gender, age, and English learning experience. The second part consisted of 35 items on the

general (items 1 to 12), before (items 13 to 16), during (items 17 to 31), and after writing strategies (items 32 to 35) (see Appendix J). However, this survey at essay level consisted of 20 items; all fell into the category of writing strategies (WS) (Appendix K). The items on both questionnaires were rated on a five-point Likert scale anchored at 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

3.7.1.3 Timed Writing Quizzes

Timed writing quizzes at both paragraph and essay levels were given to validate or double-check students' progress trajectory in writing over the course of each semester. Four timed quizzes were administered to students in different descriptive, narrative, process, and cause and effect rhetorical modes within an interval of about three to four weeks. The purpose of in-class tasks was to track students' development of their writing fluency, accuracy, and quality over time. In addition, they aimed to give students the chance to evaluate their understanding and ability of writing in different rhetorical modes while receiving formative feedback on their work. Furthermore, they were exploited as a means of students' in-class practice, and tools to make sure that students' development throughout the study was attributed to the effect of instruction or intervention, rather than as the result of other variables or unknown factors.

3.7.1.4 Observation Notes and Students' Reflective Comments

Observation could offer an accurate picture of what students do during different activities, yet some certain measures should be taken to reduce the sensitivity involved (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). As the main activities that shape observation data, instructional dialogues and assessment conversations between the teacher and students were used to tap into students' thinking patterns and their use of strategies (Ruiz-Primo, 2011). The instructor played different roles such as the observer, participant, and ethnographer while teaching these two courses. The use of

observation could be ethically justified on the grounds that the researcher was the instructor of the courses, and therefore posed no harm or risk to students while observing them. Observing students was also aligned with the idea of formative or iterative feedback, as the observational notes were integrated into the whole-class feedback whenever it was noticed that a majority of students were struggling with a writing problem or issue.

In order to eliminate or minimize the observer's bias or to account for the objectivity in collecting data from observing students, the researcher tried to be as impartial as possible through gathering sizable data from different sources using different data collection instruments. As such, the researcher made an endeavor to observe students' struggle with writing in various situations while teaching them, correcting their papers, and consulting their reflections, comments, stories, or activities in their writing logs and portfolios. Sometimes, students were asked to express their opinions or concerns about their own progress, as well as instructional materials and tasks only to look for the issues that might have been ignored or have been beyond the compass of other research instruments.

Students were encouraged to keep a writing log during the first semester. This served as a file by which students could keep track of their writing and as a notebook in which they could take notes of the important tips during the feedback session or make notes out of their reading materials outside of the classroom. In addition, students were asked to keep all their assignments, including the drafts and revisions of the timed quizzes in their logs. Furthermore, they could make glossary of new vocabulary, expressions, and grammatical points embedded in sample paragraphs or reading materials at the back of their logs. During the second semester, however,

students were guided to keep writing portfolios, which were more sophisticated than writing logs, in terms of their function and size. They functioned as a spacious file in which students could keep their reading materials, keep track of their new vocabulary, writing drafts, revisions, and more importantly, make reflective comments on their activities and assignments.

The purpose of encouraging students to comment on their own learning was to help them become critical thinkers who can reflect and evaluate their own learning or the efficacy of their learning strategies. In addition, keeping a portfolio epitomized students' contribution to learning and teaching processes, as it could have an affective impact on attracting their interest, curiosity, and attention to participate more actively in the class activities and assume more accountability towards their own learning. When students' perception of their own learning or development is positive, this will enhance their self-efficacy, as one of the determinants of success in language learning (Pajares, 2003). Students' report on their learning can help teachers find out whether their morale is low or high, or whether they have a positive picture of themselves, hence motivated or not. Therefore, students' perspectives in terms of their concerns and suggestions on portfolio writing could benefit the syllabus designers to incorporate them into writing classes as a new instructional component that can enhance students' learning and increase their participation in the mainstream instructional activities.

3.7.1.5 Interviews

An interview, as the last applied instrument, was conducted to obtain an in-depth evaluation of the rewards and challenges involved as a result of the intervention, as well as to triangulate the results of the other data collection instruments. A quarter of students were randomly selected and interviewed at the end of each semester.

Interviews at both levels were semi-structured, asking students experience, opinion (or value), and feelings questions to allow the researcher to be more flexible with the procedure and establish a rapport with students to obtain from them as much information as possible (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). They were also conducted in Persian to enhance the validity of students' responses, as they could understand the questions and freely express their opinions or ideas. Each interview consisted of 7 core questions, with several follow-up questions, investigating students' evaluation of the effectiveness of the model and its components (see Appendices L & M). In other words, these questions addressed the hidden areas of students' practice by eliciting more details and explanation on their responses to several important items on the questionnaires.

3.7.2 Data Collection Procedures

The elicitation and collection of the required data started from the first session of students' class attendance. For each data collection instrument, there was a procedure and a schedule. Pre- and post-tests were administered first, followed by the pre- and post-intervention questionnaires. Timed writing tasks were administered within an interval of every three to four weeks during the course of the semester. Interviews were conducted as the last instruments while the researcher's observations were made and students' reflective comments were collected at different phases throughout the study.

3.7.2.1 Pre- and Post-Tests

A pre- and post-test were administered to students at the first and last session of each semester to examine the effect of the writing intervention on the fluency, accuracy, and quality of their writing performance. A task sheet, with a familiar prompt and clear instructions, was given to each student, asking them to write at least one paragraph during the first semester and an essay for the second semester. Since some

of the students did not have any idea of the structure or organization of paragraph writing in English at the beginning, they were guided to write within the paragraph format by demonstrating a sample. The task instructions and prompt were also translated into Persian orally, yet further guidance or support such as using dictionaries or other resources that could help students with their writing was avoided. The tests were administered, collected, and corrected under the same conditions.

3.7.2.2 Pre- and Post-Intervention Questionnaires

After collecting the pre- and post-test papers, pre- and post-intervention questionnaires were administered under the equal conditions. The instructions were explained in Persian to ensure that students understand how to fill in a survey. Students were also informed that writing their names was completely optional to ensure that they respond to the items the way they honestly feel, without the fear of letting their teacher down if they responded otherwise. Students were provided with sufficient time to complete and return the surveys in the class.

3.7.2.3 Timed Writing Quizzes

After presenting each new rhetorical mode in the class and sparing enough time for practice, students were given a similar prompt within that covered rhetorical mode. These quizzes were scheduled within almost an interval of every three to four weeks, or once during each instructional module, and the timetable was arranged on the course policy sheet shared with students at the beginning of each semester. During these timed writing tasks, students were not allowed to use dictionaries, to consult their writing logs, or to ask for help from their instructor or fellow students. The quiz papers were collected, corrected, and returned to students ahead of the next class meeting to offer them the opportunity to reflect on the provided feedback and keep track of their errors or problems. However, after every conference session, when

students undertook sufficient reviewing and revisions of their work, the papers were re-collected and filed as part of the required data for the study.

The first writing prompt during each semester addressed the descriptive rhetorical mode, asking students to describe their favorite character, whether it be a TV star, a sportsperson, etc. The second writing prompt addressed narrative rhetorical mode that required students to narrate one of their childhood memories. The topic of the third quiz addressed the process of how to become a successful translator, whereas the last quiz required students to discuss the causes and effects of air pollution in big cities. After receiving feedback on their papers, students transferred their paragraphs to their writing logs and essays to their portfolios for further drafting, revising, or editing.

3.7.2.4 Observation Notes and Students' Reflective Comments

Observation notes were collected during the teaching and assessment processes, especially from the casual talks with students during the group work activities, conference sessions, and after or before the class. The teacher/researcher scheduled meetings with students at least twice during each semester to clarify the delivered feedback, offer further advice on their writing development, check the amount and quality of the self-directed activities in their portfolios, and listen to their grievances, concerns, or suggestions to guide the future instructional and learning tasks. From time to time, the rationale behind different activities was shared with students to have their opinions and suggestions in order to modify and tailor the learning activities to their level and needs.

No formal procedure or scale was followed for observing students or to receive their comments. For example, no technological devices such as videotapes for recording

students' activities or talks was employed for the fear of distracting students' attention or due to their concern lest this data be used for other purposes. Furthermore, the researcher made an endeavor not to discuss any personal matter with students – nor to dig into their personal issues – just to account for ethical concerns in collecting the observational data. Whenever the researcher noticed that something worth popped up, which was not addressed by other data collection instruments, it was recorded in a diary dedicated to this purpose. Most of the notes were taken during students' group work and conference sessions, where the instructor had time to listen to students' problems, challenges, or success stories.

At the beginning of each semester, the instructor explained the guidelines for developing writing logs and portfolios including their purpose, format, and design. In addition, the type of activities that students should engage in or the materials they could collect, along with the assessment procedure and the necessary tips and instructions, were clarified. Sample writing logs and portfolios, which the instructor borrowed from the ELT Department at Eastern Mediterranean University in Cyprus, were distributed and demonstrated to offer students insights into the quantity and quality of the expected work. Students also took turn keeping these samples for a while to review and check the content, design, and format. Asking students to document or keep track of their learning activities was in line with training them to make use of effective cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies, besides encouraging them to become more organized, autonomous, and active learners.

Students kept almost all class activities and homework assignments in their logs or portfolios. For example, they stapled or clipped their favorite reading texts to their portfolios and then summarized or paraphrased them on a weekly basis or every

other week. Students were also encouraged and guided to make their comments including their personal stories, memories, and evaluations about their learning or writing experiences in their logs and portfolios. Students' logs and portfolios carried some part of the course assessment, and this was another incentive for their development or preparation. During the first semester, students hardly made any comments in their writing logs because of their low confidence in writing and lack of enough familiarity with the nature of the task. However, a few students made informative and illuminating comments in their portfolios during the second semester, which echoed mostly their positive feelings and optimism about their writing development. Students' comments in their writing logs and portfolios were collected and sieved for the worthwhile data or story that would corroborate the findings from other sources or support responding to the research questions.

3.7.2.5 Interviews

The semi-structured interviews were conducted in a face-to-face fashion between the instructor and each selected participant. To avoid formality and lower anxiety in students, the interviews followed a discussion-like atmosphere so that students have the chance to express their feelings freely in a stress-free situation. After explaining the purpose of the interview, the instructor started asking questions beginning with more general and then delving into more specific questions that addressed students' experience with different parts of the instruction. The interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed, and coded into different categories according to each different question, or area of writing or language learning.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

The data analysis procedure began from the time the data were collected. Data analysis was an evolutionary and cumulative process, demanding a critical approach

to the design and development of classroom activities and materials, as well as the assessment of students' writing performance. Both quantitative and quantitative methods of data analysis were employed in this study. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 16 was utilized to analyze the quantitative data. For example, Descriptive Analysis, Paired Sample T-test, and Pearson Correlation were used to demonstrate and compare the means of students' writing fluency, accuracy, and quality scores on different pre- and post-tests and timed writing tasks. Additionally, students' responses to the items on the pre- and post-intervention questionnaire were compared using T-test statistical analysis. As for the qualitative data, coding and content analysis were conducted to analyze the data collected from interviews, observation notes and students' reflective comments in order to trace the likely changes in their writing performance during different phases of the study.

3.9 Data Analysis Procedures

The data from the pre- and post-tests were reviewed before statistical analysis was conducted. The mean score of each dependent variable was entered into SPSS for any missing or incomplete data in cases when a student was absent on these tests. Then, the students' mean fluency, accuracy and quality scores on the pre- and post-tests were calculated and compared with each other. In order to measure students' fluency and accuracy, the number of words written per the time given and the percentage of their error-free texts according to the different types of errors were calculated, respectively. In addition, the adapted marking rubrics for scoring the written paragraphs and essays including those on pre- and post-tests, and timed writing quizzes were used to assess students' writing quality score. The scores were then recorded and tabulated for discussion and interpretation purposes.

Students' responses to different items of the questionnaires were also analyzed to showcase a profile of their acquisition and use of different writing strategies. Before entering the data into SPSS, the questionnaires were reviewed to make sure that there was no missing response and to reverse the scale for items with negative denotation. Then, students' responses to the pre-intervention questionnaire were compared with their responses to the post- intervention questionnaire to find out about changes in their use of strategies and their attitudes towards writing during each semester. In addition, the qualitative data including students' responses to the interview questions, observation notes and their reflective comments were coded, categorized, and the most recurrent themes or frequent patterns were extracted for further discussion of the results or the interpretation of the findings in the light of the literature reviewed. Students' direct quotes or their translated versions were used in support of the main findings of the study.

Chapter 4

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

This chapter presents the analysis of the data collected from different sources. The quantitative and qualitative results are presented according to the order of the research questions in two different parts of paragraph and essay writing levels. Research questions one to four are answered based on the data obtained from the quantitative means of instrumentation such as pre- and post-tests, timed writing tasks, and questionnaires, whereas the data collected from the qualitative instruments such as instructor's observation notes and students' reflective comments, and interviews are consulted to answer the last research question. In order to protect their identity, participants are not referred to by their names while discussing the results, and the generic pronoun 'she' is used to refer to all participants in order not to disclose their gender.

4.1 Results and Findings at Paragraph Level

The first half of this study focused on teaching paragraph writing to students. Therefore, all components of this instructional model and strategies used addressed the elements and structure of paragraph development in English. Students were also taught about the ways recurrent structures, patterns, vocabulary, and discourse conventions could differentiate one rhetorical mode from the other. The results of the analyzed data are presented and tabulated in details under the following sub-sections.

4.1.1 Analysis of Pre- and Post-Test

The first research question at paragraph level sought to investigate whether the intervention resulted in the development of students' fluency, accuracy, and the quality of their paragraph writing. Paired Samples T-test was utilized to analyze and compare the means of dependent variables on the pre- and post-test. The results reported in Table 5 show that students' mean fluency score or speed of their writing improved significantly over the course of the study, as the number of words they wrote per minute rose significantly from the pre-test ($M = 4.68$, $SD = $ I.74) to the post-test ($M = 5.43$, $SD = $1.60, $t(83) = 4.71$, $p < .05$). In addition, students' mean accuracy score or the proportion of writing error-free paragraphs increased from the pre-test ($M = 76.37\%$, $SD = 12.49$) to the post-test ($M = 84.81\%$, $SD = 7.47$, $t(83) = 8.98$, $p < .05$, and the 95% confidence interval for the mean difference (almost 8.5%) between two values indicated a significant development. There was also a significant rise of almost one score in students' mean quality score from the pre-test ($M = 2.08$, $SD = 1.13$) to the post-test ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 1.24$), $t(83) = 13.09$, $p < .05$. In general, the results revealed significant development in students' writing fluency, accuracy, and quality at paragraph level.

Table 5. Analysis of Fluency, Accuracy and Quality Scores

	M	SD	t	df	p
Post_f - Pre_f	.754	1.467	4.712	83	.000
Post_a - Pre_a	8.443	8.610	8.987	83	.000
Post_q - Pre_q	.974	.682	13.096	83	.000

Note: *pre* and *post* stand for pre- and post-test; *f*, *a*, and *q* stand for fluency, accuracy, and quality.

4.1.2 Analysis of Timed Writing Quizzes

In order to find out the extent to which students made a significant progress in paragraph writing within an interval of every three to four weeks, a Paired Sample T-test was conducted to compare the students' writing fluency, accuracy, and quality scores on four timed class quizzes with the scores of the same variables on the pre-test. The results presented in Table 6 indicate that, except for a slight decline in the case of cause and effect rhetorical mode, there was a steady progress in students' scores from one timed writing task to another. The mean fluency scores for descriptive, narrative, process, and cause and effect rhetorical modes were 4.73, 4.87, 5.12 and 5.04, respectively, suggesting a significant progress on the last two quizzes, as students developed their writing and received sufficient feedback on their performance. The mean accuracy scores also experienced the same trend rising from 77.73 on the first quiz to 82.69% on the last quiz, suggesting that students performed, as was expected, better on reducing their errors or improving their accuracy scores on these timed writing tasks. Likewise, the mean quality scores rose from 2.11 on the first quiz to 2.71 on the last quiz for the same paragraph types. However, the results indicated that while students' mean fluency and accuracy scores demonstrated a slight decline on the cause and effect task, students' mean quality score experienced an upward trend throughout the semester.

Table 6. Analysis of Timed Writing Quizzes

	M	SD	t	df	p
Pre_f – D_f	.055	.962	.519	83	.605
Pre_f – N_f	.199	1.059	1.725	83	.088
Pre_f – P_f	.444	1.168	3.485	83	.001
Pre_f – E_f	.369	1.186	2.853	83	.005
Pre_a – D_a	1.362	9.493	1.315	83	.192
Pre_a – N_a	4.026	8.795	4.195	83	.000
Pre_a – P_a	7.297	9.499	7.041	83	.000
Pre_a – E_a	6.323	10.393	5.576	83	.000
Pre_q – D_q	.029	.642	.408	83	.685
Pre_q – N_q	.261	.841	2.844	83	.006
Pre_q – P_q	.604	.908	6.092	83	.000
Pre_q – E_q	.629	.915	6.298	83	.000

Note: *D*, *N, P* and *E* stand for Descriptive, Narrative, Process, and Cause and Effect respectively.

The second research question addressed the extent to which students' writing fluency, accuracy, and quality gain scores are correlated. Since "correlation between .40 and .60 are often found in educational research and may have theoretical or practical value, depending on the context" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, p. 344), the results of correlational analysis presented in Table 7 indicate that all correlations between these variables were statistically significant. To begin with, pre-test fluency was correlated moderately (r = .62) with post-test fluency. Pre-test fluency also showed a moderate correlation with accuracy and quality on both pre-test and post-test. However, this correlation was weaker between post-test fluency and other variables. For example, while correlation between pre-test fluency and other variables fell into the range r = .38 to r = .62, this reduced to between r = .30 and r = .37 for post-test fluency.

