A Genre-Based Investigation of Inter/Intra-Lingual Relationships between Persian and English Academic Writings: Common Underlying Proficiency Oriented

Mahboubeh Safavi∗   Firooz Sadighi∗∗

Mohammad Sadegh Bagheri∗∗∗   Mustafa Zamanian∗∗∗∗

Abstract

Although L2 writing has attracted salient attention and monopolized many studies in EFL contexts, there is still no full image of its complicated nature. Trying to play a supplementary role in achieving that image, this study aimed at finding whether Persian and English argumentative and descriptive academic writings were inter/intra-lingually associated and if genre played a role in provoking any differences in the means of total scores obtained from the essays. In so doing, 50 Iranian senior MA TEFL students at the intermediate level were asked to write down two argumentative and two descriptive essays in Persian and English. Each essay was assessed against IELTS task 2 writing band descriptors. Then, the data were analyzed through the Pearson product-moment correlation and paired-samples *t*-test. The results revealed there were significant positive correlations between the total scores obtained from Persian and English argumentative and descriptive essays. The findings supported the existence of a common underlying proficiency (Cummins, 1980), out of

which L1 and L2 writing skills emerged. The results also illustrated there were significant differences between the means of some of the total scores. It was supposed these differences might be due to the possible genre-sensitive nature of common underlying proficiency.

Most of the L2 learners consider writing in the target language as a challenging task. Some researchers reckon this taxing nature is because not only do L2 learners have to struggle with the principles of writing an organized essay, but they also have to buckle with a second language (Hyland, 2003), which has different parameters from their mother tongue's (Chomsky, 1965). For decades, researchers have tried to investigate the challenging nature of L2 writing by paying heed to different issues. One of the controversial issues was to scrutinize the level of association between L1 and L2 writings (Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2013). They believed that knowing about it would help have a better understanding of how it might facilitate or interfere with the task of L2 writing. Another matter in question was the effect of genre on L2 writing. Different genres, such as argumentative and descriptive, have their distinctive features (Cumming, 2001), and some researchers assumed that those features might play a role in determining the quality of L2 writing (Moqimipour & Shahrokhi, 2015). Aside from those disputable issues, researchers have always attempted to provide justifiable theories and find panaceas to simplify the problematic task of L2 writing.

One of the prominent theories which attracted a great deal of attention was Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) proposed by Cummins (1980). In this model, as he stated, "experience with either language can, theoretically, promote the development of the proficiency underlying both languages" (p. 95). He proposed this theory against the separate underlying proficiency model, which claimed that L1 and L2 proficiencies were two separate modules in L2 learners' brains. To solidify his theory and provide some evidence

against the separate underlying proficiency model, Cummins (1979a) referred to some correlational studies which supported the theory that L1 and L2 were by no means detached. The building blocks of CUP were Cummins's (1979a, b) earlier theories, which were Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) and linguistic interdependence hypothesis. Cummins (1979a) considered academic skills, i.e., writing, reading, speaking, and listening, as a part of CALP, which he later renamed as the *academic language* (Cummins & Yee-Fun, 2007). He defined CALP or academic language as the students' ability to utilize L1/L2 for educational purposes in academic contexts.

Drawing on CALP, Cummins (1979b) proposed the prominent concept of the linguistic interdependence hypothesis. It was acknowledged that L2 CALP development depended on the level of L1 CALP achievement. That is to say, the better the students' ability in L1 academic language skills gets, the more successful their L2 academic language performances might be. Furthermore, to evaluate the students' L1 and L2 academic skills, their performances and the scores assigned to them were considered as the rough manifestations of their skill levels. To perfect this hypothesis, Cummins also introduced the threshold hypothesis that stated only if the learners achieved a certain and age-related level of L1 and L2 proficiencies, the linguistic interdependence hypothesis would work. Finally, trying to broaden the hypothesis, he came up with the CUP model, which stated that both L1 and L2 CALPs were interdependent as they stemmed from the same underlying module in the brain. Using this model, he justified how being equipped with L1 CALP could pave the way for the development of L2 CALP or the other way around. Cummins's valuable theories made the basis for many studies, especially the correlational ones in the realm of language skills, such as writing, which has always been regarded as a challenging skill that needs more and more investigations.

Motivated by Cummins's theories, as well, the current study employed the common underlying proficiency model as the theoretical framework and

tried to find whether there were any correlations between the total scores obtained from Persian and English argumentative and descriptive essays written by Iranian senior MA TEFL students at the intermediate level. Then, the results were checked to see whether they would confirm or reject that L1 and L2 academic writings, as parts of L1 and L2 CALPs, stemmed from a common underlying proficiency. The genres involved were argumentative and descriptive because they are the most prevalent text-types at academic levels (Ziahosseiny & Derakhshan, 2006). They are used by EFL students to do their assignments, write down articles and theses, or fulfill the requirements to continue their studies abroad by taking proficiency tests like IELTS (Sadeghi & Maleki, 2015). Using two different genres, this study also attempted to see if there were any differences between the means of total scores obtained from the essays to inspect whether genre played a role in determining the results. If so, then the results might support the genre-sensitive nature of common underlying proficiency.

Literature Review

Several researchers tried to see the phenomenon through Cummins's glasses by inspecting the same issue regarding the relationship between L1 and L2 literacy skills. Some researchers (e.g., Ansarimoghaddam & Tan, 2014; Cho, 2010) assumed that this relationship might be *intra-modal*, i.e., improving/diminishing one skill in L1 such as writing could result in amending/attenuating the same skill in L2 or the other way around. Some other researchers (e.g., Fukuda, 2011; Schoonen, 2019), however, concluded that this relationship might be not only intra-modal but also *inter-modal*, i.e., strengthening/weakening one skill such as reading might bring about advancements/setbacks in writing skill or vice versa. The scholars in the field also managed to investigate this possible relationship from different perspectives, the two principal of which were macro- and micro-level analyses of writings of different genres. Furthermore, they considered some influencing

variables such as gender, first language literacy or writing skill, L2 proficiency, awareness level regarding similarities and differences between L1 and L2, and genre.

Through macro-level inspection, some investigators inspected L1-L2 essays relationship by collecting data from the participants' think-aloud protocols and paying heed to the way L2 learners handled the writing process (e.g., Fujii, 2012; Kim & Yoon, 2014; Shabani, Tahriri, & Farzaneh Ardebili, 2016; Weijen, Bergh, Rijlaarsdam, & Sanders, 2009), or the rhetorical or organizational patterns of their essays (e.g., Mu & Carrington, 2007; Rashidi & Alimorad Dastkhezr, 2009; Sadeghi & Maleki, 2015). Some of the researchers provided evidence on the unfavorable relationship between L1 and L2 writings. Fujii (2012), for instance, claimed that L2 learners applied a great deal of their L1 to translate their ideas into L2 while writing persuasive compositions; however, this complicated process of writing an essay led to literal translation and destruction of the intended meaning. Besides, Shabani et al. (2016) mentioned that their participants' direct writings outperformed the translated ones, implying the harmful role of L1 in the process of L2 writing. Likewise, Weijen et al. (2009) illustrated that learners' L1 employment while writing in L2 was negatively correlated to text quality regarding meta-comments.

In contrast, some other researchers tried to highlight the useful link between L1 and L2 writings. Kim and Yoon (2014) and Sadeghi and Maleki (2015), for example, revealed that strategic or conscious L1 employment could bring about L2 writing advancement. Mu and Carrington (2007), similarly, pointed out that some L1 writing strategies such as metacognitive, cognitive, and social ones could positively be transferred to L2 writings. In addition to those studies confirming the negative or positive relationships, there was an investigation by Rashidi and Alimorad Dastkherz (2009) that displayed no significant relationship between L1 and L2 essays regarding the organization of writings. Shifting the attention to the product rather than the

process, some other investigators pivoted their studies around micro-level inspection of L1 and L2 writings through analyzing the components of essays at word, sentence, and discourse levels (e.g., Guo, Liu, & Chen, 2014; Javadi-Safa, Vahdany, & Khalili Sabet, 2013; Kohro, 2009; Moulavi Nafchi, Safarpoor, & Ghorbanimoghadam, 2014). Altogether, their studies demonstrated positive, negative, or zero relationships between L1 and L2 writing skills.

