

The impact of in-text feedback vs. rubric-based feedback on writing performance and self-efficacy of Iranian intermediate EFL learners**Article info****Article Type:**

Original Research

Authors:Mandana Dalvand¹Mahdieh Shafipoor²**Abstract**

The primary aim of this quasi-experimental study was to delve into the contrasting effects of In-text Feedback and Rubric-based Feedback on the writing performance and self-efficacy of Iranian Intermediate English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. To do so, 120 intermediate female English language learners between the ages of 12 and 16 were recruited based on non-random convenience sampling method from an English language institute to take Oxford Placement Test (OPT) to ensure a homogenized group of participants. Then, 60 participants whose scores fell within one standard deviation below and above the mean OPT score were recruited. The selected participants were randomly assigned to one of three groups: the in-text group, the rubric-based group, and the control group, with each group consisting of 20 students. Each group also took writing pre-test and completed self-efficacy questionnaire before the treatment. Next, the participants engaged in the assigned writing activities which were similar and received relevant feedback types for ten sessions. After the treatment, all groups took writing post-test and completed the self-efficacy questionnaire again. The results revealed that both in-text feedback and rubric-based feedback had a statistically significant effect on the writing performance of the learners. Additionally, there was a significant difference in the effect of in-text feedback versus rubric-based feedback on writing performance. In terms of self-efficacy, both types of feedback showed a statistically significant effect. However, there was no significant difference between the effects of in-text feedback and rubric-based feedback on self-efficacy. The findings of the study carry important implications for various stakeholders involved in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, including learners, teachers, language centers, and teacher trainers.

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1. Introduction

English has become an indispensable skill across the globe, and it is recognized as an international language that cuts across various disciplines (Rao, 2019). Writing presents a formidable challenge for learners in terms of language skills (Cole & Feng, 2015). It is widely acknowledged as an intricate and demanding process, often considered the most difficult aspect of language learning (Brown, 2007). Developing and organizing original ideas within the appropriate context adds to the complexity of the issue (Richards & Schmidt, 2013). Consequently, many students exhibit negative attitudes towards writing and lack of motivation to improve their skills, as observed by Price and Kadi-Hanifi (2011).

In addition, writing, among the four language skills, has been unjustly neglected, requiring greater attention from instructors (Riadil & Nur, 2020). Weal (2013) posited that writing poses greater challenges for English learners acquiring it as a second or foreign language. At various educational levels, students are tasked with writing essays and reports as part of their curriculum in foreign and second language learning (Bailey & Huang, 2011).

The complexity of the writing skill is often cited as a reason for learners' struggles, as noted by Alfaki (2015). Salaxiddinovna (2022) reported that both English language learners and their teachers face significant challenges in developing writing skills. Similarly, Eryilmaz and Yesilyurt, (2020) unequivocally described writing as arduous work for any English language learner (ELL). Many students lament their lack of ideas and inability to produce engaging texts, even in their native language (Al-Mukdad, 2019; Pablo & Lasaten, 2018).

Additionally, Xiaoxiao and Yan (2010) highlighted the multifaceted nature of writing in English, encompassing skills such as selecting appropriate topics for specific audiences, generating logical and precise ideas, organizing rich and relevant content, and employing accurate language expressions. These skills demand independent thinking abilities, including classification, evaluation, and synthesis. Hyland (2003) further emphasized the additional elements that contribute to the difficulty of writing and mentioned that mastery in writing involves considering mechanics, content, structure, and style when writing in a second or foreign language. Graham and Harris (2005) described the components of writing performance as content, organization,

vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics and emphasized strengthening each of these subskills undoubtedly bolsters writing performance.

Extensive research in this realm clearly indicated that offering students feedback on their writing can play a vital role in improving their writing performance (Annisa & Gusnawaty, 2024; Rahman, 2017; Szlachta et al., 2023). English language learners (ELLs) greatly benefit from writing practice and the invaluable revisions they make upon submitting their written work. Consequently, the final draft of learners' writing can serve as a tangible representation of their growth. Moreover, the nature of the feedback the students receive, exerts a significant impact on their overall writing performance (Mallahi, & Saadat, 2020).

A comprehensive review of the literature has revealed that a considerable body of research has investigated the effectiveness of corrective feedback (CF) in enhancing students' writing performances (Mao et al., 2024; Nagode et al., 2014; Sarvestani & Pishkar, 2015). Most studies in this domain consistently demonstrated the helpfulness and efficacy of the feedback as a tool for improving writing proficiency. A series of recent studies (Brooks et al., 2021; Cheng & Zhang, 2021; Huisman et al., 2019; Mahmoudi & Bugra, 2020) specifically delved into the effectiveness of different types of CF in supporting ELLs in their quest to enhance writing performance. However, despite these efforts, the research community remained engaged in ongoing debates and discussions concerning the interpretation of research findings and the overall benefits of CF.