Table 7. Correlation between Fluency, Accuracy and Quality Scores

		Pre_f	Post_f	Pre_a	Post_a	Pre_q	Post_q
Pre_f	Pearson		.620**	.520**	.386**	.485**	.424**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N		84	84	84	84	84
Post_f	Pearson			.376**	.373**	.342**	.302**
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.000	.000	.001	.005
	N			84	84	84	84
Pre_a	Pearson				.738**	.768**	.694**
	Sig. (2-tailed)				.000	.000	.000
	N				84	84	84
Post_a	Pearson					.734**	.821**
	Sig. (2-tailed)					.000	.000
	N					84	84
Pre_q	Pearson						.839**
	Sig. (2-tailed)						.000
	N						84
Post_q	Pearson						
	Sig. (2-tailed)						
	N						

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

In addition, the relationship between pre- and post-test accuracy with other variables reported high correlation values. For example, the correlation between pre- and post-test accuracy was $r = .73$, and between pre-test accuracy and pre- and post-test quality were $r = .76$ and $r = .69$, respectively, indicating strong positive relationships. Post-test accuracy also showed strong positive correlations of $r = .73$ and $r = .82$ with pre- and post-test quality. The strongest positive correlation ($r = .83$), however, was reported between pre- and post-test quality. Yet, the relationship between quality and accuracy gain scores was much higher, more positive and therefore more significant. This also indicates that accuracy could be a stronger indicator of the quality or holistic impression of a piece of writing than fluency. The results in Table 8 also corroborate these findings, illustrating that there is a positive and significant relationship among the gain scores of three dependent variables. Thus, these results

suggested that as students built their confidence to write more words per minute, they kept on writing paragraphs with fewer errors and better quality.

Table 8. Correlation Coefficients for Fluency, Accuracy and Quality Gain Scores

		Fluency Gain	Accuracy Gain	Quality Gain
Fluency Gain	Pearson Correlation	1	.232[*]	.012
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.034	.912
	N	84	84	84
Accuracy Gain	Pearson Correlation	.232[*]	1	.263[*]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.034		.016
	N	84	84	84
Quality Gain	Pearson Correlation	.012	.263[*]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.912	.016	
	N	84	84	84

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The third research question sought to investigate whether the writing intervention has made different contributions to students at different writing proficiency levels. Table 9 presents the results of students' progress scores on their writing fluency, accuracy and quality at different proficiency levels. According to these results, the mean fluency progress score for beginner students ($M = .97$) was higher than that of elementary ($M = .67$) and intermediate ($M = .13$) students. Similarly, the mean accuracy progress score for beginners ($M = 12.78$) was more than twice as high as that of elementary ($M = 5.88$) and intermediate ($M = 3.65$) students. However, students at elementary level ($M = 1.15$) enjoyed a higher mean quality progress score than both beginner ($M = .91$) and intermediate ($M = .72$) students.

Table 9. Fluency, Accuracy and Quality Gain Scores by Proficiency Level

Beginner Level	*N*	*Min.*	*Max.*	*M*	*SD*
Fluency Gain	36	2.00	4.68	.9722	1.51837
Accuracy Gain	36	4.12	32.03	12.7806	10.48597
Quality Gain	36	.20	2.21	.9169	.66881
Elementary Level					
Fluency Gain	33	3.75	4.44	.6764	1.61831
Accuracy Gain	33	2.68	17.01	5.8879	4.68256
Quality Gain	33	.00	3.00	1.1518	.71422
Intermediate Level					
Fluency Gain	15	2.64	3.20	.1353	1.34780
Accuracy Gain	15	5.88	17.45	3.6525	5.11111
Quality Gain	15	.00	1.80	.7200	.56467

Therefore, the results suggest that although students at all writing proficiency levels made progress as a result of engaging with this intervention program, those at lower levels of proficiency, as was expected due to emphasizing more basic strategies of writing development, benefited more than others.

4.1.3 Analysis of Pre- and Post-Intervention Questionnaires

The analysis of pre- and post-intervention questionnaires addressed research question four, which examined the extent to which students developed their acquisition and use of writing strategies. Comparing the means of students' responses to the questionnaire items between two administrations in Table 10 indicates positive and statistically significant development in their acquisition and use of writing strategies. As can be seen, the mean difference of students' responses to all of the questionnaire items shows that the mean for WSPost-Q (*M* = 3.92, *SD* = .331) was significantly higher than that of WSPre-Q (*M* = 3.43, *SD* = .381), t(84) = 10.248, *p* < .05. Further

analysis of different sections, however, suggests that the general writing category (*M* = 0.68) underwent the most significant change, followed by during writing (*M* = .52), after writing (*M* = .41), and before writing (*M* = .34) categories.

Table 10. Analysis of Questionnaires

	M	*SD*	*t*	df	*p*
Pre-general – Post-general	.682	.524	11.927	83	.000
Pre-before – Post-before	.345	.858	3.687	83	.000
Pre-while – Post-while	.513	.474	9.927	83	.000
Pre-after – Post-after	.414	.818	4.634	83	.000
WSPost_Q – WSPre_Q	.488	.437	10.248	83	.000

The most remarkable findings, however, were that students strongly agreed that they liked writing and needed to write well in English (items 1 and 2), with no change in their opinions from the beginning to the end of the semester. As was also expected, the biggest variation in students' responses concerned statements that addressed their familiarity with the structure and different types of paragraphs in English, brainstorming, drafting, and revising strategies (items 8 to 12, respectively). That is, students reported developing knowledge of how to write a well-structured paragraph following effective cognitive or process-based strategies. Additionally, students reported significant improvement in their knowledge of grammar and the content of their paragraphs (items 19 and 20). There was a change in students' responses between the two administrations regarding improving their writing speed (item 3), using less repetition of identical words and phrases (item 26), following punctuation rules (item 27), and rewriting their paragraphs after receiving feedback (item 34) (see Appendix J).

4.1.4 Analysis of Observation notes and Students' Reflective Comments

Given that students did not build their confidence in writing to reflect on different learning activities and strategies in their writing logs, only observation notes were analyzed to report on their engagement with the instructional model. The extracted themes from observation notes addressed mostly students' concerns, challenges, and language learning beliefs exposed during their practice time in the class or through individual conversations during face-to-face meetings. In the first place, it was observed that most students were indifferent to the analytic scoring or the detailed analytic assessment in the form of offering them a breakdown of their fluency, accuracy, and quality scores. Indeed, students were unfamiliar with receiving three scores or grades on their papers; a practice that was incongruent with their experiences, beliefs, or expectations of feedback on their performance. On the contrary, they were looking forward to receiving only one single score on their papers, mostly addressing their writing accuracy. Since students used writing at sentence level to practice grammar, most of them believed that writing is simply about an attempt to reduce the number of grammatical errors from one piece of writing to another.

In cases when students received comments and marginal notes on their papers, they also showed a tendency towards those comments with more affective than cognitive weight. For example, they were excited to find out whether their teacher was happy with their performance, and what emoticon they received at the bottom of their paper. Moreover, it was observed that feedback was a psychologically charged practice because students regarded their teacher's feedback on their work as a commitment to improve their writing and a concern with their learning challenges and problems. This sense of empathy with the teacher or appreciation of the

delivered feedback motivated some students to work herder in order to, for instance, reduce their errors from one quiz to another.

Some students were also observed to overestimate the role of grammar in their success in writing, a finding that corroborates the results of other data collection instruments. Having held onto this belief, these students seemed to believe that grammar should precede writing and writing should be the application of grammar or a practical assessment of this knowledge. A few less proficient students even doubted the effect of such instruction during the early weeks of the semester. However, this feeling seems to haunt students when they are presented with innovative practices. To overcome these emotional burdens, the endeavor was made to frequently talk about the rationale and philosophy behind the applied strategies in order to convince students of the benefits of the strategies they were exposed to and to support them with the words of encouragement so that they gradually break away from the exam-oriented culture of pre-university years.

4.1.5 Analysis of Interviews

The content analysis of students' responses to the interview questions was carried out to answer the last research question, which investigated students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the implemented instructional writing model and its different components. The emerging themes extracted from students' comments also functioned as an assurance valve to refute or confirm the results from the analysis of more quantitative data. The following sections report the most frequent themes extracted from the students' responses and comments in the order of the questions on the interview protocol. (Students' quotes used in this section were translated from Persian into English by the instructor/researcher).

The first interview question investigated the students' overall evaluation of the intervention. An overwhelming majority of students expressed their satisfaction with the course. Among many students who made complimentary remarks and comments, one student said:

> In my opinion the course was helpful. Although I was a little bit confused at the beginning, I liked everything about it as time passed.

Another student believed that the course inculcated in them the essence of academic experience at university, represented here by the attributes of hard working and seriousness:

> This writing class was different form my high school Persian composition class. Indeed, I was not prepared at the beginning, but gradually I went with the flow when I noticed everybody was working hard.

Regarding the effectiveness of different components of this model on improving their writing, more than one third of students mentioned feedback as the most effective part of the course, whereas a quarter referred to 'workshop' or in-class practice and revising of their work as the second most successful component of this model. They also considered reading and analyzing of the sample paragraphs or texts as the third effective component of the model. Students gave a low accord to the teacher-student conferencing or other components because lack of sufficient time and logistical facilities hampered more frequent use of these strategies.

The next question sought students' opinions on the impact of the model on their thinking abilities, in particular on generating or brainstorming ideas and developing them logically into a paragraph. The analysis of data revealed that an overwhelming

majority of students' comments supported the impact of the course on familiarizing them with a new thought pattern. One student put it in this way:

> To prepare for the Persian composition classes, I used to pick up a pencil and start writing. However, I had to think a lot and figure out what to write and how to arrange my sentences to write a paragraph in English. I still feel that all my sentences appear to repeat the same thing.

The next interview question asked students about their out-of-class practicing strategies and routines. Students reported the use of five major strategies: consulting sample materials, following the process-based framework, using dictionary, exploiting technology, and resorting to L1 translation.

i. Consulting sample materials

Seven students reported reading, analyzing, and reflecting on sample and reading materials when drafting or practicing writing outside of the class. One of these students, for example, mentioned drawing on sample materials during two phases of her writing:

> First, I reviewed the sample paragraphs and picked up some key vocabulary; then, I thought about the topic and started writing. Mostly, I relied on the sample paragraphs as a reference during the process of my writing.

While some students read sample materials first, others consulted them during the last stage of their writing or when encountering problems. Several students reported the use of sample materials in a top-down fashion; that is, reading them first to get an idea of how to go about writing their own paragraph, as noted in one student's comment:

> I read and reflected on the sample paragraphs. After that, I wrote my ideas in Persian, and finally started writing and supporting them in English.

By contrast, others used these materials in a bottom-up approach, exploiting them as a reference to examine how different words and structures were used. As one student said:

> I thought about the topic first and then started writing. However, when I had doubt about using a word or a structure, I consulted sample paragraphs, my grammar book, or my dictionary.

ii. Following the process-based framework

Five students perceived practicing writing as following process-based strategies, i.e., moving through the phases of brainstorming and mining for ideas on a given prompt, sieving through the ideas to select the most supportable ones, developing them into a paragraph, and revising their work after receiving feedback from different sources. Having undertaken this process, one of these students noted:

> I thought about the topic for approximately 10 minutes, developed my ideas into a paragraph in my writing log, and then kept reviewing and rewriting it two or three times until I was happy with the final draft.

Another student, however, enjoyed a considerable slack in rewriting and redrafting her paragraph. She highlighted a two-stage revision: before receiving feedback and after:

> I usually write at midnight because it is the best time for me. I used to draft my paragraph and put it aside for two days. After that, I read, edited and rewrote it before its submission. When I received my teacher's feedback, I revised it at least twice to improve it.

iii. Using dictionary

As another important reference or learning tool, students used dictionary to complete their assignments. Although they were discouraged – except for specific cases such as looking up some nouns – to rely on bilingual dictionaries due to the risk of using words in situations where grammatically, pragmatically, or culturally deemed incorrect or inappropriate, several students addressed using bilingual dictionaries to improve their writing. Indeed, students were recommended using elementary types of monolingual dictionaries to learn the proper use of words in their context, yet some students kept using Persian-English dictionaries because they lacked confidence or sufficient knowledge of using English-English dictionaries. As one student noted:

> I thought about the topic for some minutes before starting to write. While writing, I used my Persian-English dictionary to look up the English equivalents of the Persian words I wanted to use.

The use of bilingual dictionaries was not confined to looking up the word equivalents. Rather, these references were used, at a larger scale, to translate the whole sentences or even a paragraph into English, as echoed in the following comment:

> I made use of my Persian-English dictionary a lot. I wrote the whole paragraph in Persian and then translated it into English. In particular, I used my dictionary when I ran into a problem.

However, it was observed that the overuse of bilingual dictionaries not only created funny scenes out of students' writing, but also made it difficult, in some cases, to make sense of what they were writing about.

iv. Exploiting technology

Several students reported using the Internet or other technological tools and applications, such as computers and mobile phones, to practice writing. While they were given tips on using electronic dictionaries and reading about the assigned topics online, only more competent students relied on the computer-based technology to gather ideas or to check the spelling and grammar of their writing. As one student noted:

> I used to ask my sister to help me come up with some ideas on the topic. However, I completed the paragraph myself and corrected it using the grammar and spelling checker of Microsoft Word program.

Four students mentioned *Googling* to gather information about the topic of the assigned writing tasks. Apart from obtaining new ideas, these students reported having a chance to improve their reading skills, as well as their knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. One of these students found the use of the Internet helpful to improve her reading and summarizing skills:

> I used the Internet to read about the assigned topics. Sometimes I tried to write a summary of what I read in my writing log.

Another student mentioned synthesizing strategy as she incorporated her own ideas into the notes she made from reading the online materials:

> I used the Internet to gather information about different writing topics. After that, I combined this information with my own personal ideas to complete my paragraph.

v. Resorting to L1 translation

Although students were advised to jot down their ideas in any language they wished when brainstorming, they were frequently warned against using L1 structures and translating the isolated pieces of language into English. However, a few beginner students not only transferred their L1 rhetorical styles, but also translated its actual words and syntactical structures into English, as elucidated in the following quotes:

> I relied too much on my first language to practice writing at home. I spent a lot of time thinking about the topic, and for me it was the most difficult part. At times, I could not organize my thoughts and write beautiful sentences in English. I found it difficult to think in my own language and then translate everything into English.

> I wrote down my ideas in Persian; then I translated them into English. I used dictionary to look up the words I did not know, and most of the time my teacher told me that my sentences looked like more Persian than English.

The fifth interview question addressed the students' evaluation of the course strengths. The content analysis of students' responses indicated that they strongly supported the impact of the course on developing their writing. Students also expressed satisfaction with formative feedback, their benefit from strategy training, and the efficacy of instructional materials.

i. Writing development

As the first major strength of the course, students reported progress in different aspects of their writing. For example, a majority of the interviewed students acknowledged learning the basic principles of paragraph development in English, which involved focusing on one main idea only and supporting it logically with relevant ideas, details, or other necessary information. Regarding the importance of learning to manage a paragraph in English, one student stated:

> I think I have learned how to write a good paragraph according to some principles. I feel that I have learned how to manage my ideas in a paragraph.

As the result of being presented with different learning strategies, students developed an understanding of the differences between writing in English and Persian, at least at linguistic and rhetorical levels. Notwithstanding the complexity of cross-linguistic differences, one student admitted:

> I think I learned how to deal with minor problems in my writing during the semester. I learned how to write a paragraph in English. I also realized that writing in English is different from writing in my own language.

Students enhanced their awareness of writing in English based on some principles, which are usually taken for granted, ignored, or non-existent in L1 composition classes. Not only did the course helped lower-level students learn the basics of writing in English, but it also offered more proficient students the chance to improve their writing, as highlighted in the following extracts:

> I always loved writing, but I did not know the rules of the game. I think, learning how to use grammar correctly and how to write based on some rules were among the best lessons I learned from the course.

> I was always curious to learn how to write in English based on some rules of thumb. Now, I can write because I wanted to and of course the course also helped me to do so.

ii. Satisfaction with formative feedback

Six students directly addressed the benefit of formative feedback on improving their writing. In particular, they were happy with the whole-class feedback, during which the most common errors and problems in their writing were discussed. One student referred to this strategy as the most effective part of the course:

> I think the best part of the course was discussing our writing errors and problems in the class. I noticed that students took many helpful notes and asked plenty of questions.

Another student was looking forward to receiving this type of feedback because she could focus more practically on dealing with her writing errors or problems:

> Feedback session was the best. I liked it when the teacher came to the class with a list of the most common errors and discussed them with us without mentioning the names of students who made them.

iii. Strategy training

Most of the strategies, as well as different components of the model, were referred to by their names to inculcate in students a sense of associating each strategy with achieving a course objective and to encourage them to take a professional pride in knowing the jargon of academic writing and the discourse of their future job, whether it be teaching or translating. For example, one student pointed to the exact words of 'strategy' and 'feedback' while responding to this question:

> I think focusing on the helpful writing strategies and the feedback session were the best parts of the course.

Another student found the course useful because of learning study skills and having sufficient L2 input exposure:

> In my opinion, learning about the best ways to study or practice writing and how to make use of the provided sample materials were two main strengths of the course.

iv. Efficacy of instructional materials

Four students perceived the strength of the course in the practicality and diversity of the provided instructional materials. In addition to representing examples and models

of different types of paragraphs, they helped students figure out how different components such as grammar, vocabulary, rhetorical conventions, and discourse features interweave together to form a coherent text in English. As one student commented:

> I think sample paragraphs and reading assignments were very effective. I had no clue how to write a paragraph in English. Now, I can write a good paragraph.

Students considered the role of sample materials as an eye opener to make sense of the frequent patterns and elements embedded in each rhetorical mode, as illustrated in one student's struggle with working out the differences between paragraph types:

> Sample paragraphs were very helpful, but they were a little bit difficult for my level. I read them several times to understand how they differed in terms of their topic sentences, their structure, and vocabulary used.