Concerning the existence of a correlation between L1 and L2 writings, Javadi-Safa et al. (2013) and Moulavi Nafchi et al. (2014) found positive correlations between the total scores from L1 and L2 compositions as well as the scores respecting the writing sub-skills such as vocabulary, mechanics, content, and language use. Notwithstanding, Guo et al. (2014) stated that the kind of relationship they discovered was harmful, and Kohro (2009) disclosed that he could not spot any correlation concerning the clarity of the global structure. Over time, some researchers reckoned there might be more to this relationship and claimed that it might be affected by the variables, such as gender (e.g., Fu, 2011), first language literacy or writing skill (e.g., He & Niao, 2015), L2 proficiency (e.g., Marzban & Esmaeelnia Jalali, 2016), awareness level regarding similarities and differences between L1 and L2 (Saffari, Noordin, Sivapalan, & Zahedpisheh, 2017), and genre (Moqimipour & Shahrokhi, 2015). Even though L2 writing skill and the variables affecting it have become the cynosure of many studies, the researchers are still far from reaching a full image regarding its very nature. Besides, the conducted studies, especially in Iran, have suffered from being in the minority, and more research is still needed (Ziahosseiny & Derakhshan, 2006). Furthermore, two major issues that are relevant to the context of Iran are elaborated on as follows.

Statement of the Problem

One of the most critical problems Iranian EFL learners are still struggling with is their weakness in L2 writing (Kmyabi, 2016). The main reason is that

the systematic teaching of L2 writing is not included in the syllabus designs employed in schools in Iran (Ziahosseiny & Derakhshan, 2006). Hence, before going to university, students do not practically receive much instruction on this skill. Even at the university level, only EFL students, not students of other majors, receive some instruction on L2 writing, the result of which is far from being satisfactory. In a few paragraph- and essay-writing courses, which EFL students take at university, teachers only have the opportunity to maneuver on main features of genres in L2 writing, and they do not use the genres' counterparts in L1, i.e., Persian to raise EFL learners' awareness regarding the relationships between L1 and L2 writings. According to Saffari et al. (2017), raising such awareness in writing courses might be of great help to EFL learners to ameliorate their L2 writing. Likewise, Shokrpour and Fallahzadeh (2007) attributed Iranian university students' poor performance in L2 writing to their lack of knowledge on similarities and differences between L1 and L2 writings. Therefore, in the context of Iran, not only teachers but also researchers had better give more heed to the association between L1 and L2 writings to discover in what ways mother tongue writing can pave the way for foreign language writing (Marzban & Esmaeelnia Jalali, 2016).

Another reason contributing to the tough nature of L2 writing for Iranian EFL learners is that the role of genre in determining learners' achievement is neglected in the writing courses. Either all genres, such as descriptive and argumentative, are treated the same way, or a genre such as expository writing is emphasized, and other genres do not get treated as exclusively as that one (Ziahosseiny & Derakhshan, 2006). In other words, different genres' difficulty levels are not considered for the allocation of enough time or to analyze each in detail to get it across. In this regard, Bradford-Watts (2003) pointed out that genre analysis would be practical to achieve a layout for specific vocabulary, grammar structures, organization, and other features unique to a particular genre. However, because of not paying enough attention to the role of genre, Iranian learners have difficulty observing specific rules

for each genre, especially the argumentative one. They cannot write acceptable argumentative essays because they are weak at arguing for or against disputable issues, and they tend to write descriptive essays more than argumentative ones (Sadeghi & Maleki, 2015). Then, the role of genre in diminishing or enhancing the scores Iranian learners obtain should not be ignored. Altogether, it behooves the researchers to further their studies and cover more aspects of this skill. Considering the mentioned problems, therefore, this study was conducted to contribute a bit more to the field of second language acquisition and shed more light on the very nature of the writing skill by pursuing the following objectives.

Objectives of the Study

The present study enjoyed a twofold objective. First, it aimed at finding the likely inter/intra-lingual relationships between Persian and English argumentative and descriptive academic writings of Iranian senior MA TEFL students at the intermediate level in the domain of foreign language acquisition. The following schematic representation shows the relationships of which this study tried to grab the essence.

Persian Argumentative Essays (PAE) ⟷ English Argumentative Essays (EAE)

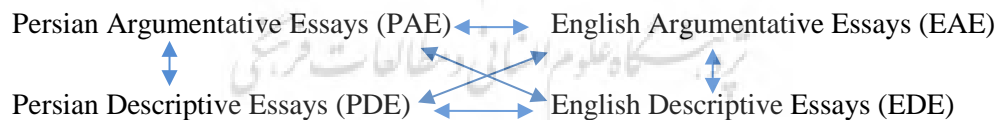Persian Descriptive Essays (PDE) ⟷ English Descriptive Essays (EDE)

Figure 1.

Schematic Representation of the Target Relationships between Iranian Senior MA TEFL Students' Persian and English argumentative and descriptive Academic Writings

As illustrated in Figure 1, this study attempted to find the possible a) *horizontal relationships* between Persian and English argumentative essays and Persian and English descriptive essays; b) *vertical relationships* between

Persian argumentative and descriptive essays, and English argumentative and descriptive essays; and c) *cross-sectional relationships* between Persian argumentative and English descriptive essays and Persian descriptive and English argumentative essays. This multifaceted account of the possible relationships gave the researchers a chance to examine whether or not L1 and L2 academic writings were possibly parts of the interdependent L1 and L2 cognitive/academic language proficiencies (Cummins, 1979a) and, therefore, stemmed from the common underlying proficiency (Cummins, 1980). Secondly, the present study investigated the possible role of genre in determining the means of total scores obtained from the participants' argumentative and descriptive writings in Persian and English. In other words, it took the variable of genre into account to check whether or not the learner's common underlying proficiency was *genre-sensitive*, which has not been done so far to the researchers' best knowledge.

Research Questions

The twofold objective of the present study was boiled down into the following questions:

1. Is there a significant correlation between Iranian senior MA TEFL students' Persian and English argumentative and descriptive essays horizontally, vertically, and cross-sectionally?

2. Is there a significant difference between the role of genre in determining the means of the total scores obtained from Iranian senior MA TEFL students' Persian and English argumentative and descriptive essays?

Method

Design

To conduct the current research and achieve its goal, a within-subject quantitative research method was applied, which delved into both correlational and causal relationships. The total scores obtained from the

micro-level evaluations of the writing tasks, i.e. Persian argumentative and descriptive essays, and English argumentative and descriptive essays, were considered as the variables used for the correlational relationships. Also, the type of genre and the results of the writing tasks were the variables taken into account for the causal relationships. Besides, this study was a quasi-experimental type of research. The participants were selected through convenient sampling but not randomly assigned, and they belonged to only one experimental group and no control group. Furthermore, the participants did not receive any treatments during the time of conducting the research.

Participants

There were 50 Iranian senior MA TEFL students (18 males & 32 females) involved in the current study. Their age ranged from 24 to 28. They were all Persian native speakers chosen from an available population of 78 students based on convenience sampling and through Oxford quick placement test. Those 50 students whose scores indicated that their English proficiency level was intermediate were selected, and the rest were excluded. The main impetus for selecting the intermediate participants was to cast aside the extreme impacts of basic and advanced English proficiency levels and to have a homogeneous group of participants. Besides, all of the participants were familiar with academic argumentative and descriptive essays in Persian and English because they had previously received instruction on them through compulsory courses they had passed in paragraph and essay writings in the two languages.

Instruments

Oxford quick placement test. University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (2001) provided two versions of Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT): a computer-based version, and a paper-and-pen version. Due to the feasibility of administration, the paper-and-pen OQPT was

applied in the current study. It included 60 multiple choice questions in two sections. There were 40 questions in the first section. Based on the test's instructions, if students could achieve a score over 36, they would be allowed to go on and complete the next section with its 20 questions. To interpret the scores obtained, there was a look-up table which facilitated the task of classifying the students into different proficiency levels from the beginner to very advanced. For the present investigation, only the intermediate-level students with scores ranging from 30 to 47 (out of 60) were chosen as the participants of the study.