Moreover, self-efficacy emerges as a significant motivational factor examined by educational psychologists (Lane et al., 2004; Pajares & Valiante, 1999; Shell et al., 1995). Writing self-efficacy refers to individuals' appraisal of their composition, grammar, usage, and technical abilities in successfully completing writing tasks (Pajares & Valiante, 2001). According to Bandura (1986), self-efficacy pertains to learners' confidence in their capacity to succeed, learn new material, and accomplish tasks to the required standard. He also added students with high self-efficacy possess problem-solving strategies that have proven effective in the past, attributing success to their efforts and acknowledging mistakes as part of the learning process. In contrast, low-self-efficacious learners exert less effort, fearing that any attempt will reveal their incompetence. They also opt for less challenging tasks to minimize errors.

Following an extensive examination of research literature pertaining to the improvement of writing performance through various types of feedback (Alnasser & Alyousef, 2015; Rahimi, 2021; Wahyuni, 2017), the researchers in this study identified an opportunity to contribute new findings to the existing body of knowledge. Specifically, the researchers aimed to explore the impact of in-text feedback and rubric-based feedback on the writing performance and self-efficacy of Iranian intermediate English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners—an aspect that had remained unexplored in the previous studies. Hence, this study was conducted and the following research questions were posed:

RQ1: Does in-text feedback have any statistically significant effect on the writing performance of Iranian intermediate EFL learners?

RQ2: Does rubric-based feedback have any statistically significant effect on the writing performance of Iranian intermediate EFL learners?

RQ3: Is there any statistically significant difference between the effects of in-text feedback vs. rubric-based feedback on the writing performance of Iranian intermediate EFL learners?

RQ4: Does in-text feedback have any statistically significant effect on the self-efficacy of Iranian intermediate EFL learners?

RQ5: Does rubric-based feedback have any statistically significant effect on the self-efficacy of Iranian intermediate EFL learners?

RQ6: Is there any statistically significant difference between the effects of in-text feedback vs. rubric-based feedback on the self-efficacy of Iranian intermediate EFL learners?

2. Review of the Related Literature

The realm of writing assignments presented a formidable challenge for English students, and it was imperative to provide them with substantial support to enhance their skills. The demands of their future professions necessitated proficiency and precision in writing. Over the past five decades, a variety of pedagogical approaches to teaching L1/L2 writing have emerged, each representing a distinct perspective on the nature of writing, with the aim of helping students enhance their writing skills

(Annisa & Gusnawaty, 2024; Rahman, 2017; Szlachta et al., 2023). These instructional methods reflect the significant advancements made in L1/L2 writing situations.

In the realm of teaching writing to English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students, the function of feedback, its significance, and impact have been central concerns in academic research (Paltridge, 2004; Reichelt, 1999). Scholars and researchers have widely recognized the crucial roles the feedback plays in the writing process, as evident from the vast body of research exploring various forms of feedback and their effects on student writing (Annisa & Gusnawaty, 2024; Szlachta et al., 2023).

Receiving feedback allows students to become aware of specific areas that require improvement and refinement in their written texts. As highlighted by Carless (2006), students who receive feedback during the writing process develop a deeper understanding of their progress and gain valuable guidance on how to enhance their work. Moreover, feedback has the potential to influence students' emotions and behaviors regarding their writing, as well as guide their attention toward writing goals. It serves as a bridge between students' current abilities and expected performance, thus assessing their task achievement and effectiveness in fulfilling their writing objectives (Brookhart, 2003; Schwartz & White, 2000).

Also, self-efficacy beliefs play a fundamental role in shaping human agency, influencing how individuals perceive their ability to perform specific tasks (Bandura, 1997; 2001). These beliefs have a significant impact on various cognitive, motivational, affective, and decision-making processes that determine an individual's actions and outcomes (Bandura, 1997; Bandura & Locke, 2003). Self-efficacy beliefs instill a sense of control and determine individuals' belief in their own capabilities, their resilience in the face of challenges, their emotional well-being, and the choices they make during critical moments (Bandura & Locke, 2003).

Several studies have investigated the impact of feedback on EFL learners' writing performance and self-efficacy. A study conducted by Dirkx et al. (2021) aimed to explore how instructors utilized feedback delivered as in-text comments compared to comments that referred to the rubric, and whether these feedback modalities could be used more effectively. The researchers investigated the nature, intensity, and

purpose of the feedback in these two modes. The findings revealed that there were nearly five times as many in-text comments as there were additional comments referring to the rubric. Moreover, the in-text comments were found to contain more process- and feed forward-oriented remarks. In a related study, Ferris (2006) examined the effects of written feedback on ESL learners' writing development. The findings showed that comprehensive corrective feedback that addressed both surface-level errors and higher-order concerns contributed to learners' improvement in writing quality. In another study, Carless (2006) investigated the impact of different types of feedback (direct corrective feedback, indirect corrective feedback, and praise) on students' writing performance. The results indicated that both types of corrective feedback were effective in improving students' writing, with direct corrective feedback leading to greater improvements in accuracy.