By contrast, the next interview question, which asked students' opinions on the weaknesses of the course, elicited fewer responses. Yet, three main grievances emerged out of students' responses: lack of enough time to practice writing and grammar, sitting in crowded classes, and the teacher's insufficient use of L1.

i. Lack of enough time

Five students complained that insufficient time was spent on practicing writing and on reviewing the newly taught grammar. Although considerable time was dedicated to teaching grammar and corrective feedback, some students associated their improvement in writing with enhancing their knowledge of grammar, demanding more explicit instruction of grammar, as illustrated in the following remarks:

> In my opinion, insufficient time was spent on teaching and practicing grammar. I still lack confidence in my knowledge of grammar.

> I think the weakness of the course was in the way grammar was handled. I wanted more practice and examples on the new lessons. I also needed more group work to practice grammar with my classmates.

ii. Crowded classes

Several students complained that the class was too crowded, and it therefore hampered the effective flow of collaborative activities such as pair and group work. Likewise, inadequate educational spaces and facilities were evident during conferencing. As one student complained:

> There were too many students in one class, and it was difficult to have pair and group work activities because of too much noise and lack of suitable space and seat arrangements.

iii. Teacher's insufficient use of L1

Four students pointed to the teacher's insufficient use of Persian while presenting the new lesson or teaching grammar as a weakness of the course. One of these students commented:

> As a matter of fact, I expected the teacher to explain grammar in Persian. Sometimes I could not follow the details in English.

Although students' first language was used for some minutes to explain grammar, almost a majority of examples given or written on the board were in English. Yet, few students expected both explanation and exemplification of grammar in their first language; a habit carried over from their previous schooling, where quite a lot of teachers are still using Persian for instruction as well as class management purposes.

In order to double-check students' understanding of the implemented strategies and the effectiveness of the instruction, the last interview question investigated their

opinions on the criteria of a well-written paragraph. Table 11 presents a thematic matrix of the most common themes expressed by respondents to this question.

Table 11. Thematic Matrix of Students' Perceptions of a Well-written Paragraph

Theme	Sample Quote
Variety	It should start with a topic sentence and sentences should not be the same.
	It should not be boring.
	It should have a topic sentence supported by different sentences and vocabulary.
	It should have a good structure, correct sentences, and a variety of vocabulary.
Reader-oriented	It should engage the reader to the end and have unity.
	It should be understandable, and have a clear introduction and conclusion.
Genre-oriented	It should look like sample paragraphs.
	It should have a topic sentence supported aptly based on its rhetorical mode.
Logically developed	It should have a main idea that is supported logically.
	It should be developed by details, examples, and other supporting sentences.

4.2 Results and Findings at Essay Level

The second half of this study focused on teaching essay to the same students, and the instructional model, materials and strategies addressed predominantly social or genre-based knowledge of writing. The results of different data collection instruments employed during this semester are presented and discussed in sub-sections below.

4.2.1 Analysis of Pre- and Post-Test

In response to the first research question or to find out whether the intervention

resulted in the development of students' essay writing fluency, accuracy, and quality, the same measurements and data analysis tools employed at the paragraph level were applied. The only difference was calculating the fluency score based on the number of words written per 50 minutes.

Table 12 reports the results of Paired Samples T-test comparing students' mean scores of their writing fluency, accuracy, and quality between two pre-test and post-test administrations. The results indicate that students' writing fluency witnessed an increase of more than 1.6 WPM. That is, the mean fluency score on the pre-test ($M = 3.41$, $SD = 1.30$) was significantly lower than that of the post-test ($M = 5.05$, $SD = 1.64$, t(83) = 12.90, $p < .05$). In other words, this shows that students wrote significantly more words per minutes (WPM) on their post-test than pre-test, or their pace of essay writing improved over the course of the semester.

Table 12. Analysis of Fluency, Accuracy and Quality Scores

	M	*SD*	*t*	df	*p*
Post_f - Pre_f	1.642	1.166	12.904	83	.000
Post_a - Pre_a	3.536	6.656	4.870	83	.000
Post_q - Pre_q	.639	.770	7.613	83	.000

Note: *pre* and *post* stand for pre- and post-test; *f*, *a*, and *q* stand for fluency, accuracy, and quality.

Additionally, the results illustrated that students wrote more accurate essays on the post-test ($M = 89.27\%$, $SD = 6.33$) than the pre-test ($M = 85.74\%$, $SD = 9.37$, t(83) = 4.870, $p < .05$, and the 95% confidence interval for the mean difference between the two values ($M = 4.98$ to $M = 2.09$) indicated a significant rise in students' percentage of writing more error-free essays. As to the development of students' essay writing quality, the results revealed that mean quality score on the post-test ($M = 3.14$, $SD =$

1.11) was significantly higher than that of the pre-test (M = 2.50, SD = 1.10), $t(83)$ = 7.61, $p < .05$. Although there seemed to be a slight increase in the overall quality of students' essays, the mean difference between the two scores (M = .47 and M = .80) indicated a statistically significant improvement. In general, the results revealed a significant development in students' writing fluency, accuracy, and quality at essay level.

4.2.2 Analysis of Timed Writing Quizzes

In order to trace students' development of their essay writing within an interval of every three to four weeks, a Paired Sample T-test analysis compared students' mean fluency, accuracy, and quality scores on four timed quizzes with the mean scores of the same variables on the pre-test. The results presented in Table 13 indicate a significant progress in students' scores on these three variables. For example, the mean fluency scores were 4.34, 5.41, 6.37, and 6.51 for descriptive, narrative, process, and cause and effect types of essay respectively, indicating a steady and upward trend in students' scores. In addition, the accuracy mean scores showed a gradual increase from 88.91% on the first quiz to 92.86% on the fourth or cause and effect quiz. Quality mean scores also demonstrated a gradual growth from 2.82 to 3.14, and then to 3.29 and finally to 3.44 for the same essay types. Despite the fact that students were in the dark about the writing topics on pre-test and post-test, the results indicate a jump in their scores on these three variables for the last two quizzes (process and cause and effect) because they were aware of the topics ahead of taking the quizzes. Students knew about topics beforehand because all class activities addressed only one topic, such as 'the causes and effects of air pollution', for which they collected a large amount of data on the Internet or from reading materials.

Table 13. Analysis of Timed Writing Quizzes

	M	SD	t	df	p
Pre_f – D_f	.925	1.426	5.943	83	.000
Pre_f – N_f	1.994	1.243	14.699	83	.000
Pre_f – P_f	2.955	1.688	16.047	83	.000
Pre_f – E_f	3.094	1.672	16.963	83	.000
Pre_a – D_a	3.169	7.439	3.904	83	.000
Pre_a – N_a	4.693	7.225	5.954	83	.000
Pre_a – P_a	6.493	7.623	7.806	83	.000
Pre_a – E_a	7.119	8.120	8.036	83	.000
Pre_q – D_q	.323	.945	3.128	83	.002
Pre_q – N_q	.643	.845	6.971	83	.000
Pre_q – P_q	.786	.886	8.131	83	.000
Pre_q – E_q	.936	.832	10.316	83	.000

Note: *D*, *N, P* and *E* stand for Descriptive, Narrative, Process, and Cause and Effect respectively.

The second research question investigated the relationship between students' writing fluency, accuracy and quality scores. The results of Pearson correlation analysis reported a positive significant correlation among mean fluency, accuracy, and quality scores (Table 14). However, while this correlation was high or very high between some pairs, it was moderate or somehow low for others.

Table 14. Correlation between Fluency, Accuracy and Quality Gain Scores

		Pre_f	Post_f	Pre_a	Post_a	Pre_q	Post_q
Pre_f	Pearson Correlation		.711**	.480**	.354**	.620**	.506**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.001	.000	.000
	N		84	84	84	84	84
Post_f	Pearson Correlation			.330**	.394**	.484**	.500**
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.002	.000	.000	.000
	N			84	84	84	84
Pre_a	Pearson Correlation				.705**	.741**	.681**
	Sig. (2-tailed)				.000	.000	.000
	N				84	84	84
Post_a	Pearson Correlation					.634**	.828**
	Sig. (2-tailed)					.000	.000
	N					84	84
Pre_q	Pearson Correlation						.761**
	Sig. (2-tailed)						.000
	N						84
Post_q	Pearson Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)						
	N						

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

For example, pre-test fluency score showed a strong positive relationship with post-test fluency score ($r = .71$). However, while pre-test fluency correlated moderately with pre-test accuracy ($r = .48$), it showed a weaker correlation with post-test accuracy score ($r = .35$). In addition, pre-test fluency correlated more than moderately with pre- and post-test quality scores ($r = .62$ & $r = .50$, respectively). The correlation between post-test fluency with other variables also revealed a moderate to weak relationship. For example, whereas post-test fluency had a higher correlation with pre- and post-test quality scores ($r = .48$ & $r = .50$, respectively),

implying an approximately strong positive relationship, it showed a weak correlation with pre- ($r = .33$) and post-test accuracy ($r = .39$) scores.

By contrast, pre-test accuracy showed a high and positive relationship with post-test accuracy score ($r = .70$), as well as strong and positive correlations with pre- and post-test quality scores ($r = .74$ & $r = .68$, respectively). In addition, the correlation between post-test accuracy and other two variables revealed the highest positive relationships. It showed relatively strong and positive relationships with pre- ($r = .63$) and post-test quality ($r = .82$) scores. The correlation between pre- and post-test quality scores was also positive and strong ($r = .76$).

Therefore, in response to the second question, the results suggest that accuracy gain scores correlated more positively with quality gain scores than with fluency gain scores. Yet, the results in Table 15 illustrate that there is positive and significant relationship between the gain scores of three dependent variables, indicating that fast writers can write more accurate with better quality essays, although accuracy proved to be a stronger indicator of the quality or holistic impression of a piece of writing.

Table 15. Correlation Coefficients for Fluency, Accuracy and Quality Gain Scores

		Fluency Gain	Accuracy Gain	Quality Gain
Fluency Gain	Pearson Correlation	1	.252[*]	.218[*]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.021	.047
	N	84	84	84
Accuracy Gain	Pearson Correlation	.252[*]	1	.386[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.021		.000
	N	84	84	84
Quality Gain	Pearson Correlation	.218[*]	.386[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.047	.000	
	N	84	84	84

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In order to examine at which writing proficiency level students can benefit from this instructional model, Table 16 reports the descriptive analysis of the mean progress scores of students' writing fluency, accuracy, and quality at three different proficiency level. Similar to these results at the paragraph level, beginner students demonstrated the highest gain scores on these variables, followed by the elementary and intermediate students, respectively. Furthermore, the results indicated that this difference was more evident in accuracy scores as the mean accuracy progress score for beginner students (8.51%) was more than three times higher than that of students at the elementary level (2.74%), and much more than that of those at intermediate level (.41%). However, while mean fluency gain score for beginners was the highest again (1.71), this score for intermediate students (1.66) was slightly higher than that of elementary students (1.59). As to the mean quality progress score, students at three levels made less than one score progress – almost 1 for beginner, more than .70 for elementary, and less than .20 for intermediate students.

Table 16. Fluency, Accuracy and Quality Gain Scores by Proficiency Level

Beginner	N	Min.	Max.	M	SD
Fluency Gain	20	.56	3.97	1.7150	.91652
Accuracy Gain	20	-5.11	41.12	8.5140	9.85475
Quality Gain	20	.00	2.14	.9640	.70983
Elementary					
Fluency Gain	43	-.70	4.54	1.5972	1.16250
Accuracy Gain	43	-10.71	13.67	2.7449	4.87789
Quality Gain	43	-1.50	2.50	.7042	.76027
Intermediate					
Fluency Gain	21	-.36	4.40	1.6633	1.41316
Accuracy Gain	21	-3.95	4.56	.4167	2.29700
Quality Gain	21	-1.00	1.00	.1971	.66796

The evidence therefore proves that this model affected students in a bottom-up fashion as far as the writing proficiency level is concerned. That is, students at

beginner level benefited more than the other two groups while students at intermediate level gained the least progress score on essay writing fluency, accuracy, and quality from the pre- to post-test administration. However, this came as no surprise because instruction usually addresses the needs of majority of students, here lower level students, especially if they are first-year university students. The ANOVA results of between-group correlation, however, revealed that this progress was significant only for mean accuracy progress score. Moreover, since the number of students at intermediate level was lower than other two groups at both paragraph and essay levels, the Post Hoc (Tukey HSD and Scheffe) analysis yielded the same results as ANOVA analysis did.

4.2.3 Analysis of Pre- and Post-Intervention Questionnaires

Research question four addressed changes in students' use of writing strategies and their attitudes towards essay writing. Before running the analysis of the data, all 20 items of the questionnaire were clustered into one category of Writing Strategies (WS). Then, a Paired-Samples T-test was conducted to find out about changes in students' acquisition and use of writing strategies between two pre- and post-intervention questionnaire administrations. The results presented in Table 17 indicate that the mean for WSPost_Q (M = 3.88, SD = 306) was significantly higher than that of WSPre_Q (M = 3.43, SD = .328), t(84) = 9.88, p < .05, as the 95% confidence interval for the mean difference between the two values was M = .53 to M = .35. Therefore, the results reported that students acquired and used effective writing strategies during different stages of their essay writing.

Table 17. Analysis of Questionnaires

	M	SD	t	df	p
WSPost_Q - WSPre_Q	.449	.416	9.884	83	.000

Further analysis revealed that the most striking differences among students' responses to the questionnaire items concerned their opinions on writing texts longer than a paragraph (item 7), learning the structure and different types of essays (items 8 and 9) and getting to know their field of study (item 19). Students also reported a big change in their satisfaction with and confidence in writing (items 1 and 2, respectively). Additionally, they developed an interest in peer reviewing or reading their friends' writings (item 14) and the ability to summarize and paraphrase English texts (items 10 and 11, respectively) (see Appendix K). Overall, the results show that students acquired and used more academic and sophisticated writing strategies during the second semester than the first semester, implying the difference between two halves of the study because they focused on different but complementary skills and sub-skills of learning to write.

4.2.4 Analysis of Observation notes and Students' Reflective Comments

Observations made during different learning activities and notes taken out mostly from students' reflective comments in their portfolios revealed some intriguing points. First, it was observed that aligned with the course objectives, students recognized reading as an important skill because of the role it played in developing their writing. Reflecting on an assignment, one student gave an account of the strategies she employed to read a text and build her knowledge on a given topic: (The student's exact sentences are quoted from her portfolio)

> In the beginning, I should say, my words I know are really limited. So when I start reading the text, there are some words that I don't know their meanings. So I have to find meanings in my dictionary. After a quick reading, I can get the main idea of the text. For getting more details, I need to read it two more times. Honestly in the beginning of the term, I didn't expect to do homework like this for writing class, and this was my first experience.

Thinking out loud, this student reported on her struggle with summarizing a descriptive text for the first time. She seemed to be familiar with the steps involved but at a loss with respect to the application of these steps to complete the task. At the end, she acknowledged the natural approach to deal with a learning problem or an overwhelming task:

> Summarizing the stories is easier than the texts about famous people. I don't know. Maybe, it's because of details in the texts. I feel every detail is important and I don't know which one is important. Also I don't know if I should change the sentences and use my own words or not. About some structures such as "she/he was born in . . ." I can't change them and sometimes I read a sentence and I don't know how I should change it. So I write it the same as the source.

When completing the task, she reflected on her practice and evaluated her performance. Whilst she counted several advantages of such an assignment, she sided with the majority in showing a lack of confidence in grammar and viewing it as the sole determinant of writing ability. However, she expressed her optimism by accepting the reality that learning to write is an evolutionary and accretive experience, and one should work hard and be patient to succeed:

> This assignment has some advantages that I can feel them like using formal words in my writing, learning new words and some structures and using grammar rules in my writing. I have still some problems for using verb tenses. I think, it is normal. This is my second term, and I need to know more in order to improve my abilities for different things about English language but I am learning.

Furthermore, students were observed to demonstrate different habits and styles when practicing writing, which sometimes posed challenges to their actual writing performance. For example, some students were not used to writing on the spot or in a crowded place such as the class environment. One of these students found the

classroom environment an unsuitable place for practicing writing: (her sentences

were translated from Persian into English by the researcher)

> Just like other students, I have my own habits for practicing writing.
> For example, I need to be in a private and quiet place to be able to write
> because I can't study in crowded places like classroom. I know this
> does not make sense at all, and I should find a way to deal with it! . . .
> Another problem is that I use dictionary a lot because I have a limited
> vocabulary. So, I should be in a place where I can have access to my
> studying tools. For example, I use electronic dictionary, and I can't
> bring my computer to the classroom, nor is my chair suitable for this
> purpose.

It was also observed that students garnered and read variegated types of reading

materials, without discriminating against any local or global topics. In other words,

their portfolios were abuzz with reading materials on Iranian as well as western or

foreign celebrities, as well as with texts on different cultural heritages, various social

issues, international cuisines, etc. This indicated students' openness to different

cultures and lack of ethnocentrism; a helpful personality factor that could further

facilitate learning of another language.

As another qualitative evidence in support of the development of students' writing

during the second semester, it was observed that, compared with the first semester or

even the beginning of the second semester, more time was spent on assessing

students' quizzes or other assignments. That is, as time passed, the length of

students' essays, the complexity of the structures and vocabulary they used, and the

quality of the content of their work improved dramatically. For example, while

assessing or correcting each student's writing at the beginning of the study took less

than 5 minutes, this time exceeded to more than 10 minutes by the end of the study.

However, some part of this time was spent on deciphering what students had written

because writing from right to left in their first language affected the quality of their

handwriting in English. Psychologically, several students associated their low performance in writing with the quality of their handwriting and, as a result, they kept complaining about its likely negative impact on the teacher's assessment of their work. This was also evident in some students' inability to differentiate between the capital and small letters of English such as t, f, p, k, and l.

In addition, the labor-intensive correction of some students' papers was one of the repercussions of the long-term negative impacts of the educational system at secondary and high school levels on their thinking and reasoning ability. It was, for example, evident that a religious black-and-white type of reasoning eclipsed their argument or reasoning style. Put simply, it was sometimes impossible to make sense of what students were writing about, especially on their pre- and post-tests that required them to give some reasons for their position on the task. However, towards the end of the study the amount of emotional language and tautology gave its way to more of an academic style, represented by the logical tactics of explaining, exemplifying, evaluating, etc.