Essay writing tasks. Four essay writing tasks, Persian and English argumentative and descriptive writings, were administered to collect the necessary data. The topic for the descriptive essays, "More and more people are relying on their private car as their major means of transportation. Describe some of the problems over-reliance on cars can cause, and suggest at least one possible solution." and the topic for the argumentative ones, "Do you agree or disagree that a person should never make an important decision alone?" were chosen from the multitude of available topics on IELTS writing exams. Only the topics were selected that appeared less troublesome and general enough for all of the participants to avoid any bias regarding having or lacking the general knowledge on them. Then, the students were required to write two essays for each topic, one in Persian and the other one in English, with at least 250 words on each essay and the time limitation of 40 minutes.

Analytical Framework

To score Persian and English argumentative and descriptive essays, IELTS task 2 writing band descriptors (public version) was employed as the analytical framework (Appendix A). It was designed by British Council, IDP: IELTS Australia and the University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations (n.d.). Three prominent and experienced experts who were professors in applied linguistics and Persian literature confirmed that this analytical framework was

applicable to score both argumentative and descriptive essays in the two languages.   In this framework, four major micro-level components: task response, coherence and cohesion, lexical resource, and grammatical range and accuracy in the students' writings were assessed. Each component had its score ranging from 0 to 9 and the advantage of a clear detailed description. Moreover, the total scores were calculated (out of 9) by adding all the scores from the four components and dividing them by four.

Raters

To assess the students' argumentative and descriptive writings in Persian and English and to maintain the inter-rater reliability of the scores obtained, this study benefited from three raters: the researcher, a skilled expert who was a Ph.D. candidate in TEFL, and also a sophisticated expert who held Ph.D. in Persian Literature. The raters' relevant education and teaching experience qualified them for the task of evaluating the papers based on the provided scoring profile, i.e., IELTS task 2 writing band descriptors (public version), over which they had commanded. They were chosen through availability sampling and were informed on the purposes of the study in advance. They willingly agreed to cooperate and allocate their time and expertise to assess the papers.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

50 Iranian senior MA TEFL students were selected from a population of 78 students using Oxford quick placement test. The test ensured that they were all at the intermediate level of English proficiency. Then, they were required to write down four essays in Persian and English: two argumentative and two descriptive ones. The topics, instructions, and scoring procedures were adopted from IELTS writing tests. The tasks were given to the participants in two sessions. As the Persian and English topics were the same, there was a three-week interval so that any test-retest effects would be minimized.

Besides, the participants were divided into two groups of 25 (9 males & 16 females) and received the tasks employing two different orders to counterbalance any possible effects of task order (Table 1). After three weeks, the second session was held, and group A's and group B's tasks were exchanged. It is noteworthy that the participants were prohibited from employing any dictionaries or receiving any peer-feedback.

Table 1.

The Order of Persian and English Essay Writing Tasks Given in Two Sessions

	Session 1	Session 2
Group A	English Argumentative Essay	English Descriptive Essay
	Persian Descriptive Essay	Persian Argumentative Essay
Group B	English Descriptive Essay	English Argumentative Essay
	Persian Argumentative Essay	Persian Descriptive Essay

After obtaining the necessary data, three experienced raters were involved in assessing the collected essays against IELTS task 2 writing band descriptors (public version). The English essays were evaluated by the researcher and a skilled expert who was a Ph.D. candidate in TEFL, and the Persian essays were rated by the researcher and a sophisticated expert who held Ph.D. in Persian Literature. Each paper was analyzed based on four micro-level components shared by both genres: task response, coherence and cohesion, lexical resource, and grammatical range and accuracy. They formed the criteria to assess both genres, and their description and the way they contributed to assigning scores were all elaborated on in the framework (see Appendix A). A score (out of 9) was allocated to each component, and the average of the four components formed the total score. Each writing received two total scores by two raters (Appendix B), and the average of those two total scores was calculated and used for the final analysis.

When the scoring procedure ended, the inter-rater reliabilities for the total scores on both Persian and English papers were calculated using Pearson product-moment correlation; high-reliability indexes were found for both English (r=.91) and Persian (r≈.86) essays. These high reliabilities could also support the reliability of the IELTS scoring scale based on which the raters judged the papers. After ensuring the inter-rater reliabilities, the researchers employed Pearson product-moment correlations to answer the first question of the study on the possible inter/intra-lingual relationships between the participating students' Persian and English argumentative and descriptive academic writings. Eventually, to answer the second question, on the possible significant role of genre on the means of total scores obtained from the writings, paired-samples *t*-tests were calculated.

Results

The present study, first and foremost, centered on perceiving if Persian and English argumentative and descriptive academic writings, written by Iranian senior MA TEFL students, were inter/intra-lingually associated. Hence, the horizontal inter-lingual correlations between a) Persian and English argumentative essays, b) Persian and English descriptive essays; the cross-sectional inter-lingual correlations between c) Persian argumentative and English descriptive essays, d) Persian descriptive and English argumentative essays; and the vertical intra-lingual correlations between e) Persian argumentative and descriptive essays, and f) English argumentative and descriptive essays were calculated to answer the first question of the study (Table 2).

Table 2.

Pearson Correlations for Persian and English Argumentative and Descriptive Writings

	PAETS EAETS	PDETS EDETS	PAETS EDETS	PDETS EAETS	PAETS PDETS	EAETS EDETS
Pearson Correlation	.781**	.783**	.670**	.776**	.708**	.824**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
N	50	50	50	50	50	50

PAETS: Persian Argumentative Essays Total Scores
EAETS: English Argumentative Essays Total Scores
PDETS: Persian Descriptive Essays Total Scores
EDETS: English Descriptive Essays Total Scores

As Table 2 indicates, there were positive and strong significant correlations between all of the pairs of essays. They were taken into account as strong ones since, according to Cohen (as cited in Pallant, 2007), the correlations of .10 to .29 were considered to be small; .30 to .49, medium; and .50 to 1.0, large. The strongest correlation was found to be the one between English argumentative and descriptive essays ($r=.824$, $p<.05$), and the next strong ones were respectively between Persian and English descriptive essays ($r=.783$, $p<.05$), Persian and English argumentative essays ($r=.781$, $p<.05$), Persian descriptive and English argumentative essays ($r=.776$, $p<.05$), Persian argumentative and descriptive essays ($r=.708$, $p<.05$), and last in order but not least in importance, Persian argumentative and English descriptive essays ($r=.670$, $p<.05$). Therefore, Persian and English argumentative and descriptive academic writings by Iranian senior MA TEFL students were both inter/intra-lingually associated. In addition to seeking correlations, this study pivoted around finding the possible significant differences between the means of total scores (TSs) obtained from those pairs of essays to answer the second question of the study on the possible role of genre in determining the results (Tables 3&4).

Table 3.

Paired Samples Descriptive Statistics for Persian and English Argumentative and Descriptive Writings

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	PAETS	5.8050	50	.73069	.10333
	EAETS	5.2850	50	.86087	.12175
Pair 2	PDETS	5.8725	50	1.09250	.15450
	EDETS	5.9050	50	1.12672	.15934
Pair 3	PAETS	5.8050	50	.73069	.10333
	EDETS	5.9050	50	1.12672	.15934
Pair 4	PDETS	5.8725	50	1.09250	.15450
	EAETS	5.2850	50	.86087	.12175
Pair 5	PAETS	5.8050	50	.73069	.10333
	PDETS	5.8725	50	1.09250	.15450
Pair 6	EAETS	5.2850	50	.86087	.12175
	EDETS	5.9050	50	1.12672	.15934

PAETS: Persian Argumentative Essays Total Scores
EAETS: English Argumentative Essays Total Scores
PDETS: Persian Descriptive Essays Total Scores
EDETS: English Descriptive Essays Total Scores

As shown in Table 3, among the inter-lingual pairs, i.e., 1-4, in pairs 1 and 4, the means of TSs obtained for both Persian argumentative and descriptive essays (*M*= 5.8050, *M*= 5.8725) were higher than the mean of TSs obtained for English argumentative essays (*M*= 5.2850). However, in pairs 2 and 3, the mean of TSs obtained for English descriptive essays (*M*=5.9050) was higher than the means of TSs obtained for both Persian descriptive and argumentative essays (*M*= 5.8725, *M*= 5.8050). Besides, for the two intra-lingual pairs, i.e., 5 and 6, the means of TSs obtained for descriptive essays were higher than the ones for argumentative essays: Pair 5, Persian descriptive essays (*M*=5.8725) and Persian argumentative essays (*M*=5.8050), and Pair 6, English descriptive essays (*M*=5.9050) and English argumentative essays (*M*=5.2850). As well as these descriptive statistics, paired-samples *t*-tests

were calculated to inspect whether those differences among the pairs were significant or not (Table 4).