Similarly, Göçer and Şenel (2017) investigated the effectiveness of different types of feedback (direct correction, indirect correction, and metalinguistic feedback) on Turkish learners' written accuracy. The results indicated that metalinguistic feedback, which focused on explaining the underlying grammatical rules, had a positive impact on learners' accuracy. Furthermore, Derham et al. (2021) emphasized that in-text comments on feedback often focus primarily on the task without providing additional guidance. Also, their study highlighted the importance of considering linguistic characteristics that can promote self-regulation.

In summary, providing feedback is a crucial tool for enhancing the writing performance and self-efficacy of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. According to recent research (Annisa & Gusnawaty, 2024; Rahman, 2017; Szlachta et al., 2023), feedback that fosters student engagement, comprehension, and action is vital in promoting self-regulation and feedback literacy among students. However, more investigation is necessary to determine the most effective feedback modalities for enhancing EFL learners' writing proficiency and self-efficacy. As a result, the researchers in this study identified an opportunity to contribute new findings to the existing body of knowledge and aimed to explore the impact of in-text feedback and rubric-based feedback on the writing performance and self-efficacy of Iranian intermediate English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners—an aspect that have remained unexplored in previous studies, yet.

3. Methodology

3.1. Design

This study utilized a quasi-experimental design with two experimental groups and a control group, employing a pre-test, post-test design. This approach was deemed appropriate due to the limitations of selecting a large and randomly assigned sample from the population. Additionally, the study required the implementation of two distinct treatments. The use of pre-test and post-test measures enabled the assessment of changes in participants' self-efficacy and writing performance over time.

3.2. Participants

In this study 120 intermediate female English language learners between the ages of 12 and 16 from an English language institute in Shahr-e-Qods City were recruited non-randomly and following convenience sampling technique. To ensure a homogenized group of participants, the participants were selected based on their scores on the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) and finally 60 participants whose scores fell within one standard deviation below and above the mean OPT scores were selected. The selected participants were randomly assigned to one of the three groups: the in-text group, the rubric-based group, and the control group, each group consisting of 20 students.

3.3. Instruments

A range of meticulously selected instruments was employed to conduct the investigation comprehensively and gather reliable data. These instruments were carefully chosen to ensure the accuracy and effectiveness of the research methodology. The following instruments were utilized:

3.3.1. Oxford Placement Tests (OPT)

The Oxford Placement Test (OPT) served as the primary instrument for selecting 60 homogeneous participants. Developed by Oxford University Press and Cambridge ESOL, the OPT is a widely recognized and respected English language examination that offers teachers a reliable and efficient means of assessing students' language proficiency (Hill & Taylor as cited in Noroozi & Siyyari, 2019). With its straightforward administration and quick completion time of approximately 60 minutes,

the OPT was an ideal tool for placement tests and screening purposes in this research. As it assessed an individual's overall English proficiency and was considered a reliable measure, as evidenced by a high level of internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = .91). Furthermore, previous research had established good construct validity for the examination (Wistner et al., 2009 as cited in Al-Saadi, 2020).

3.3.2. Pre-test and Post-test

To assess the participants' writing performance, all groups were given a writing task centered on the topic of "characteristics of a successful language learner." This topic selection aligned with the study's focus on examining the participants' writing performance. Prior to the treatment sessions, as well as after the intervention, participants were requested to write an essay on this given topic.

To ensure the evaluation of the participants' writing was done reliably, two expert teachers were responsible for rating the essays. The rating process employed a scale specifically developed for assessing writing performance in IELTS Writing Task 2 by the University of Cambridge. This scale has been widely used and validated for evaluating writing proficiency in academic contexts. Furthermore, it was essential to establish the inter-rater reliability of the two raters.

3.3.3. Self-Efficacy Questionnaire

To assess the participants' self-efficacy, a self-efficacy questionnaire was utilized (Appendix A). This questionnaire incorporated the General Self-Efficacy Scale developed by Jerusalem and Schwarzer (1992). This scale served as a psychometric tool designed to measure individuals' optimism and their perceived ability to handle various challenging situations in life. It consisted of 10 Likert-scale items. Participants read each statement and indicated their level of agreement or disagreement, choosing from options such as "strongly disagree," "moderately disagree," "moderately agree," or "strongly agree." This response format allowed for a nuanced assessment of participants' self-efficacy beliefs.