Lastly, students were observed to have preconceptions as well as misconceptions about foreign language learning or the skills involved. For example, a few students used to make belief that they were not good at writing or at working with others. When encouraged and persuaded to keep writing or working in groups, they changed their attitudes towards these activities. A bunch of students who shied way from working with others at the beginning ended up finding study friends in and outside of the classroom. Overall, the observation notes and students reflective comments suggested that implementing any instructional model or change in students' learning

beliefs and strategies necessitates attending to various variables that may interfere to plague the efficient functioning of the effective flow of instruction or learning.

4.2.5 Analysis of Interviews

The analysis of data from interviews sought to answer the fifth research question, which aimed to obtain in-depth insights into students' experiences, perceptions, and opinions on the intervention during the second half of the study. The first question asked students' perceptions about the most difficult aspect of learning to write. Students commented on grammar and the organization or logical development of ideas as the first and second most difficult components of essay writing, respectively. Some students reported that at times they had to erase one complete paragraph and rewrite it from the scratch, only because they lacked sufficient information to support the main idea. Not surprisingly, their opinion on the difficulty of generating or coming up with ideas for developing an essay preceded their opinion on the difficulty of vocabulary. Students also admitted to the difficulty of other components of learning to write such as concept learning, schemata building, and reasoning in different rhetorical modes. Acknowledging the importance of content in writing, for instance, one student said:

> I used to think that writing is only about knowing grammar, but I have realized that we should know something about the topic first.

The next interview question asked students whether the course satisfied their expectations of essay writing. Although many students simply said 'Yes, it did', the follow-up questions elicited more explanations and reasons for their positive answers. These comments revealed that students benefited from the course because it promoted an innovative and different approach to teaching English language and

writing and, as a result, they could learn grammar in the context of authentic reading texts.

i. Promoting an innovative approach

As the major emerging theme, half of the students stated that the course met their expectations of essay writing because it offered them an innovative and different way of learning English in general, and learning to write in particular. As one student said:

> Yes, it definitely did. It was actually a productive course with a lot of new things to do and learn. I have a good feeling about the whole semester.

Similarly, another student believed that the class activities militated against the usual fatigue and boredom resulting from the routines of language learning classes:

> It was the first time I had the patience to sit in a class for 90 minutes and concentrate on the lesson because I liked the interesting and challenging activities.

ii. Feeling the difference

Six students perceived the second semester as more helpful and different because of distinctive learning strategies and activities. This was also evident in the volume of work students carried out during this semester, as illustrated in the following extracts:

> Absolutely, I think my writing improved, and I worked harder than the previous semester.

> The level and volume of materials for this semester was much more challenging than those we covered during the first semester. I think I learned many new things, but I wish we had more time to analyze these materials in depth.

Expressing her good feelings of taking the course, one of these students opined that the course exceeded their expectations of a grammar and writing class:

> It was an extraordinary course; I have realized how much I know and how much I do not know about writing. I think I have improved a lot and learned the way to excellence. Now, I like writing and realized the importance of writing for my future profession.

iii. Grammar improvement

Several students expressed their satisfaction with improving their knowledge of grammar. Among the frequent positive responses, one student observed that:

> I could understand grammar better, and I think my grammar improved a lot. I also have worked harder than before.

Another student viewed learning contextualized grammar as exerting less cognitive load on their working memory because they did not have to memorize rules and formula:

> To some extent it did. Because of taking this course, I learned that I do not have to memorize grammatical rules any more to develop grammar.

As another pedagogical strategy, students were encouraged to focus on their reading and writing assignments outside of the class and turn the class into a place for addressing their concerns and discussing their errors and problems they encountered in writing. As one student noted:

> We used to search, read, and write outside of the school. In the classroom, however, we corrected our errors and learned about grammar.

The third interview question asked students' evaluation of sample essays and reading assignments. The analysis of students' responses revealed the positive impacts of the instructional materials on improving their language learning, fostering their local and general knowledge, motivating them, and enticing their sense of appreciation.

i. Language learning development

Approximately half of the interviewees commented on the positive effect of instructional materials on improving their grammar, knowledge of vocabulary and idioms, and developing other areas of language learning such as reading and even speaking. For example, the following extracts pinpointed the exact strategies and skills touched by these sample essays and reading assignments:

> Reading assignments were very useful. I learned a lot of new words, patterns, and structures. Most importantly, I learned how to summarize and write a sentence in different ways.

> I got used to reading in English, and I felt my progress in writing and other areas of language learning as well. For example, my ability in guessing the meanings of new words as well as my reading speed improved. Even the quality of my speaking improved.

ii. General and local knowledge development

As the second major theme, students reported that sample essays and reading assignments broadened their horizon, or their world knowledge, and their awareness of the discourse of their field of study or future profession – dubbed as the local knowledge. Some students were satisfied with gathering and reading a plethora of ideas and information on different assigned topics. This gave them an opportunity to effectively incorporate the learned materials into their essays. One student, for example, acknowledged the impact of reading the descriptive texts on developing her knowledge of the descriptive rhetorical mode and finding about the life of many famous people:

> In my opinion, the reading assignments were very helpful. They helped me increase my knowledge of the world. I know many famous people now, and I am proud of that.

Students also mentioned fostering an awareness of their discipline. One student specifically referred to reading about '*the process of becoming a successful translator*' as one of the four covered essay types during the second semester:

> The materials were wonderful, especially the handouts on '*translators and translation*'.

iii. Motivating materials

Four students referred to the positive affective impacts of the sample reading materials on motivating them, and attracting their interest and curiosity to read more. Students' comments addressed the authenticity of the reading texts because they covered the recent world issues or the relevant topics. As one student commented:

> The reading assignments and sample texts aroused my interest and motivation to read about different topics and obtain new ideas.

Likewise, encouraged by the novelty of the topics and content of the reading materials, another student felt:

> The texts were attractive. For example, the topics and vocabulary were all new, and this motivated me to complete reading them every week.

iv. Generating a sense of appreciation

Although this was also observed during casual conversations and conference meetings with students, they expressed their understanding and appreciation of the time spent on selecting and developing instructional materials. As such, they felt the

need to dedicate more time and work diligently to compensate for their teacher's effort, as noted in the following quote:

> The sample essays and reading materials were extraordinary. I realized that a lot of time was dedicated to preparing them, so I read them to express my appreciation and gratitude in this way.

Psychologically speaking, reading handouts inculcated in students the temptation that they included a summary of the lessons, or at least important tips useful for the exams, persuading them to read them with care, as echoed in the following comment:

> I think the reading materials were great and helped me learn many new things. They provided me with more details, and I felt they were very effective for the class quizzes.

The fourth interview question investigated students' opinions on the strengths of the course. Several themes, more or less similar to and different form those at the paragraph level, emerged from the analysis of students' comments. Among the major strengths, students reported that the course developed different aspects of their English, provided them with effective instructional materials, motivated them to work hard, offered them collaborative learning opportunities, and enhanced their local knowledge.

i. Skill or sub-skill development

 Six students commented on the quality of grammar instruction in this semester, which was carried out through input enhancement strategies, or enhancing their understanding of how grammar functions in its context of use, rather than teaching grammar in an isolated manner. As one student said:

> I learned grammar better and easier this semester, as I could locate different structures in reading materials. The course also helped me build my confidence in writing paragraphs or even texts longer than a paragraph with fewer errors.

Students highlighted the development of the depth and breadth of their vocabulary, which are regarded as two other important aspects of their writing ability. One student, for example, commented on the role of vocabulary knowledge in building her confidence in writing about different topics:

> I think the course helped me equip myself with more vocabulary, something that I feel proud of because it has greatly affected my confidence in writing.

Another student pointed to having the opportunity to become acquainted with the reasoning and thinking skills in English, as they were required to write coherent essays and attend to the ways authors use rhetorical tropes and discourse conventions to persuade their readers of the veracity of their arguments or even descriptions and narratives. This was in stark contrast to what students were taught at their L1 composition classes. This is perhaps best summarized in the following quote:

> I think analyzing different types of sample essays and providing feedback on how to write were two wonderful components of the course. After 20 years, I have learned how to think.

ii. Effective instructional materials

Several students commented on their own endeavor to scavenge different online sources for collecting their favorite materials on different writing topics and essay types. Not only did students benefit from and value the provided samples, but they also enjoyed the process of developing materials for their own portfolios, particularly when they liked the topic, as seen in the following comment:

> I liked searching about the topics, especially those about famous people. I focused specifically on grammar and taking notes while reading online.

Similarly, another student considered more contact with this input as more exposure to grammar, which appeared to be one of their major concerns:

> I think the course offered me several advantages. For example, I had enough practice of writing and exposure to grammar. I am sure the handouts were selected carefully and wisely.

iii. Motivating activities

Several students perceived the strong impact of the course in building their confidence and attracting their interest and motivation to work persistently towards improving their writing. The frequent use of phrase 'stress-free' in some comments delineated students' undesirable experience with the old and traditional teacher-centered classes in the past. As one student commented:

> In my opinion, the course was very helpful. I rarely had stress in the class, and I developed an interest in learning grammar.

Not surprisingly, then, even one of the students admired the approach taken by this course as the one she would advocate in the future if given a chance to teach:

> I learned a lot of new things from taking this course. I will definitely use this approach in my classes if I happen to become a teacher in the future.

iv. Collaborative learning opportunities

Whilst the volume of collaborative activities was minimized during this semester because students wrote longer texts and could not easily review them with their peers during one session, group work functioned as one of the powerful elements of the

model. Three students reported learning from each other and building their confidence in writing as a result of working together, as witnessed in the following extract:

> In general, the course was very helpful. For instance, I liked working in groups because it gave me more confidence in writing and resolved some of my problems in writing.

Another student ranked group work second only to the instructional materials as the most strongest component of the model:

> I think the strong components of this course were sample or reading materials, and group work activities.

v. Enhancing local knowledge

Some students expressed their satisfaction with the course because it informed them of the professional qualifications and requirements of their future career. Furthermore, this included learning about the common jargon, expectations, as well as the dos and don'ts of their field of study. As one of these students stated:

> I feel the course changed my attitude towards my major and my future job. Everything went well, and the course was totally about change.

Since many students enter university with the least information on the academic requirements of their field of study, the attempt was made to provide them with more facts and figures about their academic discipline so that they could set realistic expectations of themselves as translators or interpreters, and as a result, could better handle their studies. One of the tasks assigned during this semester required students to find translators and interview them about the expectations, rewards, and challenges of becoming a translator. Besides that, they were asked to search for

information about the qualifications to become a translator and the steps involved in becoming a successful translator, especially about the areas of language learning that would be conducive to their professional development. Having undertaken these activities, one student shaped a better image of her academic discipline:

> The course helped me in many ways. I can say that I learned how to apply my knowledge of grammar in writing. My writing also improved, and I have a better picture of my field of study.

In response to the next interview question that investigated students' perspectives about the weaknesses of the course, half of the interviewees expressed their concerns and grievances. As the major weakness, students complained that the time was too intensive to allow them for sufficient practice, revision of their work, and receiving feedback on their portfolios or essays. Additionally, students complained about their lack of confidence in grammar, their peers' overuse of Persian in the class, and the learning activities that addressed more reading than writing skills.

i. Time intensiveness

Almost half of the comments targeted lack of sufficient time to practice the covered instructional materials or tasks in the classroom. As one student complained:

> I think the only problem was the limited time. I feel there has never been enough time.

As the second half of the study was more challenging – due to students' writing of longer texts such as 400 to 600-word essays or including different texts on the same topic or rhetorical mode in their portfolios – it was almost impossible to correct and offer feedback on all aspects of their produced work. One student who expected to receive comprehensive feedback on her portfolio said:

> I think the main concern was lack of enough time. Because there was not enough time, the teacher could not fully correct and provide feedback on our portfolios or show us better ways to improve them.

ii. Less explicit instruction of grammar

Several students complained that less weight was attached to the explicit instruction of grammar at essay level. However, this theme could fall under the strengths of the course because of following more of an implicit approach to teaching grammar during this semester. As a result, these students were not satisfied with their knowledge of grammar, rather than their ability to use grammar appropriately in the context of its use. As one student stated:

> Grammar was covered better in this semester, but I still feel it is not enough. To tell the truth, no matter how much time I spend on grammar, I forget the grammatical rules and formula quickly and this makes me worried.

Since English exams in Iran are traditionally tests of grammar, including filling in the blanks with the correct forms of the verbs or transformation and substitution questions, a few students' expectation of the course was providing them with better ways to memorize the grammatical rules and be able to use them correctly. Despite the fact that they were satisfied with the course in general, these students expressed reservation and feeling of uncertainty with respect to their ability to effectively apply their knowledge of grammar. This mindset is perhaps best echoed in the following comment:

> I can deal with less serious grammatical problems now in my writing, but I wish we had more time to spend on grammar because I still have problems with grammar. I feel I forget the rules very fast.

iii. The L1 overuse

Contrary to the students' complaints about the teacher's insufficient use of Persian during the first semester, few students complained about their classmates' use of their first language in the class, or about their reluctance to participate in class routines and group-work activities whole-heartedly. As one student said:

> Some students did not have enough motivation, and they never challenged the teacher. They did not ask useful questions and used to speak Persian in the class.

iv. Tasks for the wrong purpose

Two students grumbled that the course resembled a reading rather than a writing and grammar class. One of these students complained there were more activities focusing on reading than other skills such as speaking:

> There were a lot of reading assignments, and I spent most of my time reading than writing. There was not enough interaction in the class, nor did we have much chance to talk.

Similarly, another student, who was overwhelmed by encountering plenty of new words in reading passages, expressed the same concern:

> For me, repeating some tasks was sometimes boring. For example, I had to deal with lots of new vocabulary and reading materials every week.

As one of the significant differences between the first and second semester, students were encouraged to keep a portfolio, for which every body dedicated a file or notebook. The sixth interview question asked students' opinions on the advantages of keeping a portfolio. The analysis of students' responses to this question yielded four major themes: improving their writing ability, experiencing a new initiative,

exposing their weaknesses in grammar and writing, and having an opportunity to do projects.

i. Improving writing

Eight students referred to portfolio writing as a way to practice writing and areas such as grammar, vocabulary, summarizing, and paraphrasing, which are directly or indirectly related to the development of writing skill. As the main by-product of keeping a portfolio, students enhanced their knowledge of vocabulary. Vocabulary building and its contextualized use were frequently accented by encouraging students to make a glossary of reading vocabulary at the back of their portfolios and to review them on a regular basis. The benefit of portfolio writing for vocabulary learning is acknowledged best in the following extract:

> Portfolio writing was a helpful strategy because every week I had to read at least a text to be able to write some paragraphs. Its main advantage, however, was developing my vocabulary.

Additionally, students mentioned their progress in other skills and sub-skills, especially as far as novice writers or less proficient students were concerned:

> I read many texts and summarized them in my portfolio. This helped me add more new words and concepts, obtain more ideas, and learn how to summarize texts.

> I think portfolio writing specifically challenged lower level students. It improved the quality of their reading and, at the same time, they could gather a lot of new ideas to write about different topics.

ii. Experiencing a new initiative

Several students considered portfolio writing as a new and innovative experience, and as a result, enjoyed undertaking the whole task. As one student expressed her feeling at the end of the semester:

> Portfolio writing was a good strategy. When I looked back at the activities I did in my portfolio at the end of the semester, I found out that I learned a lot of new things.

Another student viewed portfolio writing as an alternative approach to language learning:

> Portfolio writing was a new experience, and I think different and innovative activities are always motivating. I also learned that there is another way to learn English as I could collect a pile of materials from the Internet and learn a lot from them.

iii. Exposing the weaknesses

Some students considered portfolio writing as a benchmark against which they could test their knowledge of writing, vocabulary, grammar, etc. In other words, students came across their own weaknesses or gaps in their knowledge of writing or language learning while analyzing the collected reading texts. Acknowledging the existence of problems and learning how to locate them, as the first building stone in the journey towards taking ownership of their learning, was a source of comment in interview data:

> I think portfolio writing helped me learn new vocabulary better. In addition, it showed me the weak and strong areas of my writing and grammar.

> Portfolio writing was very helpful. By exposing my errors and mistakes, it helped me find out about my problems myself. I feel it was a better way of learning grammar and writing.

iv. Offering an opportunity to do projects

Two students mentioned their interest in conducting projects, including searching and discovering reading materials from the Internet or other sources, to learn about

different writing topics. Engaging in discovery-based learning, however, suited more interested or motivated students, as noted in the following quote:

> I love doing projects. Portfolio writing helped me increase my knowledge of the world, enhance my knowledge of vocabulary, and improve my writing skill.

Additionally, another student elaborated on the positive effect of keeping a portfolio on pushing her to read more and notice new grammatical features:

> Keeping a portfolio persuaded me to search for new materials every time and read them more deeply. I could learn grammar better because I used to spot grammatical points better while reading texts.

However, since portfolio development was a completely new experience for these students, they expressed some concerns in response to the last interview question. In particular, students pointed to receiving insufficient corrective feedback on their work, perceived the whole task as time-consuming and difficult, and highlighted the likelihood of collecting materials via the cut-and-paste tactic by less motivated students. Given that students were aware of the issues such as lack of enough time, crowded classes, and other contextual problems that could constrain the optimal use or monitoring this activity, hardly did they hold any strong negative attitudes towards the nature of the work itself.

i. Insufficient feedback

As their major concern, several students complained that they received insufficient amount of feedback, or less than what they had expected, on their portfolios. Indeed, portfolio writing was suggested as part of students' independent work, and except for some quick evaluation and giving guidelines, less effort was made to intervene in order to correct their content one by one, albeit the difficulty of the job. Yet, several

students believed that they could have simply reaped more benefits if their portfolios had been analyzed and assessed more deeply:

> To tell the truth, we expected more feedback and talk on our portfolios.