Table 4.

Paired Samples t-tests for Persian and English Argumentative and Descriptive Writings

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 PAETS EAETS	.52000	.54067	.07646	.36634	.67366	6.801	49	.000
Pair 2 PDETS EDETS	-.03250	.73228	.10356	-.24061	.17561	-.314	49	.755
Pair 3 PAETS EDETS	-.10000	.83681	.11834	-.33782	.13782	-.845	49	.402
Pair 4 PDETS EAETS	.58750	.68987	.09756	.39144	.78356	6.022	49	.000
Pair 5 PAETS PDETS	-.06750	.77312	.10934	-.28722	.15222	-.617	49	.540
Pair 6 EAETS EDETS	-.62000	.64184	.09077	-.80241	-.43759	-6.830	49	.000

PAETS: Persian Argumentative Essays Total Scores
EAETS: English Argumentative Essays Total Scores
PDETS: Persian Descriptive Essays Total Scores
EDETS: English Descriptive Essays Total Scores

According to Table 4, the probability values were significant only for three pairs: Pair 1, Persian and English argumentative essays (t (49) = 6.801, $p<$ .05), Pair 4, Persian descriptive and English argumentative essays (t (49)

= 6.022, *p*< .05), and Pair 6, English argumentative and descriptive essays (*t* (49) = -6.830, *p*< .05). That is, genre played a meaningful role and induced significant differences between the means of TSs obtained from those essays. Nonetheless, for the other three pairs of essays insignificant probability values were found: Pair 2, Persian and English descriptive essays (*t* (49) = -.314, *p*> .05), Pair 3, Persian argumentative and English descriptive essays (*t* (49) = -.845, *p*> .05), and Pair 5, Persian argumentative and descriptive essays (*t* (49) = -.617, *p*> .05). Hence, the findings revealed that although the obtained TSs were a function of genre in some essays, genre could not have the same striking role in some other ones.

Discussion

The results for the inter-lingual part of the first question revealed that the Total Scores (TSs) obtained from a) Iranian senior MA TEFL students' Persian and English argumentative essays (*r* =.781, *p*<.05), b) Persian and English descriptive essays (*r* =.783, *p*<.05), c) Persian argumentative essays and English descriptive essays (*r* =.670, *p*<.05), and d) Persian descriptive essays and English argumentative essays (*r* =.776, *p*<.05) were significantly associated. The correlations achieved were all strong and positive. In other words, the higher/lower the participants' TSs in Persian essays were, the better/worse their TSs in English essays got or vice versa. These findings confirmed those of prior research in the context of Iran, concerning the inter-lingual relationship between Persian and English writing skills (e.g., Javadi-Safa et al., 2013; Marzban & Esmaeelnia Jalali, 2016; Moulavi Nafchi et al., 2014; & Zare'ee & Farvardin, 2009). Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that most of the earlier investigations took only one genre into account, and they did not consider different possibilities for the relationship between L1 and L2 writings (see Figure 1).

More specifically, the findings were in line with the reasonably strong significant correlations Javadi-Safa et al. (2013) and Zare'ee and Farvardin

(2009) discovered between the overall scores from Persian and English argumentative essays ($r=.65$, $r=.47$, $p<.05$). Besides, the findings endorsed the results from Marzban and Esmaeelnia Jalali's (2016) investigation of expository compositions and Moulavi Nafchi et al.'s (2014) inspection of general compositions in that they detected noticeable significant correlations between Persian and English writing skills ($r=.93$, $r=.50$, $p<.05$). Some of the scholars attributed such correlations to Cummins' (1979b) Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis that maintains L1 skills and linguistic knowledge are transferable into L2 while a learner is acquiring L2 skills (Marzban & Esmaeelnia Jalali, 2016). Theoretically, as Cummins (1979a, p.222) claimed, "The development of competence in a second language (L2) is partially a function of the type of competence already developed in L1." Hence, regarding the results showing inter-lingual interdependence, it can be inferred that the learners' being equipped with Persian writing skills might make it easier for their brains to manage English writings better or the other way around.

The results were also consistent with other studies carried out in other EFL contexts considering different first languages (Dweik & Abu Al Hommos, 2007; Fukuda, 2011; Ito, 2009; Schoonen, Gelderen, Glopper, Hulstijn, Simis, Snellings, & Stevenson, 2003). Investigating the association between Arabic and English descriptive essays, Dweik and Abu Al Hommos (2007) discovered a reasonably strong correlation between L1 and L2 writing skills ($r=.58$, $p<.05$). Similarly, Fukuda (2011) encountered a medium correlation of .32 ($p<.05$) between Japanese and English comparison/contrast essays. Besides, Ito (2009) found significant correlations of different strengths for five proficiency levels from basic to advanced ($r=.33$, .29, .56, .51, .49, $p<.05$) between Japanese and English writings admitting that L1 writing skill could be a further advantage for L2 writing skill. Likewise, Schoonen et al. (2003) detected a very high index of correlation ($r=.93$, $p<.05$) between Dutch and English writing skills, which, the same as other mentioned studies, might

lead to the belief that L1 and L2 writings are not separate entities. In this regard, Kobayashi and Rinnert (2013, p. 442) stated that L2 writing "is not a separate entity but part of comprehensive multilingual writing competence" from which L1 writing emerged, too.

Decades before Kobayashi and Rinnert's proposing multilingual writing competence, Cummins (1979 a) talked about inter-connected L1 and L2 Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiencies (CALPs) which he assumed to be different manifestations of the Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) existing in the L2 learners' brains (Cummins, 1980). Then, regarding the obtained inter-lingual correlations in the current research, it might be assumed that in the participants' brains, there was a CUP out of which Persian and English writing skills, as parts of L1 and L2 CALPs, emerged. As L1 and L2 writing CALPs were demonstrations which rose from the same academic repository in the learners' minds, they were significantly correlated. Referring to Cummins's theories, some other researchers (e.g., Dweik & Abu Al Hommos, 2007; Fukuda, 2011; Ito, 2009; Javadi-Safa et al., 2013; Marzban & Esmaeelnia Jalali, 2016) also backed this idea in their experimental studies. They suggested that no matter what the mother tongue is, once an L2 learner has acquired a specific L1 skill such as writing, this knowledge is accessible for the learner in the process of learning the same L2 skill and leads to their association (Fukuda, 2011). In other general words, "The relationship between first and second Language literacy skills suggests that effective development of primary language literacy skills can provide a conceptual foundation for long-term growth in English literacy skills" (Cummins, 2000, p.39).

In addition to the findings on inter-lingual relationships, the results for the intra-lingual part of the first question illustrated the participants' TSs in Persian argumentative and descriptive essays ($r = .708$, $p<.05$), and English argumentative and descriptive essays ($r = .824$, $p<.05$) were significantly correlated, and the correlations obtained were both strong and positive. To wit, the participants who had a better/worse performance on argumentative essays

enjoyed higher/lower scores on descriptive essays or the other way around. This part of the findings affirmed the assumption by some researchers (e.g., Nickerson, 2018; Reiff & Bawarshi, 2011; Rounsaville, 2012) who believed that learners can successfully employ their old knowledge of genres for a new task of writing, which might have provoked the existence of the intra-lingual correlation between writings in the current study. In the same vein, Devitt assumed that once the learners are aware of one type of genre, they are "equipped with a tool to be adapted and to be used in a variety of contexts rather than the learned genre" (as cited in Viriya & Wasanasomsithi, 2017, p. 12).