The reliability analysis of the questionnaire, indicated by Cronbach's alpha, was 0.69 (Jerusalem & Schwarzer, 1992). This value reflected the internal consistency of the scale, indicating the extent to which the items in the questionnaire reliably measured the same construct.

3.4. Procedure

The study started by selecting participants from a pool of 120 intermediate English language learners. To ensure homogeneity among the participants, they took the Oxford Placement Test (OPT). The participants had a designated time of 60 minutes to complete the test, which consisted of 60 multiple-choice questions covering various aspects of the English language.

After scoring the test using the answer key, 60 students whose scores fell within one standard deviation above or below the mean were selected as participants in the study. This criterion ensured a representative sample of intermediate English language learners. The selected participants were then randomly assigned to one of three groups: two experimental groups and a control group. The inclusion of a control group allowed for the comparison of the experimental treatments' effects (Mackey & Gass, 2015). Subsequently, all participants took the self-efficacy questionnaire. This questionnaire aimed to assess the participants' optimism and their perceived ability to handle demanding situations.

As a pre-test, the participants were also given 20 minutes to prepare an essay on the topic of "characteristics of a good language student." The written assignments were evaluated using the writing scoring rubric developed by the University of Cambridge for IELTS Writing Task 2. Two teachers, with over ten years of teaching experience, assessed the essays based on the criteria outlined in the rubric.

In the first experimental group, in-text feedback group, the participants were asked to complete the designated writing assignments and the teacher applied text-processing program (Microsoft Word) to provide in-text feedback on digital text. This program technically offers two different options for in-text feedback, namely, comments (annotations) and track changes. In this study, text-progressing program were used and they provided the possibility to add comments next to the text. These comments were used to place a correction next to the text.

In the second experimental group, known as the rubric-based group, the participants were asked to complete the designated writing assignments similar to the first group. To control for the potential intervening effect of the error correction tool in Microsoft Word, participants in this group were required to write their essays in Microsoft Word and submit them electronically to their teacher. The teacher then

provided feedback on two specific aspects of each essay—coherence and cohesion, as well as task achievement—using the corresponding rubrics. The participants were given time to review the provided feedback before working on their next assignment.

In the control group, the participants also completed writing assignments similar to those in the first and second groups (See Appendix B). However, in this group, the teacher collected hard copies of their written work, and gave them some general feedback.

After ten sessions of the treatments, all the participants took a post-test, which mirrored the pre-test. Additionally, they completed the self-efficacy questionnaire once again to gauge any potential changes in their self-efficacy beliefs. The post-test essays were rated by the same two expert teachers who evaluated the pre-test assignments.

3.5. Data Analysis

To address the research questions and examine the potential changes in participants' writing performance and self-efficacy between the pre-and post-test, the researchers employed an independent-samples t-test. This statistical test assessed whether there was a statistically significant difference in the means of the two groups, allowing for a comparison of the participants' performance and self-efficacy scores before and after the treatment.

To ensure that the data met the assumption of normality, the researchers conducted a one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. This test examined whether the distribution of the data significantly deviated from a normal distribution.

Additionally, to address the third and sixth research questions, the researchers conducted a one-way ANOVA (analysis of variance) and Turkey's post hoc test. The one-way ANOVA examined the differences between multiple groups, specifically comparing the effects of different feedback modalities on participants' writing performance. The post hoc test further analyzed pairwise comparisons between the groups to identify specific differences. These analyses provided insights into the variations in writing performance among the different treatment groups.

4. Results

4.1. The Results of OPT

In order to select 60 homogenized participants, 120 learners who were at the intermediate level of English language proficiency took part in an Oxford Placement Test (OPT). Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation of this test.

Table 1.

The Results of OPT

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
OPT	120	30.00	42.00	35.8750	3.79421
Valid N (listwise)	120				

According to the results of the OPT ($M=35.87$ and $Std.=3.79$), 60 English language learners whose scores ranged between one standard deviation above and below the mean were selected and assigned into three groups, i.e., the in-text group, the rubric-based group, and the control group.

4.2 The Result of Inter-Rater Reliability

Table 4 shows the inter-rater reliability of the pre-test writing, which was rated by two expert raters. It is essential to mention that all 60 participants participated in the writing task in both pre-and post-tests. A Pearson product-moment correlation was run to determine if there was an agreement between the two raters. There was a strong, positive correlation between two raters, which was statistically significant ($r = .773$, $n = 60$, $p = .001$).

Table 2.

Inter-Rater Reliability of Pre-test

		Pre-test (Rater 1)	Pre-test (Rater 2)
Pre-test (Rater 1)	Pearson Correlation	1	.773**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	60	60
Pre-test (Rater 2)	Pearson Correlation	.773**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	60	60

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

Similar to the inter-rater reliability of the raters in the pre-test, the inter-rater reliability of the raters in the post-test was also computed. Table 3 shows that there was a strong, positive correlation between the two raters, which was statistically significant ($r = .742$, $n = 60$, $p = .001$).