> Some texts were very long, and our teacher did not offer enough help to manage them. I think portfolios were not examined carefully.

ii. A time-consuming and difficult task

Three students perceived the task of keeping and managing a portfolio as a time-consuming and boring activity. As one of student commented:

> Portfolio writing took more time than I had expected. Sometimes I found it boring.

They referred to the difficulty of the task due to the volume of the work as well as the complexity of some vocabulary or concepts in reading passages. For example, due to the inadequacy of their world knowledge, a few students experienced difficulty in making sense of concepts such as 'greenhouse effect', 'constitutional reforms', or other similar challenging ideas. One of these students complained:

> Encountering too many new words while reading a text was sometimes confusing.

iii. The cut-and-paste issue

Two students reported that they noticed some of their classmates' effortless cut-and-paste tactic to gather reading materials for their portfolios, without going through analyzing them or reflecting on their content. One of these students believed that portfolio writing might suit only motivated and determined students:

It was a great experience for those students who understand and have goals. Some students just resorted to cut-and-paste trick to develop their portfolios.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the findings of this study in the light of the reviewed literature. The first section provides a summary of the major findings of the study based on the order of research questions. The next section suggests several implications of the findings for teaching writing in similar EFL contexts, where university students are still struggling with this demanding skill. The following section discusses the limitations of the design of the study for the future implementation or replication. The chapter concludes by offering several suggestions for further research, followed by a list of references used in this study as an essential resource for further reading or future research.

5.1 Discussion of Findings

This study described and evaluated the implementation of a writing intervention in an EFL first-year writing class. A group of English translation undergraduate students were presented with a process genre instructional writing model for one academic year in order to investigate the changes in their writing fluency, accuracy, and quality, as well as their acquisition and use of effective writing strategies promoted by this model. Besides challenging the inadequacy of writing pedagogy in this context, this study questioned the inadequacy of the existing writing curriculum for first-year undergraduates. This writing intervention employed an eclectic approach to teaching four types of writing rhetorical modes at two paragraph and essay writing levels during two consecutive semesters. First, students were taught

how to use cognitive strategies such as analyzing samples, brainstorming, drafting and revising to develop a paragraph in English. Then, they focused on social strategies of deconstructing longer threads of discourse, searching for information and reading on different topics, developing a portfolio and engaging in collaborative activities to learn how to write a 4 to 5 paragraph essay in English. Having engaged in different types of product, process, and genre-based strategies, students demonstrated a willingness as well as readiness to embark on writing as an independent skill as early as the first semester.

The first research question sought to investigate the effect of implementing a process genre instructional writing model on the fluency, accuracy, and quality of students' paragraph and essay writing. Both quantitative and qualitative evidence from the pre- and post-tests, self-report surveys, timed writing quizzes, in-class and out-of-class observation notes and reflective comments, and interview questions demonstrated significant development in students' writing performance. In general, this model enhanced students' sensitivity to the form and content of their writing (Carter, 2003) – represented by their writing accuracy and quality scores – as well as to the fluency, discourse features and rhetorical conventions, mechanics, and a wide spectrum of elements that shape a piece of writing.

To begin with, the results of students' performance on pre- and post-tests and timed writing tasks indicated a significant progress on their paragraph and essay writing performance. However, while students' progress on timed writing quizzes at paragraph level experienced a decline on cause and effect rhetorical mode, it demonstrated a steady increase at essay level because students were aware of the writing topics beforehand and had therefore more time at their disposal to read and

prepare for the quizzes. They could, for example, focus on the formulaic language, chunks and patterns embedded in each different rhetorical mode to improve the content and language of their writing. Students were given this opportunity because the last two quizzes functioned as testing students' disciplinary knowledge, and thus the assessment of their performance matched the instruction in order to enhance their authenticity (Cumming et al., 2005). Moving from more general types of writing to more specific and disciplinary texts was in lockstep with one of the theoretical underpinnings of this study or Carter's (1990) idea of expertise which emphasizes guiding writers to move along the continuum of general knowledge (or knowledge of the world) to local knowledge (or knowledge of the field) in academic writing programs.

In addition, it was deemed unrealistic if students were supposed to write an essay as long as 300-400 or even with more words without having enough preparation or information about the topic. This helped students demonstrate a higher level of self-confidence with respect to attending to the linguistic knowledge and skills in developing their essays. More recent internationally recognized proficiency exams such as TOEFL iBT and GRE also require test takers to respond to integrative tasks of reading and writing. Thus, this could not be interpreted as a rote-learning strategy because students were not asked to engage in the isolated pieces of language; rather, they went over a series of reading materials and texts to help them prepare for their disciplinary writing assignments and exams in the upcoming years (Cumming et al., 2005; Weigle, 2002).

This practice is also supported by the literature on vocabulary and second language acquisition whereby learners can focus on exemplars and chunks of language to

develop their knowledge of discourse and language use (Rumelhart & McClelland, 1986). Language learning in this sense is a matter of putting together a lot of exemplars, collocations, patterns, etc., as well as figuring out the relationships between them. In support of his notion of 'collocational competence', Hill (2000) recommended integrating reading and writing skills to help students notice the contextualized use of collocations. This learning strategy was recommended instead of teaching or learning new vocabulary in isolation (Lewis, 2000; Woolard, 2000), which is still prevalent in many EFL contexts. In addition, Willis's (1990) notion of 'lexical syllabus' and Lewis's (1993) 'lexical approach' bear witness to the importance of vocabulary in helping students tackle the immediate complexities of reading texts in the target language. A number of studies (e.g., Baba, 2009; Chen & Su, 2012; McDonough, et al., 2014) also addressed the interface between language learners' proficiency level and the knowledge of vocabulary in writing. That is to say, the breadth and depth of vocabulary can reflect students' level of proficiency and their writing ability so that more proficient learners possess a deeper knowledge of vocabulary and are, as a result, equipped with better writing skills. Besides building vocabulary, reading helps students enhance their rhetorical awareness as they go about deconstructing and analyzing the way information is presented in texts (Sengupta, 1999).

The second research question investigated the extent to which students' scores on their writing accuracy, fluency, and quality correlated with each other at each paragraph and essay level. The results revealed positive and statistically significant relationships between these three variables at both levels, suggesting the interdependence of different aspects of writing so that when students make progress in the speed of their writing, they can also write more accurately and enhance the

overall quality of their writing. In addition, it can be argued that quality is not a feature alienated from accuracy and fluency. Rather, it would be far more likely that students who gain a better confidence in writing longer texts demonstrate a better writing quality in terms of composing more cohesive, well-structured, and logically organized compositions with fewer errors of different types. This finding in consistent with previous research (e.g., Jarvis et al., 2003) on the text characteristics of ESL writers' composition, revealing that highly rated writings were long and had more sophisticated vocabulary, which is considered as another determinant of higher quality in writing. However, the results suggested that accuracy gain scores correlated more positively with quality gain scores than with fluency gain scores, indicating that accuracy could be a stronger indicator of the quality of students' writing.

In response to the third research question, or the effect of this intervention on the spectrum of different writing proficiency levels, the results indicated that although elementary and intermediate students reported significant and considerable progress, the pendulum swayed towards novice writers or lower level students, who achieved the highest progress scores and benefited the most. Therefore, as was also observed, it seems that two groups of language learners may feel frustrated when they enter university as far as the interplay between the syllabus content and proficiency level is concerned. The first group includes novice writers or beginner learners who are usually under pressure to keep up with the rest of students and compensate for the lost opportunities they have had before, such as working harder or attending private language schools. In this study, these students were concerned, complained a lot, and kept asking for more Persian instead of English in the classroom in order to cope

with their frustration. However, this concern haunted a majority of these students to work diligently and, as a result, benefit from the instruction.

The other worrying group is the upper level writers or learners, such as pre-intermediate or intermediate students, who are already at a better vantage point than lower level students in terms of their confidence in language use, and instruction is hardly geared towards accommodating their expectations. In this study, these students frequently objected to the policy of placing them with lower level students in one class. Furthermore, they asked for more challenging materials, and most of them preferred to do extra work. In particular, engaging in portfolio writing and more sophisticated tasks of summarizing, paraphrasing, and making a glossary of academic vocabulary offered these students the opportunity to move their learning forward. They also benefited from learning by teaching and helping others during the collaborative activities or pair and group work because in this way they could test the breadth and depth of their knowledge (Walqui, 2006).

In response to the fourth research question, the results reported that the implementation of this model generated positive changes and significant development in students' habits, beliefs, and attitudes towards writing as well as in their acquisition and use of process and genre-based writing strategies. More cognitive or process-based strategies in writing were predominantly the focus of paragraph writing development whereas teaching essay writing capitalized mostly on the social or genre-based strategies. However, some strategies such as portfolio writing are encouraged by both process-based (Duff & Hornberger, 2008) and genre-based approaches (Hamp-Lyons & Condon, 2000) to teaching writing. In addition, most of these strategies are overlapping, and there is no fine line between them as for

their classification under one specific approach in concerned. Therefore, the emphasis of one approach on some of these strategies is a matter of degree rather than an all-or-nothing principle, and various types of strategies from different categories, such as administering impromptu timed writing quizzes, were employed in both semesters.

Among the most significant developments on the use and acquisition of effective writing strategies, students reported learning the structure and different types of paragraphs and essays. They expressed a need, satisfaction and confidence in writing. They also reported that they liked writing and needed to write well in English, which further indicated the mismatch between first-year students' real needs or preferences and the syllabus content and curricular priorities. Students made use of product-based strategies such as producing a one-shot timed composition in quiz situations besides employing process-based strategies such as brainstorming, multi-drafting, revising, and rewriting of their work in and out of the classroom (Badger & White, 2000). Previous research reported that multi-drafting and revising strategies are among the attributes of good writers (Cho, 2003) and those who exercise a high level of self-regulation to cope with the cognitive demands of writing tasks (Zimmerman & Riesemberg, 1997). It was, however, observed that proficiency level determined the type of strategy students used because novice and more proficient writers exploited different types of strategies (Sasaki, 2000). For example, lower level students were observed to depend more than others on memorizing patterns of language use for the timed writing quizzes and on using bilingual dictionaries to practice writing.

However, students reported more confidence and satisfaction with their development at essay level because of having the opportunity to get a grip on the strategies of summarizing, paraphrasing, and commenting on authentic texts, which in turn helped them build up their conceptual and linguistic knowledge (Grabe, 2001; Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). Students benefited from engaging in social strategies of collaborative work such as working in groups, peer-correction and peer-assessment, and doing projects during this semester (Daniels, 2001; Feez, 2002; Hyland, 2007). Thanks to activities such as reading different types of texts and interviewing professionals, their lecturers, or senior students of translation, students also developed a better understanding of the requirements of their field of study (Bruce, 2008; Hyland, 2007). Thus, it could be noted that the course offered students more practical approaches to learning or practicing writing. In particular, they fostered a new attitude towards writing that recognized the marriage of reading and writing skills as two complementary and interconnected skills in teaching and learning writing in academic contexts (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996).

Another significant development was a shift in students' beliefs regarding their preference for learning-centered approaches over the traditional grammar-translation and teacher-centered approaches to teaching writing. This learning-centered approach or 'visible pedagogy' – although not limited only to the explicit instruction of the target language structures (Hyland, 2004) – demanded that the course policy, lesson plans, and other class activities be shared with students as the main group of stakeholders. In other words, the objectives, students and teacher's responsibilities, logistics, and evaluation procedure for each lesson were to a large extent predictable and visible in order to cultivate in students the sense of responsibility and maximize their participation and contribution to their own learning. This was in marked

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contrast with the traditional teacher-centered instruction in which there were many surprises and unpredictable activities whereby teachers could stun learners with their pedagogical maneuvers, and students had to conform to the rules of the game in order not to fail the course.

Regarding the use of other effective strategies, students learned how to use references such as monolingual dictionaries, grammar books, and technology to improve their writing. Although only a handful of students used technology such as computer and the Internet to check the spelling and grammar of their work or to gather information and ideas on different topics, these tools offered them a chance to appreciate the value of technology-enhancement learning in L2 writing. In particular, writing teachers and students could recognize the use of the Internet as an invincible resource for language learning, which is testified by the diversity of online programs, courses, and environments such as webcasts, blogs, and wikis, which are constantly being designed and updated for language learners. The rapid growth of technology suggests that language educators should assume new responsibilities to better serve their students' needs and preferences (Sawhill, 2008) because of the difficulty to use old methods and strategies for teaching the new generations of language learners (Prensky, 2001).

The significant change in students' use of different writing strategies resonates with their development of writing proficiency components proposed by Canale and Swain (1980), where focusing on writing accuracy corresponds to developing grammatical competence; familiarizing with genre-based strategies fulfills the requirements of sociolinguistic competence; knowing to write according to L2 discourse and rhetorical conventions emphasizes fostering discourse competence; and being aware

of using specific strategies to suit each different rhetorical mode underlines focusing on strategic competence. However, the boundary between these competencies is not clear-cut. Given that reading is a key factor in developing students' writing (Krashen, 1982), it is also difficult to exactly pinpoint which skill had the upper hand in developing these different competencies. Moreover, these different competencies seem to develop through a cyclical and dynamic rather than a linear and fixed process. For example, reading and summarizing a text might encourage students to draw on these four types of components concurrently.

The last research question addressed students' opinions on the effectiveness of the writing intervention, in particular their perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of its different components. The major emerging theme concerning the strengths of the model was students' recognition of the constructive effect of formative feedback, which renders feedback as a recursive, changing, and never-ending element of any writing program. This type of feedback not only helped students improve different aspects of their writing ability, but also functioned as a robust emotional bond between students and teachers throughout the study. However, the results suggested that the success of the delivered feedback, particularly corrective feedback, depended to a large extent on the learners' differences in that students who were less motivated to revise or rewrite their work benefited less than others from this type of feedback (Gue´nette, 2007; Hyland, 2003; Munice, 2002). In many cases, it was observed that students' errors resurfaced in their next writing because they spent less time reflecting how to eliminate or reduce them (Munice, 2000).

Although there were students who associated feedback solely with corrective feedback, or the teacher's comments on their grammar, other types of feedback such

as responding to the content and organization of students' writing were also offered to help them be critical of what they read or write and, as a result, write more coherently and meaningfully. However, while students appreciated the teacher's response to their writing performance, this proved to benefit more novice writers than the other groups of students. Aligned with previous research on the use of L1 to give feedback when meaning or content is concerned (Atkinson, 1993; Cook, 2001; Nation, 2003), lower level students preferred more comments in their first language than in English. There could be two explanations for students' tendency to receive feedback in their first language: some students, affected by their previous schooling experiences, were probably more obsessed with their knowledge of language usage, such as knowing grammatical rules and formula. Explicit instruction in their first language could then give them a chance to increase their engagement with grammar. The other assumption is that some students suffered from a low command of English, and they were therefore afraid of being ignored by the teacher if English was used for all class activities.

Another major strong point underscored by students was portfolio writing that functioned as an effective and innovative language learning strategy. Most importantly, keeping a portfolio functioned as a source of input for students to develop their writing, reading, vocabulary, and other areas of language learning. The results highlighted that portfolio writing acted as a multi-purpose learning tool. On the one hand, it informed students of their progress in achieving the short-term and long-term learning objectives. On the other hand, it exposed their weaknesses in different areas of writing or language learning. By probing into the quantity or quality of students' collected or written materials, portfolio writing also informed the teacher of the effort students made and the time they spent working outside of the

class (Hamp-Lyons, 2002; Weigle, 2002). However, extra caution was exercised when introducing portfolio writing because Iranian students are not generally familiar or "encouraged to develop journals or keep diaries and share their writing with their peers" (Abdollahzadeh, 2010, p. 79). The crowded classes, instructors' busy timetable, and the ineffective educational policies and practices appear to be accountable for this failure:

> The traditional milieu of learning is based more on an oral culture than a written culture, i.e. the students are not trained adequately from early grades to do much writing, and in most English classes students get used to passively listening to lectures on writing models and doing simple end-of-chapter exercises. (Abdollahzadeh, 2010, p. 79)

Instructional materials, either provided by the teacher or collected in the form of reading texts by students themselves, were evaluated as another powerful element of the course. Besides functioning as a rich resource for students to consult and learn about the way different aspects of language and thought interact to shape the written discourse, they served as authentic texts written by competent authors against which students could test their so-called learning hypotheses and assess their knowledge of writing (Swain, 2000). Exposing students to a plethora of writing samples and reading materials, as one of the main principles of genre-based approach to teaching writing, suited students in this context because most of them enter university without having the least experience with writing in English. In addition, an absence or insufficient exposure to the samples of writing in the target language could increase students' dependency on the rhetoric and linguistic repertoire of their first language (Kubota, 1998; Rahimi, 2009). This L1 transfer was more evident in cases when students were under pressure to write in the class. The use of authentic reading materials therefore raised students' awareness of the differences between two

languages in terms of their different syntactical structures, discourse features, rhetorical conventions, and the like (Silva, 1993).

Relieving students of unnecessary reliance on their L1 as a source of linguistic, discourse, and rhetoric knowledge through incorporating genre-based strategies into this course saved a lot of their frustration. Since traditional approaches to teaching writing have failed to take into account the ways by which students expand their world knowledge to support the content of their compositions, advocating genre approaches assisted students to acquire vast panoply of ideas and improve their lexical knowledge. Introducing portfolio writing and encouraging students to contribute to the mainstream learning activities gradually fostered their autonomy towards the end of the study. This collaboration and contribution, in turn, aroused their curiosity, interest, and a sense of care and appreciation to dedicate more time to their studies (Hirvela & Pierson, 2000; Richard-Amato, 1996).