Considering the word *equipped* in Devitt's statement, it may be inferred that her proposal might have its roots in Cummins's interdependent CALPs theory with a bit of modification and expansion. That is to say, not only do L2 learners being equipped with L1 writing CALP possibly associate with their L2 writing CALP or the other way around but also being armed by one of L1 genre (e.g., descriptive) CALPs, for instance, might play an invaluable role to ease the task of another L1 genre (e.g., argumentative) or vice versa, as was the case in the current study. Notwithstanding, not all studies in the field yielded the same results as the present study. These results were in disagreement with some investigations with almost the same purposes, which discovered either no relationship between L1 and L2 writing skills or, even if they found any, it was trivial and not reliable (e.g., Abu-Akel, 1997; Carson, Carrell, Silberstein, Kroll, & Kuehn, 1990; Kohro, 2009; Mirzaee & Marzban, 2016; Rashidi & Alimorad Dastkhezr, 2009). Such contrasts with the results of the current study could be due to various factors, like the participants' mother tongue, L2 proficiency level, the applied scoring scale, and the essay genre.

The results of the study conducted by Abu-Akel (1997), for instance, were in contrast with the results of the current study. He discovered that there was no significant association between the learners' Hebrew and English

comparison and contrast writing skills ($r=.02$, $p>.05$), and there was a very low correlation between their Arabic and English overall writing scores ($r=.23$, $p<.05$). Long before Abu-Akel, an investigation of the same genre conducted by Carson et al. (1990) also displayed the opposite results from our study. They found that there was no meaningful relationship between Chinese and English writings ($r=-.019$, $p>.05$) and a very low correlation between Japanese and English ones ($r=.23$, $p<.05$). The source of such contrast might be the reason that both studies benefited from the participants of both intermediate and advanced levels. Being at the advanced level and exposed to more input in L2 over a long period might bring about the students' independence from their mother tongue (Butzcamm, 2003) while writing in English which, in turn, might lead to the reduction of the correlation between L1 and L2 writing skills. Another source of variability might be that they scrutinized different first languages from the present study.

According to Cummins (1979a, p. 121), the amount of interdependence between L1 and L2 skills or cognitive/academic language proficiencies (CALPs) is a factor of the amount of similarity and difference between the structures of those languages as "CALP will be less active and effective when the L1 and the L2 are very dissimilar." In a similar vein, Kohro's (2009) investigation revealed different outcomes as he claimed there was no correlation between the total scores achieved from Japanese and English narrative essays ($r=.30$, $p>.05$). Except for investigating a different first language, this study employed a macro-level analytical framework based on Labov and Waletzky's (as cited in Kohro, 2009) narrative theory to rate the essays. However, the present study enjoyed a micro-level analytical framework of IELTS task 2 writing band descriptors. The most important question that arises is if the analytical frameworks at different levels may spawn any effects on the correlation between L1 and L2 skills or not, which needs several pieces of new research to be clarified. Meanwhile, researchers should bear in mind that "the quality of writing assessment is to a great extent

dependent upon the criteria used" (Ghanbari, Barati, & Moinzadeh, 2012, p.86).

Inspecting the possible correlation between Persian and English writing skills as the current study, Mirzaee and Marzban (2016) and Rashidi and Alimorad Dastkhezr (2009) also achieved different results. Mirzaee and Marzban reported that the total scores obtained from the Persian narrative, descriptive, and expository essays were not significantly correlated with the scores obtained from the English ones ($r=-.0420$, $p>.05$). This dissimilarity from the present study may not be attributed to the participants' mother tongue, i.e., Persian; however, it might be owing to the different genres that they put under scrutiny. Besides, the participants of their study might have had different genre knowledge from the participants of the current investigation. Since "genre knowledge is multi-faceted, having linguistic, social and disciplinary levels," the participants needed to employ various resources placed in their genre knowledge to fulfill the aim of different target essay genres (Uzun, 2017, p. 154). On top of them, genre knowledge may be a contributing factor determining or predicting the quality of writing performance (Lu, as cited in Uzun, 2017) or even improving it (Hoogeven & Gelderen, as cited in Uzun, 2017). Last but not least, Rashidi and Alimorad Dastkhezr also found no meaningful correlation between Persian and English argumentative writings ($r=.18$, $p>.05$); divergence of their results from the current study's might also be due to the different semi-macro-level scoring scale they utilized to rate the essays.

A part of the findings to the second question of the study illustrated that the means of TSs obtained from Persian argumentative and descriptive essays were meaningfully higher than the mean of TSs obtained from English argumentative essays. This result confirmed the findings of the studies conducted by Javadi-Safa et al. (2013) and Ziahosseiny and Derakhshan (2006). They also found that the mean of the total scores for Persian essays was higher than the one for the English writings. According to Javadi-Safa et

al., it was not surprising because Persian was the participants' mother tongue, and their command over it seemed to be mostly unrivaled while their L2 proficiency was at the intermediate level. On top of that, the lower mean of scores for argumentative essays might be because not only did the participants have to deal with L2, but they also had to employ their reasoning to do the possible burdensome argumentation that is distinctive in different cultures (Uysal, 2012). Another part of the findings to the second question displayed that the mean of TSs obtained from English descriptive essays was significantly superior to the mean of TSs obtained from English argumentative essays. Although not significantly, the mean of TSs obtained from Persian descriptive essays was higher than the mean of TSs obtained from Persian argumentative essays.

The participants' better performance in their descriptive essays than their argumentative ones might be due to the possibility that the responsible faculties for reasoning and description possibly worked differently in the participants' brains, and the argumentation faculty, as it turned out, was beaten hands down by the description one. Besides, many researchers (e.g., Ka-Kan-Dee, 2015; Saito, 2010; Wingate, 2012) confirmed that argumentative essay seems to be the most challenging genre for EFL learners as it is a complicated activity in which the writers adopt a stance on a disputable topic and try to persuade the reader to accept their outlooks by giving reasons and supporting ideas (Anker, as cited in Saito, 2010). Finally, the last part of the findings to the second question showed that the mean of TSs obtained from English descriptive essays was, surprisingly, higher than the means of TSs obtained from Persian descriptive and argumentative essays; however, the differences were trivial and not significant. Such an unexpected finding might be a result of different a priori instructions the participants received on Persian and English paragraph and advanced essay writings (Rashidi & Alimorad Dastkhezr, 2009). Nonetheless, a separate piece of research is needed to confirm the genuine source and explanation of such a finding. In sum,

considering that L1 and L2 writing skills originated from a CUP and interrelated L1 and L2 CALPs (Cummins, 1979 a, b, 1980), it could be true that the essence of the CUP and CALPs was *genre-sensitive* resulting in different means of TSs.