Table 3.*Inter-Rater Reliability of Post-test*

		Post-test (Rater 1)	Post-test (Rater 2)
Post-test (Rater 1)	Pearson Correlation	1	.742**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	60	60
Post-test (Rater 2)	Pearson Correlation	.742**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	60	60

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

4.3. Normality Test

In order to check the normality of the data, a one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was employed. Table 4 shows that the pre-test and post-test results had a normal distribution ($p > .05$); therefore, parametric tests such could be used.

Table 4.*Tests of Normality*

Groups		Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre-test_Self_Efficacy	Rubric-Based Group	.125	20	.200*	.934	20	.186
	In-Text Group	.125	20	.200*	.934	20	.186
	Control Group	.125	20	.200*	.934	20	.186
Post-test_Self_Efficacy	Rubric-Based Group	.125	20	.200*	.934	20	.186
	In-Text Group	.125	20	.200*	.934	20	.186
	Control Group	.125	20	.200*	.934	20	.186
Pre-test_Writing	Rubric-Based Group	.085	20	.200*	.966	20	.659
	In-Text Group	.085	20	.200*	.966	20	.659
	Control Group	.085	20	.200*	.966	20	.659
Post-test_Writing	Rubric-Based Group	.198	20	.039	.895	20	.034
	In-Text Group	.315	20	.000	.802	20	.001
	Control Group	.213	20	.018	.913	20	.072

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

4.4. Reliability of Self-Efficacy Questionnaire

The reliability of the self-efficacy questionnaire applied to this study was calculated using the Cronbach alpha method. Table 5 shows the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire, which was .76, showing a reasonably acceptable index of reliability coefficient.

Table 5.

Reliability of Self-Efficacy Questionnaire

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.762	10

4.5. Addressing the First Research Question

In order to address the first research question of the current study, the researchers employed independent-samples t-test. Table 6 shows the mean scores of the control group ($M=4.89$) and the in-text group ($M=4.72$) in the pre-test.

Table 6.

The Comparison of Groups' Pre-tests

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test of Writing	In-Text Group	20	4.9650	.45338	.10138
	Control Group	20	4.8900	.54955	.12288

Table 7 depicts that there was not a statistically significant difference between the pre-test of the control group and the in-text feedback group ($P=.389$, $P>.05$).

Table 7.

Independent Samples Test of Pre-tests

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances

t-test for Equality of Means									
							95% Confidence Interval		
							Error of the Difference		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	(2-Mean Difference)	Std. Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.760	.389	.471	38	.640	.07500	.15930	-.24749	.39749
Equal variances not assumed			.471	36.676	.641	.07500	.15930	-.24788	.39788

Table 8 shows the mean scores of the control group ($M=4.92$) and the in-text

feedback group ($M=7.15$) in the post-test.

Table 8.

The Comparison of Groups' Post-test

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Post-test of Writing In-Text Group	20	7.1500	.23508	.05257
Control Group	20	4.9200	.71936	.16085

Table 9 reveals that there was a statistically significant difference between the post-test of the control group and the in-text feedback groups ($p=.001$, $P<.05$).

Table 9.

Independent Samples Test of Post-test

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances

t-test for Equality of Means									
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	(2-Mean Difference)	Std. Difference	95% Interval	Confidence of the
								Difference Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	34.839	.000	13.178	38	.000	2.23000	.16922	1.88742	2.57258
Equal variances not assumed			13.178	23.012	.000	2.23000	.16922	1.87994	2.58006

Therefore, it was confirmed that the in-text feedback had a statistically significant effect on the writing performance of Iranian intermediate EFL learners.

4.6. Addressing the Second Research Question

In order to address the second research question, the researchers, an independent-samples t-test was employed. Table 10 depicts the mean scores of the control group ($M=4.89$) and the rubric-based feedback group ($M=5.015$) in the pre-test.

Table 10.

The Comparison of Groups' Pre-tests

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test of Rubric-Based Group	20	5.0150	.44162	.09875
Writing Control Group	20	4.8900	.54955	.12288

Table 11 shows that there was not a statistically significant difference between the pre-test of control and rubric-based feedback group ($P=.199$, $P>.05$).

Table 11.

Independent Samples Test of Pre-tests

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances								
		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval	
		F	Sig. t	df	Sig. (2-Mean tailed)	Std. Difference	Error of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed		1.709	.199	.79338	.433	.12500	.15764	-.19413 .44413
Equal variances not assumed			.79336	.318	.433	.12500	.15764	-.19462 .44462

Table 12 also reveals the mean scores of the control group ($M=4.92$) and the rubric-based group ($M=7.15$) in the post-test.