However, great care and caution was exercised in order not to inculcate in students a feeling of inadequacy of their first language (Leki, 1991). For example, students were informed that languages are different, and language learners might "transfer rhetorical patterns from their L1 into L2 writing" (Kubata & Lehner, 2004, p. 9), and this inevitable transfer would not render the superiority of English rhetoric to any other language. Notwithstanding the importance of rhetorical organization and discourse conventions in writing classes, it seems that these are the least emphasized areas of L2 writing development in EFL contexts because of the popularity of exam-oriented traditional approaches to writing pedagogy (Lee, 2011). Even in students' L1 composition classes – as far as writing instruction in Iranian context is concerned – there is no solid syllabus for teaching writing, nor is there any formally trained

writing teacher. Thus, while teachers should acknowledge the difference between the rhetorical features and discourse conventions of the target language and learners' first language (Odlin, 1989), they should also demonstrate this disparity by providing learners with sufficient examples from both languages.

As another point of departure between English writing and Persian composition classes, students acknowledged the positive effect of this writing intervention on developing their thinking and reasoning skills, as well as familiarizing with the requirements of becoming a qualified professional in the future. In order to become more effective writers, students came to this understanding that they should immerse themselves in the discourse used by the community of translators who use the language in response to a social situation (Freedman, 1999). Although this discourse was limited to reading and analyzing only a few disciplinary texts and interviewing professional or instructors students should not be robbed of this opportunity in this input-poor EFL context where translation is a well-established profession occupied by a big professional community. In addition to the academic advantages of reading and writing about their future profession, students were given an opportunity to know the means of shortening the path to this lucrative job market.

However, students voiced several concerns, which were partly related to the ineffective curriculum or educational policies and partly related to the belief mismatches between students and the teacher regarding the nature of grammar, writing, and language learning in general. For example, placing mixed-abilities students in one classroom and allotting insufficient time to writing skills revealed to a large extent the inadequacy of the educational policies and the curriculum in meeting students' expectations of such a basic course. This also posed a big

challenge for the teacher to effectively monitor everybody's work or to give them the opportunity to work in pairs or groups (Rahimi, 2009). Seating a group of heterogeneous students in one class not only put a backbreaking burden on the teacher to cater to the needs of everybody, but also exerted a laborious pressure on the lower level students to express themselves freely or speak English in the class. While more competent students complained that some students spoke Persian or remained silent in the class, less competent students, by contrast, asked for more Persian and explicit instruction of grammar. Moreover, students' concern about the lack of sufficient time to practice grammar and writing during different phases of the study or to analyze the content of their portfolios refers to the insufficient time allocated to teaching writing by the curriculum, not to the engaged or the actual time the teacher and students were involved in dealing with the course activities.

In addition, students were concerned about their classmates' use of cut-and-paste tactic to develop their portfolios. While teachers should be aware of students' resort to ineffective tactics to develop their portfolios (Brown, 2004), this should not discourage them to abandon what has proven to work for a majority of students in different contexts (Duff & Hornberger, 2008; Hamp-Lyons, 2000; Hamp-Lyons & Condon, 2000; Weigle, 2002). Therefore, instead of abolishing a practice for fear of students' involvement in the acts of academic disintegrity, teachers can find ways to better assess students' portfolios more effectively, if not carefully. In this study, the endeavor was made to check students' portfolios to ensure they did not copy materials from each other or gather reading materials without reflecting on or reading them. Also, students' progress on class quizzes was a solid proof that a majority of students benefited from portfolio writing in many ways.

Students were also too concerned about their knowledge of grammar to the point where they expected the whole class time to be spent on dealing with their never-ending problems in grammar. Some students even expected corrective feedback on their portfolios, which was impossible due to the time constraints and the sizable volume of the materials, as well as the fact that portfolios were not supposed to be corrected word by word for their writing fluency, accuracy, and quality. Since they could not feel the immediate payoff of keeping a portfolio, this added to their unrealistic expectation of teacher's correcting them to improve their knowledge of grammar. Due to their exposure to ineffective teaching practices during their previous schooling (Ahmed, 2010; Rahimi, 2009), these students might have found the new approach to teaching grammar challenging and difficult. However, as was suggested by the interview data, this was not an unpredictable concern because learning another language is a demanding, time-consuming, and challenging task, which might result in language learning belief conflicts between students and teachers.

Affected by their exposure to six years of traditional grammar-translation teaching, some students also expected more holistic and impressionistic type of assessment or feedback than a detailed analytic report on their writing. Put simply, feedback for them was limited to knowing subjective opinion of their teacher on their progress in order to figure out their position related to others, due to the prevalent competitive culture and the popularity of the norm-referenced assessment in this context. In addition, this reflected the impact of authoritarian class environment these students experienced during their secondary and high school years, when they participated in learning activities to show respect for their teacher, or for fear of letting their teacher down. Pedagogically, however, the fact that even adult learners look forward to

receiving the teacher's judgment on their performance suggests that all learners, regardless of their age, gender, and educational background, may anticipate positive affective feedback enthusiastically. This affective type of feedback, therefore, could motivate them to work harder or revise their writing more frequently.

Another source of optimism for providing feedback on students' errors is the belief that many errors are developmental (Kroll, 2002); hence their occurrence is part of the cognitive process of language learning and the absence of feedback might be detrimental to this process. However, whilst giving feedback has been documented in the response literature (e.g., Chandler, 2003; Ellis, 2009; Ferris, 2004), as an inevitable part of each instruction because many learners staggeringly expect it, error correction was observed not to be as effective as previous research has assumed. Indeed, many students failed to harness the recurrence of their grammatical errors in their next work. In several cases, this was an exhausting experience (Ferris, 2002), which turned feedback into a counterproductive practice. However, more motivated students were found successful in avoiding the resurfacing of their errors, highlighting further the role of individual differences and factors in the efficacy of error correction (Munice, 2002). That is to say, unless students themselves take the lead with an inquisitive mind to deal with their errors, offering corrective feedback would be a futile effort. A better policy to raising students' awareness of the gap in their writing knowledge and to locate their errors themselves, however, was to increase their exposure to the contextual use of language embedded in the sample essays and reading materials during the second semester.

As such, the main challenge in implementing this instructional model was making a huge effort to inform students of the debilitative impacts of their beliefs in the

traditional grammar-translation approach to teaching writing and to gradually apply the process and genre-based guidelines and strategies (Bruce, 2008). As a result of the turns and twists of the first semester, students were better prepared for the initiatives of the second semester such as portfolio writing and putting several paragraphs together to write longer texts. Yet, it took a considerable amount of time for students to become familiar with each step or strategy. For example, some time passed before students started attending to the quality of their ideas and content of their composition.

In general, the data from different sources indicated that the elements of three main approaches to writing pedagogy from the second half of the 20th century have been effectively implemented in a first-year EFL writing class. While the theoretical principles and practical guidelines of genre-based approach to teaching writing formed the cornerstone of this instructional model, particularly during the second half of the study, the process of generating and obtaining ideas until submitting the revised work served the purpose of the process approach, and the administered timed quizzes followed the guidelines of the traditional product-based approaches (Badger & White, 2000; Bruce, 2008). In other words, if different approaches to writing pedagogy used in this study could be spatially represented, they could be depicted chronologically so that more recent approaches can encompass older approaches, rather than the other way around (Figure 2).
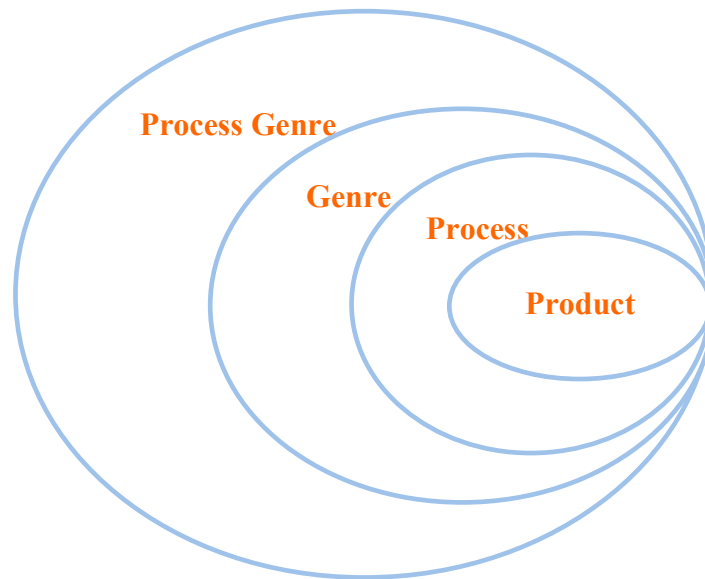
Figure 2. Spatial representation of the main approaches to teaching writing

It can be concluded that from the 1960s onwards the circle has become bigger and bigger to incorporate more traditional or older approaches into more recent approaches. That is, the process approach can encompass the product approach or both product and process approaches can be incorporated into genre-based approaches. However, the figure highlights that the boundaries between the circles are elastic and may shade into each other, suggesting an overlap and conflict in the definitions, theoretical, and practical considerations of these different approaches while, at the same time, acknowledging the development and improvement of writing pedagogy towards the biggest circle over time.

This could also suggest that abandoning of or adhering to a single approach in a specific context appears to be throwing out the baby with the bath water, so to speak, because of the developmental nature of learning to write, which demands following or recycling strategies at different phases of instruction. In other words, an approach is not inherently good, bad, or even perfect; it is only effective when exploited at the

right time and place. Alternatively, this might mean that teachers of writing should adopt a more comprehensive perspective towards teaching this challenging skill by adhering to an eclectic approach to their classroom practice through handpicking elements from different approaches that could better accommodate the real needs of their students.

After all, although the findings of this study could not be generalized to other contexts because of limitations such as using a small population of students compared to the population of students in Iranian universities, and the contextual and curriculum constraints and affordances, the findings can throw light on the teaching and even assessment of writing in EFL writing programs. Most importantly, the findings could help lend a greater understanding to the better design of writing instructions and bridge the gap in L2 writing literature with regard to implementing the post-product or eclectic approaches to teaching writing in EFL contexts. It is hoped that educational authorities and teachers of writing in Iran recognize the importance of academic writing as an indispensable skill in broadening students' knowledge of different aspects of language learning, and a key player in the fate of those students who are inclined to pursue the higher levels of education at a national or international university where English is the medium of communication and education.

5.2 Implications for Practice

The findings from this study can inform pedagogical practices in a number of ways. To begin with, they support the possibility and practicality (Kumaravadivelu, 2001) of employing the more recent developments in writing pedagogy in an input-poor EFL context in order to keep up with their counterparts in ESL and even other EFL contexts (see Kim & Kim, 2005: Matsuo & Bevan, 2002). Most importantly,

subscribing to the principles of The New Rhetoric Group could ensure students' familiarity with the twists and turns of learning academic writing in the new era of disciplinary diversity at higher education. An instructional writing model that incorporates elements from genre-based approaches accounts for the authenticity of instructional materials, if not the situations of their use, collaborative activities, and the use of formative feedback or assessment. The access to different strategies and tools could allow teachers to decide whether the assessment of a writing course should be based on a take-home exam, a pop quiz, portfolio writing, an integrative approach, etc.

Secondly, this study, whose immediate intent was to ameliorate a contextual problem, stresses the roles students can play in their learning through their openness to instructional initiatives as well as the contribution they can make to satisfy their own needs in learning to write or writing to learn (Manchoˊn, 2011). Since eclectic approaches espouse blending different areas of language learning into different pedagogical loops, teachers who intend to implement similar instructional models in their writing classes should assume different roles and responsibilities for their students. This will therefore affect the class dynamics with respect to the ways they translate the theoretical underpinnings of these hybrid approaches into the feasible pedagogical strategies and activities while addressing the real needs of students in second language writing. In other words, a pedagogy that focuses on enhancing students' responsibility for their learning and engagement in a constructive dialogue and interaction with their teacher, fellow students, and other sources of input is not an option, but a new trend in the education of the new millennium. Mazur (2009), a professor of physics at Harvard, who advocates students' understanding of the concepts at the expense of rote learning, noticed "learning gains nearly triple with an

approach that focuses on the student and interactive learning" (p. 51). The use of these eclectic approaches would also entail mutual accountability and cooperation among other educational stakeholders such as teacher educators, curriculum and syllabus designers, and even local material developers to reap the utmost benefits from their application in foreign language learning programs.

The findings have some implications for advocates of critical contrastive rhetoric and critical pedagogy. The findings imply that improper education could lead to producing ill-prepared students who may not be capable of functioning as fully-fledged individuals on the global scene; hence widening the gap between different educational contexts. These movements were unwittingly sympathetic to the educational policies in developing countries where ineffective curricular and pedagogical practices have been linked to the cultural differences (see Kaplan, 1966; Kubota & Lehner, 2004). Instead, a Freirean approach to literacy (Freire & Macedo, 1987) in the age of globalization and multicultural understanding should help empower students who have been deprived of the proper education in the name of indigenization or localization (Borjian, 2013).

The findings further suggest that establishing an instructional model is not at odd with the principles of student-centered trend in education because different parts of a model could stand as stages for both students and teachers to work together towards achieving a common goal. However, since instructional writing models are usually designed and developed according to a theory of learning, teachers need to modify them as they test them against their theoretical tenets in a given context of practice. De Freitas et al. (2008) acknowledged the benefit of instructional models, yet they warned us against their limited use across different disciplines or contexts. For

example, while teachers fit the models to their own practice, not vice versa, these models should be realistic, dynamic, and fluid in order to evolve and accommodate both the latest practical and theoretical developments (De Freitas et al., 2008). This could mean that while an instructional model works as an invaluable tool for teachers in one context, it may necessitate major changes to fit another context. Moreover, as Sockman and Sharma (2008) observed, teachers can use instructional models as a means of reflection on their practice. That is, teachers can undertake post hoc or retrospective evaluation of these models to best develop or revise them for their next implementation.

Some three decades ago, Horowitz (1986a) warned teachers against advocating the unwise or untactful use of new approaches to language education, arguing that they should at least bear a resemblance to more real situations. Other scholars (e.g., Kroll, 2002; Leki, 2002), on the other hand, advised teachers against sticking to a single approach, and suggested that they should keep up with new developments and adjust them to their learners' needs. By the same token, Johns (2002) and Cumming (2002) rejected the use of simplified writing models and approaches in classrooms. These admonitions indicate that writing teachers should function as scavengers searching for the most effective and appropriate practices and theories that would suit their context rather than advocating a model blindly. For example, sensitivity to a particular context or even local culture (Flowerdew, 2002) while attempting to promote change in students' beliefs, study skills, and habits, use of strategies during different phases of implementing an instructional model should be among some precautions in selecting or making use of a model.

As an example, while managing and keeping portfolios help students improve their linguistic knowledge, research, and organizational skills (Aydin, 2010), or help teachers as an assessment mechanism (Ghoorchaei et al., 2010; Hamp-Lyons, 2000; Weigle, 2002), they should be used wisely and efficiently. Under pressure to meet deadlines, students may fall into the trap of collecting reading materials without having the opportunity to read, analyze or reflect on them. In order for students not to get entangled into the habit of only piling reading materials, teachers can run formative assessments of the portfolios or checking them for the quantity and quality of the included materials on a regular basis. In addition, although every learner or teacher may be more or less cognizant of the time-consuming and challenging nature of keeping a portfolio, introducing this strategy in a specific context should be carried out tactfully to minimize a backlash against students' motivation and interest.

Thirdly, for the last 30 years or even more, undergraduate students majoring in English in Iran were offered writing courses from the second year or third semester. However, this study provided evidence of students' readiness and their need to embark on writing from the early days of the first year, due to the importance of teaching writing not only for reinforcing the retention of grammatical structures, as traditional product-based approaches suggested, but also for developing students' vocabulary, discourse knowledge, reading and even, as some students commented in their portfolios, speaking abilities. In particular, the findings suggest that L1 curriculum should not take students' ability to write academic and more complex types of writing for granted (Hirose, 2003; Nassery, 2013), nor should L2 curriculum invest heavily in encouraging students to write personal and emotional compositions because these types of writings do not generally need much preparation on the part of teachers and students. In other words, although expressive types of writing might

hinder students' dependence on the rote-learning strategies of imitation and memorization or facilitate their communication in an online environment (Zimmerman & Riesemberg, 1997), they have given their way to writing for more academic and specific purposes (Bartholomae, 1985). Writing for academic purposes has gained momentum due to the rise of new disciplines at tertiary level of education and the role of disciplinary identity, which require students to subscribe to a specific discourse community and meet the expectations of their major or future career (Bazerman, 1997; Dressen, 2008; Hyland, 2007).

As another implication for further practice, educators and teachers of writing should bear in mind that incorporating a loop of formative feedback into writing classes is not a matter of choice; rather, it is a crucial element of any instruction because the conventional wisdom holds that everyone can learn from their mistakes through revision and reflective practice. Thus, regardless of the type of learning theory or teaching approach teachers adopt in their classes, they should offer feedback as a channel of communication to inform students of their development and, on the other hand, to obtain information that could guide the next instructional activities. This suggests that while teachers provide students with information on their errors or progress, they need students' feedback to make sure the instruction dovetails, for instance, with students' learning needs and learning styles. In addition, students' better performance and satisfaction could have a positive effect on teachers' performance and the course quality. On the other hand, students' view of feedback could be affected by the type and amount of response they receive from their teachers. For example, if teachers' priority in giving feedback is directed towards students' content of their writing, students will pay more attention to the quality of their ideas or to more communication of meaning than form.

Finally, the findings of this study give further evidence of the consensus among researchers and practitioners regarding the difficulty of teaching writing in almost all contexts, particularly while dealing with first-year or lower level students. This demands that teachers capitalize on affective feedback and strategies that could motivate and encourage students to participate in learning activities as well as contribute to their learning. As the first step in easing up the challenging process of learning to write, teachers should tailor instructional materials and learning activities to students' needs, interests, and motivation. Furthermore, because of the poor quality of instructional materials at secondary and high school levels in many EFL contexts, majority of students enter university with the least reservoir of world knowledge essential to deal with different writing topics. This, therefore, holds writing teachers responsible for leveling up students' schemata by encouraging them to read and discuss the reading materials to build their conceptual and linguistic knowledge as the essential elements of academic writing. The move from reading to writing recognizes this fact that learning to write would not happen in vacuum; rather, it needs preeminently investing in students' reading ability to help them garner enough information and ideas about different topics.