Conclusion

Through a holistic examination of the outcomes of the present research, it can be cautiously concluded that Iranian senior MA TEFL students' significantly-correlated Persian and English argumentative and descriptive writing skills provided some support for the existence of a Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) in the learners' brains. Those with a more developed Persian writing skill had a better English writing quality. Also, for those participants whose Persian writing was not strengthened enough, their English writing was under-developed. The participants' writing skills were a part of L1 and L2 Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiencies (CALPs), which were considered as the surface structures of the CUP. Furthermore, it can possibly be rounded off that genre played a filter-like role for those L1 and L2 CALPs, out of each of which two writing abilities for argumentative and descriptive essays with different levels of strength emerged (Figure 2). So, the differences in the mean scores obtained for descriptive and argumentative essays showed that the participants' CUP and Persian and English CALPs were genre-sensitive, which, to the researchers' best knowledge, was assumed for the first time in the present study.
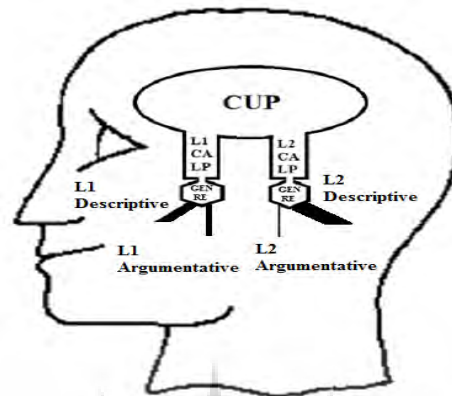
Figure 2.
The Genre-based Version of Cummins's (1980) Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP)

As depicted in Figure 2, L2 argumentative writing CALP was the thinnest or the least powerful. It might have been the result of the participants' simultaneous dealing with reasoning and parameters of L2 while writing their English argumentative essays. L1 descriptive and argumentative writing CALPs were bolder and stronger than L2 argumentative writing CALP. This seemed to make sense as the participants had more command over their mother tongue than L2. L1 descriptive writing CALP was also a bit thicker than L1 argumentative writing CALP as the participants seemed to be stronger in description than argumentation even in their mother tongue. Last but not least, L2 descriptive writing CALP was the boldest of all. It was stronger than its expected untapped version because it might have been manipulated and strengthened by the a priori instruction the participants received. Finally, consolidating the results regarding the hypothesis of genre-sensitive CUP and L1 and L2 CALPs and the possible contributing factors to this phenomenon, such as a priori instruction, certainly warrants some more pieces of focused and meticulous research.

Implications

One of the problems Iranian EFL university students encounter is their weakness in L2 writing (Javadi-Safa, 2018). A factor accounting for this shortcoming might be the assigned monolingual syllabus design, which has been cast doubt upon (Hall & Cook, 2012). In the context of Iran or probably many other countries in which English has the role of a second/foreign language, monolingual instruction has been considered superior as the educational system is based on the L1-L2 separation approach of instruction. However, the found interdependence between Persian and English essays in the current study doubts the separationist trend. Meanwhile, it supports Cummins's common underlying proficiency, which contains interrelated L1 and L2 cognitive/academic language proficiencies that help each other's development (Cummins, 2005). This, in turn, backs the dual-language approach in which teachers can benefit from the students' mother tongue while instructing L2 skills (Cummins, 2005). As exemplified by Cummins, in the context of Turkey, Eglish writing instruction not only developed English writing skill but also it led to the improvement of Turkish writing skill.

Likewise, as Kobayashi and Rinnert (2013, p.442) put it, " L2 writing is closely interrelated with writing in other languages." Therefore, it is proposed that to teach L2 writing to Iranian EFL learners, syllabus and materials designers work on *dual-language combined syllabuses and textbooks* having both L1 and L2 writing principles to be taught through students' mother tongue and the foreign language they are learning. Then, based on those syllabuses and textbooks, teachers can have the learners employ some of the applicable L1 writing knowledge to the task of L2 essays to facilitate and improve EFL learners' L2 writing (Sadeghi & Maleki, 2015). Also, teachers can employ awareness-raising techniques to inform and familiarize EFL learners with similarities between L1 and L2 writing skills, which may ameliorate the learners' first and second language writing performances concurrently. Utilizing those techniques may assure L2 learners that L2

writing is not a pain in the neck and can be simplified through being taught in their mother tongue as well.

Another problem with Iranian EFL university students is their weaker performance in some genres, such as argumentative than others like descriptive (Sadeghi & Maleki, 2015). This might be due to the learners experiencing difficulty in finding suitable words and grammatical structures to meet the purpose of a specific text type and achieve the expected result (Rahman, 2011). One of the most important findings of the present study was the significant role of genre in the findings obtained from Persian and English argumentative and descriptive writings. Syllabus designers, for instance, had better create distinct combined syllabuses for argumentative and descriptive essays. They need to spend more time and effort on the syllabuses for some problem-prone CALPs such as the one related to writing argumentative essays in order to devise the syllabuses that may ease the task of argumentation in L2. Teachers can also contribute to the learners' understanding of text types and their features by having a genre-based approach towards teaching L2 writing (Abbaszadeh, 2013). In this approach, the specific characteristics of each genre will be taught to the students by analyzing the samples of each genre separately. As Viriya and Wasanasomsithi (2017, p. 11) pointed out, " Genre awareness approach substantially benefited students by enabling them to be aware of how texts were shaped for different communication purposes."

Limitations and Further Suggestions

Every piece of research is bound to some restraints, and this study was not an exception. Concerning the participants of the study, it was not possible to check their homogeneity regarding their Persian language proficiency as there was not such a useful test available in the context of Iran for Persian native speakers. Though it would take a lot of time and expertise, designing a Persian language proficiency test is recommended, and it might be the first in the field. Besides, this study focused only on the micro-level investigation of

the essays. However, if it had been possible to have both micro- and macro-level analyses, then it would have been clarified whether the level of analysis might have had any impacts on the obtained results or not. As Uysal (2012) put it, at the macro level, the logic of argumentation is cultural-based, and first language rhetorical patterns may affect L2 written argumentation. He also added that particular analytical frameworks such as Toulmin or Hinkel's models of reasoning were needed (as cited in Uysal, 2012). However, due to the scope limitations, this study could only benefit from a micro-level analytical framework. So, it is suggested that an investigation be carried out by using different analytical frameworks at different levels to check their possible effects on the findings. Last but not least, the researchers could not take into account more than two genres in the present study. Other genres might lead to obtaining different results under the same conditions due to their distinctive features. Therefore, carrying out research using a variety of genres is recommended to shed more light on the role of genre in L2 writing by checking whether they produce the same results supporting common underlying proficiency and its genre-sensitive nature or not.

References

Abbaszadeh, Z. (2013). Genre-based approach and second language syllabus design. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 84*, 1879-1884.

Abu-Akel, A. (1997). On reading-writing relationships in first and foreign languages. *JALT Journal, 19*, 198-216.

Ansarimoghaddam, S., & Tan, B. H. (2014). Undergraduates' experiences and attitudes of writing in L1 and English. *GEMA Online® Journal of Language Studies*, *14*(1), 7-28.

Bradford-Watts, K. (2003). What is genre and why is it useful for language teachers? *JALT*, *27*(5), 6-8. Retrieved July 18, 2018 from https://publications.org/tlt/articles/2033/05/ index

British Council, IDP: IELTS Australia, & the University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations (n.d.). IELTS writing task 2 band descriptors (public version). Retrieved May 09, 2017 from https://www.ielts.org/-/media/pdfs/writing-band-descriptors-task-2.ashx?la=en

Buzcamm, W. (2003). We only learn language once. The role of mother tongue in FL classrooms: Death of a dogma. *Language Learning Journal, 28*, 29-39.

Carson, J. E., Carrell, P. L., Silberstein, S., Kroll, B., & Kuehn, P. A. (1990). Reading-writing relationships in the first and second language. *TESOL Quarterly, 24,* 254-266.

Cho, H. Y. (2010). Bi-directional rhetorical transfer in the writing of Korean learners of English: A case study of three groups. *Second Language Studies, 28* (2), 49-95.

Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the theory of syntax*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.

Cumming, A. (2001). Learning to write in a second language: Two decades of research. *International Journal of English Studies*, *1*(2), 1-23.

Cummins, J. (1979a). Cognitive/academic language proficiency, linguistic interdependence, the optimum age question, and some other matters. *Working Papers on Bilingualism, 19*, 121-129.

Cummins, J. (1979b). Linguistic interdependence and the educational development of bilingual children. *Review of Educational Research, 49*, 222-251.

Cummins, J. (1980). The construct of language proficiency in bilingual education. In J. E. Alatis (Ed.), *Current issues in bilingual education* (pp. 81-103). Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

Cummins, J. (2000). *Language, power, and pedagogy: Bilingual children in the crossfire* (Vol. 23). UK: Multilingual Matters.

Cummins, J. (2005). Teaching for cross-language transfer in dual language education: Possibilities and pitfalls. *TESOL Symposium on Dual*

Language Education: Teaching and Learning Two Languages in the EFL Setting. Bogazici University, Istanbul, Turkey, 23 September.