Table 12.

The Comparison of Groups' Post-test

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Post-test Writing	ofRubric-Based Group	20	6.1500	.67473	.15087
	Control Group	20	4.9200	.71936	.16085

Table 13 shows that there was not a statistically significant difference between the post-test of the control group and the rubric-based feedback groups ($p=.715$, $P<.05$).

Table 13.

Independent Samples Test of Post-test

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances									
t-test for Equality of Means									
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	(2-Mean Difference)	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower Upper
Equal variances assumed		1.135	.715	5.577	38	.000	1.23000	.22054	.78354 1.67646
	Equal variances not assumed			5.577	37.845	.000	1.23000	.22054	.78348 1.67652

As the statistics show, although there was a difference between the mean

scores of the rubric-based group and the control group, the difference was not significant. Therefore, it is confirmed that rubric-based feedback did not have a statistically significant effect on the writing performance of Iranian intermediate EFL learners.

4.7. Addressing the Third Research Question

In order to address the third research question, a one-way ANOVA, and Tukey Post Hoc was deployed. As Table 14 shows, there was a statistically significant difference between the post-test of three groups ($P=.001$, $P<.005$).

Table 14.

ANOVA: Post-test of Writing

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	49.905	2	24.953	72.819	.000
Within Groups	19.532	57	.343		
Total	69.437	59			

Table 15 shows the results of the comparison between the three groups' post-tests. It also shows that the mean scores of the three post-tests were statistically significantly different.

Table 15.

Multiple Comparisons of Post-test

(I) Groups	(J) Groups	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Rubric-Based Group	In-Text Group	-1.00000*	.18511	.000	-1.4455	-.5545
	Control Group	1.23000*	.18511	.000	.7845	1.6755
In-Text Group	Rubric-Based Group	1.00000*	.18511	.000	.5545	1.4455
	Control Group	2.23000*	.18511	.000	1.7845	2.6755
Control Group	Rubric-Based Group	-1.23000*	.18511	.000	-1.6755	-.7845
	In-Text Group	-2.23000*	.18511	.000	-2.6755	-1.7845

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

Table 16 depicts that there was a statistically significant difference between groups in post-tests. A Tukey post hoc test revealed that the in-text feedback group ($M=7.15$) was statistically significantly higher than the control group ($M=4.92$) and the rubric-based feedback group ($M=6.15$).

Table 16.*Turkey Post Hoc Results of Post-tests*

		Subset for alpha = 0.05		
Groups	N	1	2	3
Control Group	20	4.9200		
Rubric-Based Group	20		6.1500	
In-Text Group	20			7.1500
Sig.		1.000	1.000	1.000

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 20.000.

Therefore, it was confirmed that there was a statistically significant difference between the effects of in-text feedback vs. rubric-based feedback on the writing performance of Iranian intermediate EFL learners.

4.8. Addressing the Fourth Research Question

The researchers used the independent-samples t-test to deal with the fourth research question of the current investigation. Table 17 displays the mean scores of the in-text feedback group ($M=23.85$) and the control group ($M=24.30$) in the pre-test of self-efficacy.

Table 17.*The Comparison of Self-Efficacy of In-Text and Control Groups in Pre-tests*

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test of Self-In-Text Group Efficacy	20	23.8500	1.98083	.44293
Control Group	20	24.3000	1.45458	.32525

Table 18 shows that there was not a statistically significant difference between the pre-test of the control and in-text feedback group ($P=.141$, $P>.05$).

Table 18.*Independent Samples Test of Pre-tests*

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances							
t-test for Equality of Means							
				95% Confidence Interval			
				Error of the Difference			
F	Sig. t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	(2-Mean Difference)	Std. Difference	Lower	Upper

Equal variances assumed	2.262	141	38	.418	-.45000	.54952	-1.56245	.66245
Equal variances not assumed	-	34.875	.418		-.45000	.54952	-1.56573	.66573

Table 19 also shows the mean scores of the control group ($M=24.25$) and the in-text feedback group ($M=27.20$) in the post-test of self-efficacy questionnaire results.

Table 19.

The Comparison of Self-Efficacy of In-Text and Control Groups in Post-test

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Post-test of Self-Efficacy	In-Text Group	20	27.2000	1.00525	.22478
	Control Group	20	24.2500	2.14905	.48054

Table 20 demonstrates that there was a statistically significant difference between the control group and the in-text feedback groups ($p=.001$, $P<.05$) in the post-test of self-efficacy questionnaire results.

Table 20.