5.3 Limitations

This study described and evaluated a teaching intervention in first-year EFL writing in Iran. While the findings could inform writing programs in contexts with similar concerns, this study is limited in a number of ways regarding the generalization of the findings to such settings. First, since the actual class time for teaching writing was one session or 90 minutes per week, the program was too intensive and in some cases the fatigue factor might have affected students or the teacher's performance. Therefore, further replication of this study needs to consider allocating more time to

exposing students with fewer rhetorical modes or assigning some parts of class activities as homework in order to save more time and energy for more important learning activities in the classroom.

Lack of sufficient time also affected the effective guidance and training of students to apply the expected learning strategies. For example, although the use of Word Processor and the Internet for editing purposes, searching and gathering content on different topics, and access to concordances and dictionaries were frequently recommended, there was hardly any time dedicated to in-class practice to ensure the efficient use of these tools. Thus, the future implementation of this model demands the students' optimal use of technology to improve their writing and to enhance their cooperation and communication with their peers or teacher. As another limitation, the student-teacher meetings were in many cases confined to returning students' quiz papers and receiving their revised drafts. Therefore, different institutional and syllabus constraints such as unsuitable educational spaces and facilities for face-to-face meetings or conference sessions could have affected students' evaluation of the conference sessions, in particular their expectation of the amount of feedback on their portfolios.

Another limitation of the study refers to the way some key concepts may be interpreted differently by different readers. As an example, while the use of eclectic approach may not render the actual or at least the equal use of different strategies and activities from a range of approaches to teaching writing, its use suggested borrowing strategies and techniques from other approaches. Thus, selective rather than eclectic suits the process genre approach advocated by the implemented instructional writing model. Likewise, using 'deficiencies' for the underdeveloped

areas of students' L2 knowledge refers more to the way the pre-university educational policies and practices in this context have failed to prepare students for some basic skills in L2 writing than to the cultural factors or incapacity or inadequacy of their first language. Also, the findings supported students' thought development or fostering their thinking abilities. Since these students were new to the concept of paragraph writing and the way ideas are sequenced or glued in English as well as how to generate ideas for different writing topics, more reservation should be exerted while dealing with thought development patterns as cognitive abilities are invisible and difficult to observe by less sophisticated data collection instruments. Therefore, helping students write more coherently and logically to accommodate different standards of textuality (see Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981) should be used instead.

A further constraint was the possibility of the so-called observer's bias as one of the likely threats to collecting the qualitative data. In this study, the researcher was the instructor of courses, the observer, and at times a participant in some of the class activities such as group work. While "it is probably true that no matter how hard observers try to be impartial, their observations will possess some degree of bias" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, p. 452). However, since this study shared some of the characteristics of an action research, and the observer was the instructor of the courses, the presence of a third party in the class could be questionable and negatively affect the flow of teaching or learning. To overcome the bias threat, the researcher endeavored to bracket his experiences and to specifically report and reflect on what students experienced when dealing with different writing strategies or activities. The future implementation of such interventions, however, may be carried

out through a collaborative work of at least two or more colleagues to minimize the likely bias during the data collection process.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

The findings of this study underscored the success of a writing intervention in first-year EFL writing and suggested that delaying writing instruction until the second year is questionable because of the crucial role writing plays in learning the content as well as other areas of language learning (Mancho´n, 2011; Williams, 2012). However, while students' development in different aspects of their writing ability could not be attributed to the direct impact of this intervention only because it was not feasible to include a control group, employing different data collection instruments and the fact that students had fewer opportunities to write for other courses or for other purposes outside university could lend support to the effectiveness of this instructional model. Thus, given that "withholding instruction and practice opportunities in the key skills that students must acquire to pass the class would not be ethical" (McDonough, et al., 2014, p. 28), additional research in similar EFL contexts should be carried out to prove the efficacy of implementing such an instructional writing model.

Further research may also investigate the interface between this model and variables such as students' L1 writing ability (Sasaki & Hirose, 1996; Nassery, 2013; Silva, 1993), their L2 reading skills, their motivation (Busse, 2013), and other cross-cultural and contextual factors. Because this study focused specifically on the effect of an instructional writing model on freshmen students' L2 writing performance, students' ability in their L1 composition − as an important variable affecting their English writing in terms of drawing on their L1 sociolinguistic competence, discourse and rhetorical conventions, and other linguistic features − was taken for

granted. Thus, further studies need to consider students' L1 writing affordances from contrastive rhetoric (Connor, 1996; Kaplan, 1966) and sociolinguistic (Preston, 1989) perspectives in order to find out how their L1 and L2 writing ability vary as far as cultural and sociolinguistic factors are concerned.

In addition, since peer- and self-assessment, as two formative assessment tools, were used in this study, future replication of this study can provide students with a checklist or rubrics (see Matsuno, 2009; Wang, 2014; Weigle, 2002) as well as with sufficient training on how to give feedback or assess different aspects of their own or peers' writing performance. As another area for future investigation, this model can be designed in a way to integrate writing with other language learning skills. For example, although this model did not encourage much speaking in class – except for some cases when students brainstormed ideas for the assigned writing topics or discussed their writing problems and errors – more talk or a combination of oral skills with writing could be considered in the future design of such instructional models wherever and whenever time is not an issue.

Lastly, the theoretical framework and practical guidelines of The New Rhetoric Group demand employing ethnographic instruments in research and practice on writing (Bruce, 2008; Flowerdew, 2002; Flowerdew & Wan, 2010). Yet, implementing these tools was only partially realized in this study because of the students' low L2 proficiency and their unfamiliarity with the disciplinary texts, as well as the existence of contextual and logistical problems. Therefore, the use of more qualitative means of data collection and analysis in future studies could help shed more light into the dynamics of using eclectic approaches to teaching writing. However, it could be argued that students in this context would benefit from process-

based rather than genre-based writing strategies, as the latter usually focus on discourse communities, the texts they create, and the social functions they serve. All in all, the findings from this study could go a long way towards informing writing pedagogy in EFL contexts, where more traditional form-focused and product-based writing approaches are still prevalent.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Curriculum for English translation students

Semester 1	Credit	Semester 2	Credit
Reading Comprehension I	4	Reading Comprehension II	4
Grammar & Writing I	4	Grammar & Writing II	4
Conversation I	4	Conversation II	4
		Study Skills	2

Semester 3		Semester 4	
Reading Comprehension III	4	Simple Prose Texts	2
Advanced Writing	2	Introduction to Literature I	2
Simple Poems	2	Oral Reproduction of Stories I	2
Phonetics	2	Letter Writing	2
		General Linguistics I	2
		Principles & Methods of Translation I	2
		Translation of Audio & Video Tapes	2

Semester 5		Semester 6	
Introduction to Literature II	2	Reading the Press	2
Oral Reproduction of Stories II	2	Morphology	2
General Linguistics II	2	Advanced Translation I	2
Translation of Simple Texts	2	A Survey of Translated Islamic Works I	2
Using idioms in Translation	2	Translation of Official Documents I	2
Essay Writing	2	Contrastive Analysis	2
Principles & Methods of Translation II	2	Interpreting I	

Semester 7		Semester 8	
Translation of Literary Texts	2	Individual Translation II	2
Individual Translation I	2	Principles & Methods of Research II	2
Principles & Methods of Research I	2	Translation of Political Texts	2
Advanced Translation II	2	Translation of Economic Texts	2
A Survey of Translated Islamic Works II	2	Translation of Journalistic Texts II	2
Translation of Official Documents II	2	Interpreting III	2
Translation of Journalistic Texts I	2	Language Testing	2
Interpreting II	2		
Language Teaching Methodology			

Appendix B: Sample instructional materials at paragraph level

Task 1

Write down the topic sentence and the supporting sentences of the paragraph below in the space provided.

There are many different traditions associated with marriage in Iran. For example, on the night before the marriage ceremony, three or four unmarried girls hold a clean white cloth on the heads of the bride and bridegroom while they are sitting on a sofa or on the ground. Then, one of the girls starts to grind two big sugar crystals together. As she does that, she asks God to repel all evil spirits from the life of the newly married couple. Before this, the families of the girl and the boy should make sure that the "Grinding Girl" is very trustworthy and decent. This will also provides the young unmarried girls with the chance to get married in the coming years! (http://www.topics-mag.com /internatl/weddings/wedding-customs.htm)

Topic sentence

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Supporting sentences

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Task 2

Underline and name the types of supporting sentences (e.g. details, examples, facts, etc.) in the paragraph below.

The Book of One Thousand and One Nights, is a medieval Middle-Eastern literary epic that tells the story of Scheherazade, a Sassanid Queen, who must tell a series of stories to her evil husband, King Shahryar, to delay her killing. The stories are told over a period of one thousand and one nights, and every night she ends the story with a suspenseful situation, forcing the King to keep her alive for another day. The individual stories were created over many centuries, by many people and in many styles, and they have become famous in their own right. Famous examples are Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves and The Seven Voyages of Sinbad the Sailor. (www.oup.com.pk/download.asp?id=1338)

Task 3

Read the paragraph below and explain whether the following paragraph is coherent or not, and then write the type or order of events in the given space.

There are several reasons why I have decided to attend Karaj Azad University. First of all, the university campus is close to the place where I live, and I can live with my family instead of spending a lot on renting a house or an apartment. Second, the university has a flexible payment plan. I mean, I can pay my tuition is installments and this is a great comfort for my parents. Another reason is the fact that this university hires only the most qualified and experienced teachers to teach in its undergraduate programs. My chief reason, however, is Karaj University's work/study program in agriculture, my chosen field: the university requires all agriculture students to gain practical experience by working on farms in the area while they are still going to school. I am sure that this will provide great experience and prepare me to better use the skills I learn in the classroom.

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Task 4

Underline the elements used to make paragraph below coherent.

A famous example of romantic Arabic poetry is Layla and Majnun, dating back to the Umayyad era in the 7th century. It is a tragic story of undying love much like the later Romeo and Juliet, which was itself said to have been inspired by a Latin version of Layla and Majnun to an extent. Layla and Majnun is considered part of the Virgin Love genre, so-called because the couple never marry or consummate their relationship, that is prominent in Arabic literature, though the literary motif is found throughout the world. Other famous Virgin Love stories include "Qays and Lubna", "Kuthair and Azza", "Marwa and Al Majnoun Al Faransi" and "Antara and Abla".

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_literature)

Task 5

Write down the elements of the following narrative paragraph in the blank spaces.

Maura, who like to be thought of as the most beautiful and powerful queen of Arabia, had many suitors. One by one she rejected them, until her list was reduced to just three sheiks. The three sheiks were all equally young and handsome. They were also rich and strong. It was very hard to decide who would be the best of them. One evening, Maura disguised herself and went to the camp of the three sheiks. As they were about to have dinner, Maura asked them for something to eat. The first gave her some leftover food. The second Sheik gave her some unappetizing camel's tail. The third sheik, who was called Hakim, offered her some of the most tender and tasty meat. After dinner, the disguised queen left the sheik's camp. The following day, the queen invited the three sheiks to dinner at her palace. She ordered her servant to give each one exactly what they had given her the evening before. Hakim, who received a plate of delicious meat, refused to eat it if the other two sheiks could not share it with him. This Sheik Hakim's act finally convinced Queen Maura that he was the man for her. "Without question, Hakim is the most generous of you" she announced her choice to the sheiks. "So it is Hakim I will marry".

(http://erigasangeger.blogspot.com/2012/07/contoh-narratvie-text-pendek-ali-baba.html)

Protagonist:

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Setting:

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Goal:

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Obstacle:

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Climax:

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Resolution:

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Appendix C: Sample instructional materials at essay level

Task 1

Read the following text about a famous Iranian celebrity and then summarize the text into five paragraphs based on the introduction given under different headings.

Soraya Esfandiary Bakhtiari

Soraya Esfandiary-Bakhtiari (22 June 1932 – 26 October 2001) was the second wife of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the late Shah of Iran. Though her husband's title, Shahanshah (King of Kings), is the equivalent of Emperor, it was not until 1967 that a complementary feminine title, *Shahbanu*, was created to designate the wife of a Shah.

Born in Isfahan, Iran, Soraya Esfandiary was the eldest child and only daughter of Khalil Esfandiary—a noble of the Bakhtiari tribe of southern Iran who was the Iranian ambassador to West Germany in the 1950s—and his Russian-born German wife, Eva Karl. She had one sibling, a younger brother, Bijan. Her family had long been involved in the Iranian government and diplomatic corps. An uncle, Sardar Assad, was a leader in the Iranian constitutional movement of the early 20th century.

Marriage to the Shah

In 1948, Soraya was introduced to the recently divorced Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi in Paris, by Forough Zafar Bakhtiari, a relative, when she was still a student at a Swiss finishing school. They were soon engaged (the Shah gave her a 22.37 carat (4.474 g) diamond engagement ring).

Soraya married the Shah at Golestan Palace in Tehran on 12 February 1951; originally, the couple had planned to wed on 27 December 1950, but the ceremony had to be delayed due to the bride being ill. Though the Shah announced that guests should donate money to a special charity for the Iranian poor, among the wedding gifts was a mink coat and a desk set with black diamonds sent by Joseph Stalin; a Steuben glass *Bowl of Legends* sent by U.S. President and Mrs. Truman; and silver Georgian candlesticks from King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, and the 2,000 guests included Aga Khan III.

The ceremony was decorated with 1.5 tonnes of orchids, tulips, and carnations, sent by plane from the Netherlands, and entertainment included a circus sent from Rome. The bride wore a silver lamé gown and a full-length female white-mink cape.

Infertility and divorce

Though the wedding took place during a heavy snow, deemed a good omen, the imperial couple's marriage had disintegrated by early 1958 owing to Soraya's apparent infertility, for which she had sought treatment in Switzerland and France, and the Shah's suggestion that he take a second wife in

order to produce an heir. She left Iran in February and eventually went to her parents' home in Cologne, Germany, where the Shah sent his wife's uncle, Senator Sardar Assad Bakhtiari in early March, 1958, in a failed attempt to convince her to return to Iran. On 10 March, a council of advisors met with the Shah to discuss the situation of the troubled marriage and the lack of an heir. Four days later, it was announced that the imperial couple would divorce. She later told reporters that her husband had no choice but to divorce her.

On 21 March 1958, the Iranian New Year's Day, a weeping Shah announced his divorce to the Iranian people in a speech that was broadcast on radio and television; he said that he would not remarry in haste. The headline-making divorce inspired French songwriter Françoise Mallet-Jorris to write a hit pop song, *Je veux pleurer comme Soraya* (*I Want to Cry Like Soraya*). The marriage was officially ended on 6 April 1958.

In a statement issued to the Iranian people from her parents' home in Germany, Soraya said, "Since His Imperial Majesty Reza [sic] Shah Pahlavi has deemed it necessary that a successor to the throne must be of direct descent in the male line from generation to generation to generation, I will with my deepest regret in the interest of the future of the State and of the welfare of the people in accordance with the desire of His Majesty the Emperor sacrifice my own happiness, and I will declare my consent to a separation from His Imperial Majesty."

After the divorce, the Shah, who had told a reporter who asked about his feelings for the former Queen that "nobody can carry a torch longer than me", indicated his interest in marrying Princess Maria Gabriella of Savoy, a daughter of the deposed Italian king Umberto II. In an editorial about the rumors surrounding the marriage of "a Muslim sovereign and a Catholic princess", the Vatican newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano, considered the match "a grave danger."

Princess Soraya launched a brief career as a film actress, for which she used only her first name. Initially, it was announced that she would portray Catherine the Great in a movie about the Russian empress by Dino De Laurentiis, but that project fell through. Instead, she starred in the 1965 movie I tre volti (The Three Faces) and became the companion of its Italian director, Franco Indovina (1932–1972). She also appeared as a character named Soraya in the 1965 movie *She*.

Later Years in Paris
After Indovina's death in a plane crash, she spent the remainder of her life in Europe, and was very depressed. During her last years Princess Soraya lived in Paris on 46 avenue Montaigne. She occasionally attended social events like the parties. Her friend and event organizer Massimo Gargia tried to make her happy by meeting young people. Princess Soraya was known to have taken Internet Lessons at the Cybercafe de Paris. She was a regular client of the hairdresser Alexandre Zouari. She also enjoyed going to the Bar and the Lobby of the Hotel Plaza Athénée located opposite her apartment. She was often accompanied by her former Lady in waiting and loyal friend Madame Firouzabadian Chamrizad. Another friend was the Parisian socialite, Lily Claire Sarran.

Princess Soraya did not communicate with the Shah's third wife Farah Diba, even when both of them lived in Paris.

Death
Princess Soraya died of unknown causes in her apartment in Paris, France; she was 69. Upon learning of her death, her younger brother, Bijan (1937–2001) (who died in Paris one week after Soraya), sadly commented, "After her, I don't have anyone to talk to."

After a funeral at the American Cathedral in Paris on 6 November 2001 — which was attended by Princess Ashraf Pahlavi, Prince Gholam Reza Pahlavi, the Count and Countess of Paris, the Prince

and Princess of Naples, Prince Michel of Orléans, and Princess Ira von Fürstenberg — she was buried in the Westfriedhof, a cemetery in Munich, Germany, along with her parents and brother. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soraya_Esfandiary-Bakhtiari)

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Read the following essay about some requirements to become a good translator. Then find someone (a working translator, a third or fourth-year student of Translation, one of your lecturers, etc.) and interview him/her on the steps a translator needs to take to become successful in the profession.

To Be a Good Translator

In addition to being a member of our country, we are members of the world community, and this gives us a global identity. Therefore, it is quite natural for us to think about world affairs and cooperate in solving the world's problems. To do so, the first and most important tool is "language," which is socially determined.

The world is becoming smaller and smaller as the systems of communication and information are developing and becoming more and more complicated. In the process of such a fast exchange of information and for the purpose of improving cultural contacts, one thing is certain, and that is "translating." This is why there is a need for competent translators and interpreters.

Training translators is an important task which should be given a high priority. The service that translators offer to enhance cultures and support languages has been significant throughout history. Translators are the agents for transferring messages from one language to another, while preserving the basic cultural ideas and values.