Cummins, J., &. Yee-Fun, E. M. (2007). Academic language: What is it, and how do we acquire it? In J. Cummins & C. Davison (Eds.), *International handbook of English language teaching* (Vol. 15, pp.797-810). Boston, MA: Springer.

Dweik, B. S., & Abu Al Hommos, M. D. (2007). The effect of Arabic proficiency on the English writing of bilingual-Jordanian students. Retrieved July 08, 2018 from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED497505.pdf

Fu, J. (2011). *The Influence of gender and culture on first and second language writing of Chinese and Japanese-speaking university students* (Doctoral dissertation, Teaching & Learning University of Toronto). Retrieved July 10, 2018 from https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/29924/1/Fu_Jing_201106_PhD _thesis.pdf

Fujii, Y. (2012). The effects of L1 on L2 writing and translation: A case study. *Journal of Modern Languages, 22*(1), 32-44.

Fukuda, E. (2011). Relationships of L1 and L2 reading and writing skills. *The Bulletin of the Graduate School, Soka University, 33,* 353-379.

Ghanbari, B., Barati, H., & Moinzadeh, A. (2012). Rating scales revisited: EFL writing assessment context of Iran under scrutiny. *Language Testing in Asia, 2*(1), 83-100.

Guo, M., Liu, J., & Chen, P. (2014). A case study on the effect of negative Chinese transfer on English writing. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 4*(9), 1941-1947.

Hall, G., & Cook, G. (2012). Own-language use in language teaching and learning. *Language Teaching, 45*(3), 271-308.

He, X., & Niao, L. (2015). A probe into the negative writing transfer of Chinese college students. *English Language Teaching, 8* (10), 21-29.

Hyland, K. (2003). *Second language writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge university press.

Ito, F. (2009). The threshold to transfer writing skills from L1 to L2. *The Bulletin of the Kanto-ko Shin-etsu English Language Education Society*, *23*, 1-10.

Javadi-Safa, A. (2018). A brief overview of key isuues in second language writing teaching and research. *International Journal of Educatin and Lieracy Studies, 6*(2), 15-25.

Javadi-Safa, A., Vahdany, F., & Khalili Sabet, M. (2013). A study of the relationship between Persian and English writing skills among adult EFL learners in Iran. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature, 2*, 43-52.

Ka-Kan-Dee, M. (2015). *Analysing EFL students' argumentative writing difficulties and teaching strategies employed by lecturers in selected universities in Thailand* (Doctoral dissertation, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Thailand). Retrieved July 12, 2018 from eprints.usm.my/31890/1/Maleerat_Ka-Kan-Dee_(HJ).pdf

Kim, Y., & Yoon, H. (2014). The use of L1 as a writing strategy in L2 writing tasks. *Gema Online: Journal of Language Studies, 14*(3), 33-49.

Kmyabi, G. (2016). Analyzing contrastive features in English and Persian argumentative writings. *International Journal of Research Studies in Education, 5*(2), 13-28.

Kobayashi, H., & Rinnert, C. (2013). Second language writing: Is it a separate entity. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 22*(4), 442-443.

Kohro, Y. (2009). A contrastive study between L1 and L2 compositions: Focusing on global text structure, composition quality, and variables in L2 writing. *Dialogue, 8*, 1-19.

Marzban, A., & Esmaeelnia Jalali, F. (2016). The interrelationship among L1 writing skills, L2 writing skills, and L2 proficiency of Iranian EFL

Learners at different proficiency levels. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *6*(7), 1364-1371.

Mirzaee, M., & Marzban, A. (2016). An Investigation of the interdependence between writing in Persian as L1 and English as L2 on female intermediate students: Language problem or writing problem. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *6*(6), 1229-1235.

Moqimipour, K., & Shahrokhi, M. (2015). The impact of text genre on Iranian intermediate EFL students' writing errors: An error analysis perspective. *International Education Studies, 8*(3), 122-137.

Moulavi Nafchi, A., Safarpoor, L., & Ghorbanimoghadam, R. (2014). The effect of Iranian students' English language proficiency in writing on composing in Persian. *International Journal of English and Education, 3*(4), 46-56.

Mu, C., & Carrington, S. B. (2007). An investigation of three Chinese students' English writing strategies. *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language-EJ, 11*(1), 1-23.

Nickerson, A. K. (2018). *Teaching genre for transfer: Rhetorical genre studies in a secondary English classroom* (Doctoral dissertation, Middle Tennessee State University). Retrieved July 12, 2018 from https://jewlscholar.mtsu.edu/xmlui/handle /mtsu/5664

Pallant, J. (2007). *SPSS survival manual: A step by step guide to data analysis using SPSS for windows* (3rd ed.). England: Open University Press.

Rahman, M. M. (2011). Genre-based writing instruction: Implications in ESP classroom. *English for Specific Purposes World*, *33*(11), 1-9.

Rashidi, N., & Alimorad Dastkhezr, Z. (2009). A comparison of English and Persian organizational patterns in the argumentative writing of Iranian EFL students. *JoLIE, 2*, 131-152.

Reiff, M. J., & Bawarshi, A. (2011). Tracing discursive resources: How students use prior genre knowledge to negotiate new writing contexts in first-year composition. *Written Communication*, *28*(3), 312-337.

Rounsaville, A. (2012). Selecting Genres for transfer: The role of uptake in students' antecedent genre knowledge. *Composition Forum, 26*,1-16. Retrieved May 17, 2018 from http://compositionforum.com/issue/26/selecting-genres-uptake.php

Sadeghi, B., & Maleki, M. (2015). Improving the ability of writing argumentative essays of Iranian EFL learners by raising awareness of rhetoric transfer. *Cumhuriyet Science Journal (CSJ), 36*(3), 1541-1559.

Saffari, N., Noordin, S. M., Sivapalan, S., & Zahedpisheh, N. (2017). Transfer of mother tongue rhetoric among undergraduate students in second language writing. *International Education Studies*, *10*(11), 23-32.

Saito, S. (2010). *An analysis of argumentative essays of Thai third-year English major instructed by the integrated process-genre approach* (Master's Thesis, Srinakharinwirot University, Bangkok). Retrieved July 12, 2018 from thesis.swu.ac.th/swuthesis/Eng(M.A.)/ Siwaporn_S.pdf

Schoonen, R. (2019). Are reading and writing building on the same skills? The relationship between reading and writing in L1 and EFL. *Reading and Writing*, *32*(3), 511-535.

Schoonen, R., Gelderen, A. V., Glopper, K. D., Hulstijn, J., Simis, A., Snellings, P., & Stevenson, M. (2003). First language and second language writing: The role of linguistic knowledge, speed of processing, and metacognitive knowledge. *Language Learning*, *53*(1), 165-202.

Shabani, M., Tahriri, A., & Farzaneh Ardebili, S. (2016). The impact of first and second languages on Azerbaijani EFL learners' writing ability. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies, 4* (1), 24-31.

Shokrpour, N., & Fallahzadeh, M. H. (2007). A survey of the students and interns' EFL writing problems in Shiraz University of Medical Sciences. *The Asian EFL Journal Quarterly, 9*(1), 147-163.

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (2001). *Oxford quick placement test*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Uysal, H. H. (2012). Argumentation across L1 and L2 writing: Exploring cultural influences and transfer issues. *Vigo International Journal of Applied Linguistics, 9*, 133-159.

Uzun, K. (2017). The relationship between genre knowledge and the writing performance. *Journal of Teaching English for Specific and Academic Purposes*, *5*(2), 153-162.

Viriya, C., & Wasanasomsithi, P. (2017). The effect of the genre awareness approach on development of writing ability. *International Forum of Teaching and Studies, 13* (1), 11-22.

Weijen, D. V., Bergh, H. V. D., Rijlaarsdam, G., & Sanders, T. (2009). L1 use during L2 writing: An empirical study of a complex phenomenon. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 18*, 235-250.

Wingate, U. (2012). 'Argument!' helping students understand what essay writing is about. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, *11*(2), 145-154.