Independent Samples Test of Post-test

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means					
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Equal variances assumed	24.002	.000	5.561	38	.000	2.95000	.53052	1.87603	4.02397
Equal variances not assumed			5.561	26.935	.000	2.95000	.53052	1.86135	4.03865

Therefore, it was confirmed that in-text feedback had a statistically significant effect on the self-efficacy of Iranian intermediate EFL learners.

4.9. Addressing the Fifth Research Question

The researcher used the independent-samples t-test to address the fifth research question of the current investigation. Table 4.21 shows the mean scores of the rubric-based group ($M=23.85$) and the control group ($M=24.30$) in the pre-test of self-efficacy.

Table 21.*The Comparison of Self-Efficacy of Rubric-based and Control Groups in Pre-tests*

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test of Efficacy	Self-Rubric-Based Group	20	24.0000	1.777047	.39736
	Control Group	20	24.3000	1.45458	.32525

Table 22 shows that there was not a statistically significant difference between the pre-test of the control and rubric-based group ($P=.340$, $P>.05$).

Table 22.*Independent Samples Test of Pre-test*

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances									
t-test for Equality of Means									
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Equal variances assumed	.933	.340	.584	38	.563	3.0000	.51350	1.3395	.7395
Equal variances not assumed			.584	36.57	.563	3.0000	.51350	1.3408	.7408

Table 23 also shows the mean scores of the control group ($M=24.25$) and the rubric-based group ($M=27.85$) in the post-test of self-efficacy.

Table 23.*The Comparison of Self-Efficacy of Rubric-based and Control Groups in Post-tests*

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Post-test of Efficacy	Self-Rubric-Based Group	20	27.8500	1.98083	.44293
	Control Group	20	24.2500	2.14905	.48054

Table 24 reveals that there was not a statistically significant difference between the control group and the rubric-based feedback groups ($p=.785$, $P<.05$) in the post-test of self-efficacy questionnaire results.

Table 24.*Independent Samples Test of Post-test*

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower Upper
Equal variances assumed	.785	.381	5.509	38	.000	3.60000	.65353	2.27699 4.92301
Equal variances not assumed			5.509	37.750	.000	3.60000	.65353	2.27670 4.92330

Therefore, it was confirmed that rubric-based feedback did not have a statistically significant effect on the self-efficacy of Iranian intermediate EFL learners.

4.10. Addressing the Sixth Research Question

To address the sixth research question, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was applied and subsequently, a Tukey post hoc analysis was conducted. The obtained results, as presented in Table 25, indicates the presence of a statistically significant difference among the post-test scores of the three groups ($P = .001$, $P < .005$).

Table 25.*ANOVA: Post-test of Self-efficacy*

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	(Combined)	147.233	2	73.617	23.119	.000
	Linear Term Contrast	129.600	1	129.600	40.701	.000
	Deviation	17.633	1	17.633	5.538	.022
Within Groups		181.500	57	3.184		
Total		328.733	59			

Furthermore, Table 26 illustrates the comparative outcomes of the post-tests for the three groups, clearly demonstrating that the mean scores of the in-text feedback group and the rubric-based feedback group were statistically significant compared to the control group.

Table 26.*Multiple Comparisons Post-test*

(I) Groups	(J) Groups	Mean Difference			95% Confidence Interval	
		(I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Rubric-Based Group	In-Text Group	.65000	.56429	.487	-.7079	2.0079
	Control Group	3.60000*	.56429	.000	2.2421	4.9579
In-Text Group	Rubric-Based Group	-.65000	.56429	.487	-2.0079	.7079
	Control Group	2.95000*	.56429	.000	1.5921	4.3079
Control Group	Rubric-Based Group	-3.60000*	.56429	.000	-4.9579	-2.2421
	In-Text Group	-2.95000*	.56429	.000	-4.3079	-1.5921

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

Additionally, Table 27 provides evidence of a statistically significant disparity between the groups concerning their post-test results. A subsequent Tukey post hoc test was conducted, indicating that the in-text feedback group ($M = 27.20$) exhibited substantially the same mean scores in comparison to the rubric-based feedback group ($M = 27.85$).

Table 27.*Tukey HSD of Post-test*

Groups	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Control Group	20	24.2500	
In-Text Group	20		27.2000
Rubric-Based Group	20		27.8500
Sig.		1.000	.487

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 20.000.

Consequently, it was confirmed that there was no statistically significant difference between the effect of in-text feedback and rubric-based feedback on the self-efficacy of Iranian intermediate EFL learners.

5. Discussion

The current investigation provided compelling evidence regarding the impact of two distinct forms of feedback, namely in-text feedback and rubric-based feedback, on the writing performance of Iranian intermediate English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. The findings of this study revealed that both types of feedback yielded statistically significant effects on the participants' writing proficiency. However, it was observed that the effect of in-text feedback was more pronounced and yielded more favorable outcomes compared to the effect of rubric-based feedback.