Bearing these facts in mind, the question is: what skills are needed to promote translating ability? And how can one become a good translator?

The first step is **extensive reading** of different translations of different kinds of texts, since translating requires active knowledge, while analyzing and evaluating different translations requires passive knowledge. Therefore, receptive skills should be developed before the productive ones; i.e. by reinforcing their passive knowledge, students will eventually improve their active knowledge. Receptive skills improve the students' language intuition and make them ready for actual translating.

A good translator is someone who has a comprehensive **knowledge of both source and target languages**. Students should read different genres in both source and target languages including

modern literature, contemporary prose, newspapers, magazines, advertisements, announcements, instructions, etc. Being familiar with all these genres is important, since they implicitly transfer culture-specific aspects of a language. Specialized readings are also suggested: reading recently published articles and journals on theoretical and practical aspects of translation.

"Writing" skills, i.e. the ability to write smoothly and correctly in both source and target languages, are also important. Writing is in fact the main job of a translator. Students should become familiar with different styles of writing and techniques and principles of editing and punctuation in both source and target languages. Editing and punctuation improve the quality and readability of the translation.

Moreover, translation trainees should have **a good ear** for both source and target languages; i.e. they should be ready to pick up various expressions, idioms, and specific vocabulary and their uses, and store them in their minds to be used later.

A good translator should be familiar with the **culture**, **customs**, and **social settings** of the source and target language speakers. She should also be familiar with different styles of speaking, and social norms of people who use both languages.

Using dictionaries is a technical skill in itself. Not all students know how to use dictionaries appropriately. Words have different meanings in different contexts, and usually monolingual dictionaries are of utmost value in this regard. Students need a great deal of practice to find the intended meaning of words in a particular context, using monolingual dictionaries.
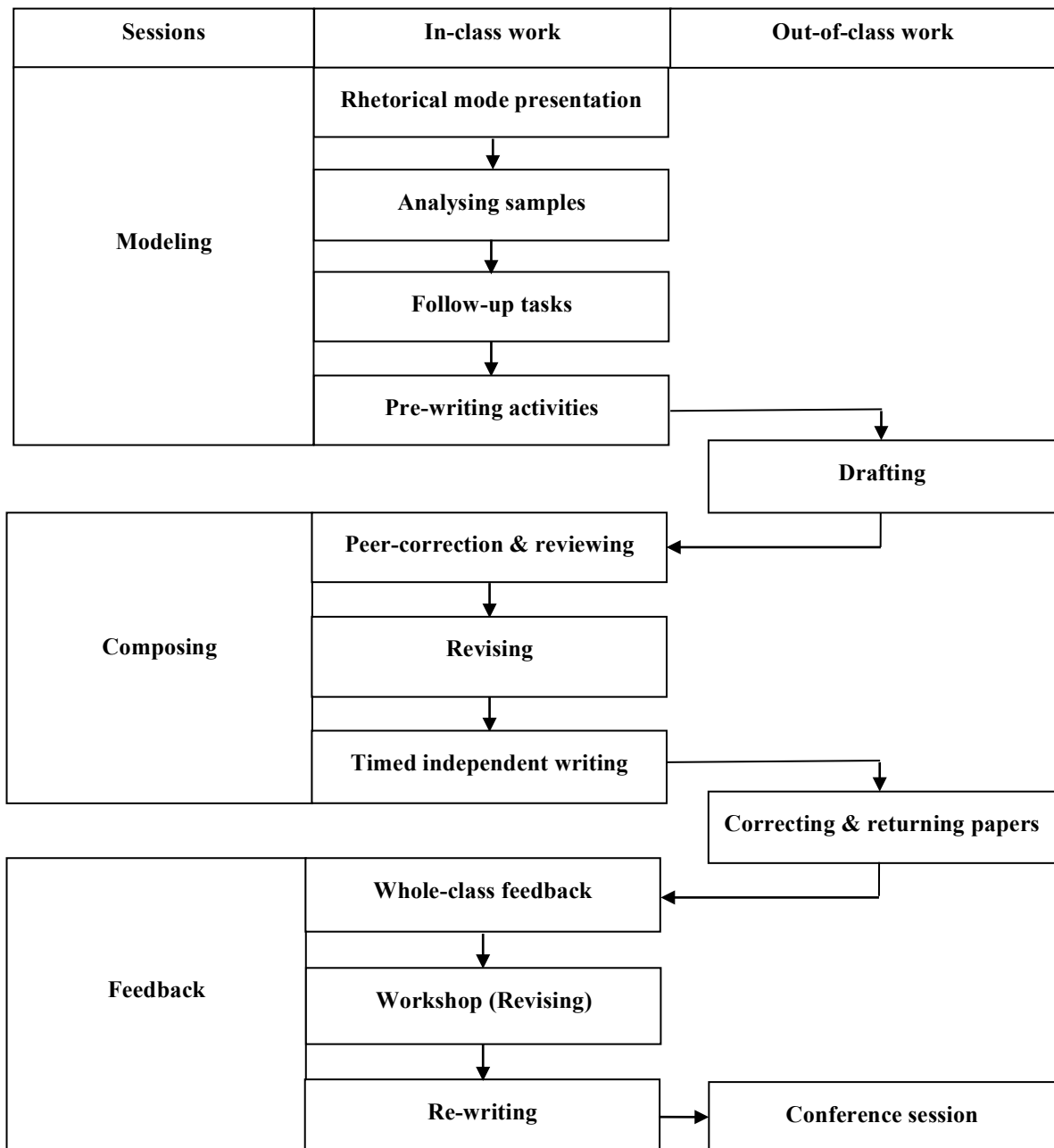
Group work and cooperation with peers can always lead the translating process to better results. Students who practice translation with their peers will be able to solve problems more easily and will also more rapidly develop self-confidence and decision-making techniques. Although there is a possibility of making mistakes during group work, the experience of making, detecting, and correcting mistakes will make the students' minds open and alert.

Another important point is that successful translators usually choose one **specific kind of texts** for translating and continue to work only in that area; for example a translator might translate only literary works, scientific books, or journalistic texts. Even while translating literary works, some translators might choose only to translate poetry, short stories, or novels. Even more specific than that, some translators choose a particular author and translate only her or his works. The reason is that the more they translate the works of a particular author, the more they will become familiar with her or his mind, way of thinking, and style of writing.

Translation needs to be practiced in an **academic environment** in which trainees work on both practical tasks under the supervision of their teachers and theoretical aspects to enhance their knowledge. In an academic environment, recently published articles, journals and books on translation are available to the trainees, who thus become familiar with good translators and their work by reading them and then comparing them with the original texts. In this way, trainees will develop their power of observation, insight, and decision-making, which in turn will lead them to enhance their motivation and improve their translating skills.

Finally, it is important to know that it takes much more than a dictionary to be a good translator, and translators are not made overnight. To be a good translator requires a sizeable **investment** in both source and target languages. (http://www.translationdirectory.com/article106.htm)

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Appendix D: A modular process genre-based instructional model

Sessions	In-class work	Out-of-class work
Modeling	**Rhetorical mode presentation** → **Analysing samples** → **Follow-up tasks** → **Pre-writing activities**	
		Drafting
Composing	**Peer-correction & reviewing** → **Revising** → **Timed independent writing**	
		Correcting & returning papers
Feedback	**Whole-class feedback** → **Workshop (Revising)** → **Re-writing**	**Conference session**

Appendix E: Error families and types

I. Grammatical Error Family	Semantic Errors
Sentence Structure Errors	1. Unclear Meaning
1. Run-on sentences	2. Usage mistakes (e.g., Awkwardness & inappropriateness)
2. Incomplete sentences	3. Insertion/omission
3. Using first language structures	
	II. Lexical Error Family
Determiner Errors	**Vocabulary Errors**
1. Articles	1. Word Choice
2. Possessive nouns/Pronouns	2. Word Form
3. Numbers	3. Prepositions
4. Indefinite pronouns	
5. Demonstrative pronouns	**III. Mechanical Error Family**
	Mechanical Errors
Verb Errors	1. Spelling
1. Subject-verb	2. Capitalization
2. Verb tense	3. Sentence & non-sentence level punctuation
3. Other verb form problems	
Numeric Shift Errors	
1. Count & non-count	
2. Singular-plural	

Appendix F: Scoring rubrics for paragraph writing

Score	Paragraph writing rubrics
5	• The paragraph's main idea directly addresses the topic and is stated clearly. • The paragraph is logically organized, using appropriate transitions and coherence markers. • The main idea is developed using specific supporting sentences (details, examples, etc.). • Vocabulary use is very good. • Grammatical errors are minor and infrequent. • Spelling and punctuation are generally accurate.
4	• The paragraph's main idea is related to the topic and is reasonably dear. • The paragraph shows solid organization, but transitions and coherence markers are not used successfully. • The main idea is developed using at least two supporting sentences. • Vocabulary use is above average. • There are minor grammatical errors that do not interfere with the main idea. • Errors in spelling and punctuation occur but do not distract the reader.
3	• The paragraph' main idea is not expressed explicitly and clearly enough. • The paragraph's organization lacks logic or coherence. • The paragraph lacks an adequate number of supporting sentences. • Vocabulary use is average. • The paragraph contains major grammatical errors. • Spelling and punctuation errors distract the reader.
2	• The paragraph's main idea is only marginally related to the topic or is difficult to identify. • The paragraph does not have an obvious organizational structure. • Supporting sentences are inadequate in number and either unclear or irrelevant. • Vocabulary use is weak. • Grammatical errors are numerous, to the extent that the text cannot be easily read and understood. • Errors in spelling and punctuation consistently distract the reader
1	• The paragraph does not address the topic or lacks a main idea. • The paragraph lacks organization. • The main idea is not supported due to lack of vocabulary and hence incomprehensible. • Vocabulary use is extremely weak. • Major grammatical errors abound, causing the reader major comprehension difficulties. • Spelling and punctuation errors are frequent and highly distracting.

Appendix G: Scoring rubrics for essay writing

Score	Essay writing rubrics
5	**An essay at this level largely accomplishes all of the following:** • effectively addresses the topic and task • is well organized and well developed, using clear supporting sentences • displays unity, progression, and coherence • displays syntactic variety, appropriate word choice, though it may have minor lexical or grammatical errors
4	**An essay at this level largely accomplishes all of the following:** • addresses the topic and task well, though some points may not be fully elaborated • is generally well organized and well developed, using clear supporting sentences • displays unity, progression, and coherence, though it may contain occasional redundancy, digression, or unclear connections • displays syntactic variety and range of vocabulary, though it will probably have occasional noticeable minor grammatical or semantic errors.
3	**An essay at this level is marked by one or more of the following:** • addresses the topic and task using somewhat clear supporting sentences • displays unity, progression, and coherence, though connection of ideas may be occasionally obscured • may demonstrate inconsistent facility in sentence formation and word choice that may result in lack of clarity and occasionally obscure meaning • may display accurate but limited range of syntactic structures and vocabulary
2	**An essay at this level may reveal one or more of the following weaknesses:** • limited development in response to the topic and task • inadequate organization or connection of ideas • unclear and fragmented supporting sentences • an accumulation of errors in sentence structure and/or usage
1	**An essay at this level is seriously flawed by one or more of the following weaknesses:** • serious disorganization or underdevelopment • little or no detail, or irrelevant specifics, or questionable responsiveness to the task • serious and frequent errors in sentence structure or usage

Appendix H: Pre-test and post-test paragraph writing prompt

Please write one or more paragraphs on the topic below:

What is your opinion on following fashion trends at school or university?

- You should spend about 25 minutes on this task and write at least 100 words.
- Remember to develop your ideas by giving reasons, examples, facts, details etc.
- Your writing will be evaluated on its content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, and spelling.

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Appendix I: Pre-test and post-test essay writing prompt

Please write an essay on the topic below:

In what ways has technology helped you to have a better life?

- You should spend about 50 minutes on this task and write at least 250 words.
- Remember to write an introduction, 2-3 body paragraphs and a conclusion.
- Your writing will be evaluated on its content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, and spelling.

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Appendix J: Pre- and post-intervention questionnaire at paragraph level

Dear student:

This questionnaire was developed to learn about your writing strategies, needs, attitudes, and expectations at paragraph level. The data collected through this instrument will be used for research purposes only. The researcher assures you that your identity and information you provide will remain confidential. If you agree to participate in this research, please complete all the instructions. I would be grateful if you make your answers frankly.

Bakhtiar Naghdipour
Department of English Translation
Karaj Azad University, September 2010

Part I. Personal Identity

Instructions: Please provide information about yourself.

1) Age: _____

2) Gender: Male ( )   Female ( )

3) First language _____

4) If you've lived in an English speaking country, please indicate how long it was. __Years & __ Months.

5) If you've studied English in language schools, please indicate how long it was. __Years & __ Months.

6) Your CGPA in high school: _____

Part II. Paragraph writing strategies and expectations

Instructions: Below are some statements that investigate learners' writing strategies, needs, attitudes, and expectations at paragraph level. Please read each statement and then decide if you (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree not disagree, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree.

No	Statements	Pre-	Post-
1	I like writing in English.	4.14	4.36
2	I need to write well in English.	4.43	4.13
3	I can write fast in English.	2.84	3.58
4	I think writing is the most difficult skill in English.	3.09	3.36
5	I read on the Internet (online) to improve my writing.	2.61	3.27
6	I note down interesting expressions/phrases to use them in my writing.	3.81	3.72
7	I focus on the ways English texts are written to develop my writing.	3.30	3.68
8	I know the structure of paragraph in English.	2.59	3.95
9	I know the characteristics of a well-written paragraph in English.	2.43	3.91
10	I know different types of paragraphs (e.g., descriptive, narrative, process etc.).	2.00	4.04
11	I know how to brainstorm new ideas.	2.16	3.85
12	I write a text over and over to make sure it looks good.	2.79	3.57
13	I read the topic more than once to make sure I understand it.	3.84	4.19
14	I write down all the ideas I know about the topic.	3.66	4.08
15	I select the ideas I can develop in a paragraph and discard the others.	3.67	4.06
16	I make a plan for the order of the selected ideas.	3.79	3.99
17	I am afraid of making errors.	3.48	3.64
18	I consider my teacher as the reader of my writing.	3.48	3.94
19	I have problems finding ideas about the topic.	3.62	2.04
20	I have problem with grammar.	3.55	2.15
21	I am good at spelling English words.	3.30	3.61
22	I support the main idea of the paragraph logically.	3.55	3.81
23	I write short sentences to avoid making mistakes.	3.57	3.54
24	I connect my sentences with transitional words (e.g. also, however, thus, etc.).	3.48	3.96
25	I use a variety of vocabulary items (e.g. verbs, nouns, adjectives, etc.).	3.46	3.60
26	I keep repeating the same words and phrases.	3.22	2.34
27	I pay attention to using punctuation marks (e.g. period, comma, colon, etc.).	3.10	3.84
28	I get help from sample texts on the topic.	3.54	4.16
29	I use a monolingual dictionary to check how words are used in their context.	3.41	3.53
30	I use a bilingual dictionary to translate new words from Persian to English.	3.93	3.74
31	I consult a grammar book.	3.49	3.65
32	I spend some time editing my draft.	3.93	3.95
33	I ask my friends' opinions on my draft.	3.40	3.39
34	I revise my draft after receiving the teacher's feedback.	3.57	4.30
35	I keep a notebook for all writing activities.	3.55	4.21

Appendix K: Pre- and post-intervention questionnaire at essay level

Dear student:

This questionnaire was developed to learn about your writing strategies, needs, attitudes and expectations at essay level. The data collected through this instrument will be used for research purposes only. The researcher assures you that your identity and information you provide will remain confidential. If you agree to participate in this research, please complete all the instructions. I would be grateful if you make your answers frankly.

Bakhtiar Naghdipour

Department of English Translation

Karaj Azad University, February 2011

Part II. Essay writing strategies and expectations
Instructions: Below are some statements that investigate learners' writing strategies, needs, attitudes, and expectations at essay level. Please read each statement and then decide if you (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree not disagree, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree.

No	Statements	Pre-	Post-
1	I am satisfied with my writing ability in English.	2.70	3.64
2	I have confidence in writing.	2.79	3.50
3	I like practicing writing at home.	3.96	3.79
4	I like practicing writing in the class.	4.01	4.17
5	I use the Internet to improve my writing.	3.76	3.85
6	I have confidence in paragraph writing.	2.80	3.43
7	I can write texts longer than paragraph.	2.80	4.21
8	I know the structure of essay in English.	2.61	3.94
9	I am familiar with different types of essays.	2.44	3.81
10	I can summarize English texts.	3.44	3.95
11	I can paraphrase English texts.	2.90	3.55
12	I like doing small-scale projects in English.	4.21	3.76
13	I like working in groups.	3.50	3.99
14	I like reading my classmates' writings.	3.24	3.99
15	I need to read in order to improve my writing.	4.38	4.10
16	I memorize expressions and phrases to use them in my writing.	3.98	4.27
17	I have enough information about the topic while writing.	3.42	3.83
18	I use sample materials to improve my writing.	4.80	4.90
19	I know my major well.	3.01	4.01
20	I expect the teacher to correct all my writing errors.	2.93	3.38

Appendix L: Interview questions at paragraph level

1. What is your overall evaluation of Grammar & Writing (I) course?

2. Could you comment on the most effective part of the course?

3. What was the impact of the course on your thinking abilities?

4. How did you use to practice writing outside of the classroom?

5. Could you comment on the strengths of the course?

6. Could you comment on the weaknesses of the course?

7. Could you comment on the criteria of a well-written paragraph?

Appendix M: Interview questions at essay level

1. Could you comment on the most difficult aspect of learning to write?

2. Do you think the course met your expectations of essay writing?

3. Could you comment on the instructional materials used during the semester?

4. Could you comment on the strengths of the course?

5. Could you comment on the weaknesses of the course?

6. Could you comment on the strengths of portfolio writing?

7. Could you comment on the weaknesses of portfolio writing?