Zare'ee, A., & Farvardin, M. T. (2009). Comparison of university-level EFL learners' linguistic and rhetorical patterns as reflected in their L1 and L2 writing. *Novitas-ROYAL, 3*(2), 143-155.

Ziahosseiny, S. M., & Derakhshan, K. (2006). Transfer of the first language of foreign language writing: A contrastive rhetoric study of English & Farsi. *Quarterly Journal of Humanities, Alzahra University*, *16*(58), 75-91.

Appendix A
IELTS task 2 writing band descriptors (public version)

Band	Task response	Coherence and cohesion	Lexical resource	Grammatical range and accuracy
9	• fully addresses all parts of the task • presents a fully developed position in answer to the question with relevant, fully extended and well supported ideas	• uses cohesion in such a way that it attracts no attention • skilfully manages paragraphing	• uses a wide range of vocabulary with very natural and sophisticated control of lexical features; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips'	• uses a wide range of structures with full flexibility and accuracy; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips'
8	• sufficiently addresses all parts of the task • presents a well-developed response to the question with relevant, extended and supported ideas	• sequences information and ideas logically • manages all aspects of cohesion well • uses paragraphing sufficiently and appropriately	• uses a wide range of vocabulary fluently and flexibly to convey precise meanings • skilfully uses uncommon lexical items but there may be occasional inaccuracies in word choice and collocation • produces rare errors in spelling and/or word formation	• uses a wide range of structures • the majority of sentences are error-free • makes only very occasional errors or inappropriacies
7	• addresses all parts of the task • presents a clear position throughout the response • presents, extends and supports main ideas, but there may be a tendency to over-generalise and/or supporting ideas may lack focus	• logically organises information and ideas; there is clear progression throughout • uses a range of cohesive devices appropriately although there may be some under-/over-use • presents a clear central topic within each paragraph	• uses a sufficient range of vocabulary to allow some flexibility and precision • uses less common lexical items with some awareness of style and collocation • may produce occasional errors in word choice, spelling and/or word formation	• uses a variety of complex structures • produces frequent error-free sentences • has good control of grammar and punctuation but may make a few errors
6	• addresses all parts of the task although some parts may be more fully covered than others • presents a relevant position although the conclusions may become unclear or repetitive • presents relevant main ideas but some may be inadequately developed/unclear	• arranges information and ideas coherently and there is a clear overall progression • uses cohesive devices effectively, but cohesion within and/or between sentences may be faulty or mechanical • may not always use referencing clearly or appropriately • uses paragraphing, but not always logically	• uses an adequate range of vocabulary for the task • attempts to use less common vocabulary but with some inaccuracy • makes some errors in spelling and/or word formation, but they do not impede communication	• uses a mix of simple and complex sentence forms • makes some errors in grammar and punctuation but they rarely reduce communication
5	• addresses the task only partially; the format may be inappropriate in places • expresses a position but the development is not always clear and there may be no conclusions drawn • presents some main ideas but these are limited and not sufficiently developed; there may be irrelevant detail	• presents information with some organisation but there may be a lack of overall progression • makes inadequate, inaccurate or over-use of cohesive devices • may be repetitive because of lack of referencing and substitution • may not write in paragraphs, or paragraphing may be inadequate	• uses a limited range of vocabulary, but this is minimally adequate for the task • may make noticeable errors in spelling and/or word formation that may cause some difficulty for the reader	• uses only a limited range of structures • attempts complex sentences but these tend to be less accurate than simple sentences • may make frequent grammatical errors and punctuation may be faulty; errors can cause some difficulty for the reader
4	• responds to the task only in a minimal way or the answer is tangential; the format may be inappropriate • presents a position but this is unclear • presents some main ideas but these are difficult to identify and may be repetitive, irrelevant or not well supported	• presents information and ideas but these are not arranged coherently and there is no clear progression in the response • uses some basic cohesive devices but these may be inaccurate or repetitive • may not write in paragraphs or their use may be confusing	• uses only basic vocabulary which may be used repetitively or which may be inappropriate for the task • has limited control of word formation and/or spelling; errors may cause strain for the reader	• uses only a very limited range of structures with only rare use of subordinate clauses • some structures are accurate but errors predominate, and punctuation is often faulty
3	• does not adequately address any part of the task • does not express a clear position • presents few ideas, which are largely undeveloped or irrelevant	• does not organise ideas logically • may use a very limited range of cohesive devices, and those used may not indicate a logical relationship between ideas	• uses only a very limited range of words and expressions with very limited control of word formation and/or spelling • errors may severely distort the message	• attempts sentence forms but errors in grammar and punctuation predominate and distort the meaning
2	• barely responds to the task • does not express a position • may attempt to present one or two ideas but there is no development	• has very little control of organisational features	• uses an extremely limited range of vocabulary; essentially no control of word formation and/or spelling	• cannot use sentence forms except in memorised phrases
1	• answer is completely unrelated to the task	• fails to communicate any message	• can only use a few isolated words	• cannot use sentence forms at all
0	• does not attend • does not attempt the task in any way • writes a totally memorised response			

Appendix B
Samples of argumentative and descriptive essays in English and Persian along with the scores given by the raters
1. Descriptive essays in English and Persian

Task 1 A

Gender: m   Age: 24   Education: MA student

1. Write a descriptive essay in a formal style with at least 250 words (including function and content words) using the topic below. You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

"More and more people are relying on their private car as their major means of transportation. Describe some of the problems overreliance on cars can cause, and suggest at least one possible solution."

Example: 'Overreliance on private cars can cause many serious problems.' includes 9 words.

Dear student: No dictionary use or consultation is allowed.

In my opinion everything has their own advantages and disadvantages, but sometimes disadvantages are more important to consider because of their negative effects on human lives. Actually about the problem of using private car I think the main point is pollution. Pollution threats every aspects of these days lives especially human health. It can cause several dangerous diseases. If we think of such a serious problems we can easily persuade ourselves to use public services for transportation.

Consequently I think the disadvantages here are much more than the advantages, and any common sence could understand it clearly. If we want to save our generation we should be careful about such a matters.

	Task Response	Coherence & Cohesion	Lexical Resource	Grammatical Range & Accuracy	Total Score
Rater 1	3/ 9	4/ 9	5/ 9	4/ 9	4/ 9
Rater 2	4/ 9	4/ 9	5/ 9	5/ 9	4.5/ 9

	Task Response	Coherence & Cohesion	Lexical Resource	Grammatical Range & Accuracy	Total Score
Rater 1	4/ 9	4/ 9	4/ 9	5/ 9	4.25/ 9
Rater 2	5/ 9	4/ 9	5/ 9	6/ 9	5/ 9

2. Argumentative essays in English and Persian

Task 2.A

Gender: m   Age: 24   Education: MA student

2. Write an argumentative essay in a formal style with at least 250 words (including function and content words) using the topic below. You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

"Do you agree or disagree that a person should never make an important decision alone?"

Example: "I agree that a person should never make an important decision alone." includes 12 words.

Dear student: No dictionary use or consultation is allowed.

I want to talk about decision making with the help of others. Decision making is a very important factor in our lives which needs a lot of attention. Because some decisions determine our future. Therefore, we should consult with experienced people.

For example, when we want to select our major we have to get help from experts to choose the best major that build our future. Or when we want to get married we shouldn't make decision alone.

To sum up, I agree that every persons should take some advices from others people in order to have the best choice in different choices.

	Task Response	Coherence & Cohesion	Lexical Resource	Grammatical Range & Accuracy	Total Score
Rater 1	3/ 9	4/ 9	5/ 9	5/ 9	4.25/ 9
Rater 2	4/ 9	4/ 9	5/ 9	5/ 9	4.5/ 9

Task 2 B

	Task Response	Coherence & Cohesion	Lexical Resource	Grammatical Range & Accuracy	Total Score
Rater 1	6/ 9	5/ 9	6/ 9	6/ 9	5.75/ 9
Rater 2	6/ 9	6/ 9	6/ 9	7/ 9	6.25/ 9