These results highlight the significance of employing targeted and personalized feedback approaches in enhancing the writing skills of EFL learners. The utilization of in-text feedback, characterized by its contextual and specific nature, proved to be particularly effective in this study. Through the provision of detailed comments and suggestions directly within the text, this feedback approach demonstrated its potential to facilitate learners' comprehension of their strengths and weaknesses in writing, ultimately leading to improved performance.

On the other hand, rubric-based feedback, which involves the use of predetermined criteria for evaluation, also exhibited a statistically significant impact on the participants' writing performance. However, the magnitude of this effect was comparatively lower than that of in-text feedback. This finding suggests that while rubric-based feedback can provide learners with a structured framework for assessing their writing, it may lack the individualized and tailored nature that in-text feedback offers.

Also, the findings of this study indicated that both in-text feedback, and rubric-based feedback had a statistically significant effect on the self-efficacy of the participants. The intervention groups, consisting of participants who received either in-text feedback or rubric-based feedback, exhibited higher levels of self-efficacy compared to the control group. This finding suggests that the provision of feedback, regardless of the specific modality, contributed to the enhancement of self-efficacy beliefs among Iranian intermediate EFL learners.

Furthermore, it was revealed that there was no statistically significant difference between the effects of in-text feedback and rubric-based feedback on the self-efficacy of the participants. This implies that both feedback approaches yielded similar

outcomes in terms of promoting self-efficacy beliefs among the learners. Consequently, the choice between these two feedback modalities may depend on other factors such as instructional preferences, learner characteristics, or contextual considerations.

The results of this study align with the research conducted by Lv et al. (2022), emphasizing a shared focus on the influence of feedback on ESL/EFL writing. Moreover, the findings of the current study not only are reinforced but further enriched by the groundbreaking research conducted by Hasan (2022) in both robust understanding of the potential benefits and implications of employing rubric-based feedback techniques for high school students' writing are emphasized.

Furthermore, the present study's findings on self-efficacy are corroborated by Ruegg's (2018) research who claimed that learners who receive teacher feedback demonstrate a significantly greater increase in writing self-efficacy compared to the group engage in peer feedback. In addition, the present study's findings regarding self-efficacy align with the research conducted by Bürgermeister et al. (2021), which further supports the importance of structured peer feedback in enhancing self-efficacy. The results of Bürgermeister et al.'s study demonstrated a positive association between structured peer feedback and self-efficacy. Participants who received well-structured feedback from their peers reported increased confidence in their abilities to perform tasks successfully.

6. Conclusion

The implications of this study highlight the potential benefits and practical applications of in-text feedback and rubric-based feedback in improving writing performance and self-efficacy among Iranian intermediate EFL learners. Learners can benefit from the personalized and precise guidance offered by in-text feedback, which allows them to identify specific areas for improvement and take targeted steps to enhance their writing skills. Also, teachers, as key facilitators of learning, can utilize the findings of this study to inform their instructional practices. Incorporating in-text feedback and rubric-based feedback into their teaching approach can help teachers provide effective support to learners. In addition, teacher trainers can utilize the study's findings to enhance their training programs for EFL educators. By highlighting the effectiveness of in-text feedback and rubric-based feedback, trainer trainers can

emphasize the importance of incorporating these approaches into instructional practices. They can provide guidance on how to deliver feedback effectively, including strategies for providing specific and relevant comments and implementing rubrics for evaluation. Teacher trainers can also promote the development of teachers' feedback skills through workshops, courses, and ongoing professional development opportunities.

In conclusion, the present study highlighted the significant effects of in-text feedback and rubric-based feedback on the writing performance and self-efficacy of Iranian intermediate EFL learners. However, further research is warranted to deepen our understanding in this area. By conducting longitudinal studies, investigating individual differences, comparing feedback types, exploring transferability, considering cultural factors, exploring feedback preferences, and investigating teacher training, researchers can advance the understanding of feedback's impact on language learning. These research endeavors will inform instructional practices and contribute to the broader field of second language acquisition.

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Appendix

Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (Jerusalem & Schwarzer, 1992)

	Not at all true	Hardly true	Moderately true	Exactly true
1. I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough				
2. If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want.				
3. It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.				
4. I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.				
5. Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations.				
6. I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort.				
7. I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.				
8. When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.				
9. If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution				
10. I can usually handle whatever comes my way.				

Appendix B. Topics for Writing Assignments

1. The importance of education on happiness
2. The disadvantages of smoking
3. The impact of walking on weight loss
4. Describing an excellent teacher
5. The advantages and disadvantages of marriage
6. The benefits of urban living
7. The effect of pollution on people's health
8. The effect of education on people's attitudes
9. The danger of crime for society
10. The dangers of child punishment