The Effect of a Newly-Developed Context-sensitive Framework of Writing Practice on Iranian EFL Learners' Writing Performance

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Abstract

The present quasi-experimental study attempts to investigate the effectiveness of a context-sensitive framework of writing on the improvement of Iranian EFL students' writing performance. To this aim, sixty sophomores majoring in English language translation from two intact classes at Islamic Azad University of Tonekabon, Iran participated in this study. An Oxford Quick Placement Test was administered to assess the participants' degree of homogeneity and classify them in intermediate (receiving 28-36 out of 60) and upper-intermediate (receiving 37-44 out of 60) groups. Then, each group was randomly assigned into experimental and control groups. A pretest of writing was administered to all participants. The experimental groups practiced essay writing according to the context-sensitive framework. After 12 sessions, all participants took part in the post test. Paired sample t-tests and independent sample t-tests were run to examine whether there were statistically significant differences between the means of the groups. The results revealed that both the intermediate and upper- intermediate experimental groups significantly outperformed the control groups stating that the context-sensitive framework was effective to improve the students' writing performance. However, there was no significant difference between the posttest scores of intermediate and upper-intermediate experimental groups. It means that implementation of context-sensitive framework was equally effective in both experimental groups. The findings supported the use of a context-sensitive framework for promoting writing ability of Iranian EFL learners. The study has implications for writing teachers, practitioners, and learners.

Keywords

Context-sensitive Framework; Essay Writing; Intermediate Iranian EFL Students; Upper-intermediate Iranian EFL Students; Writing Practice.

1. Introduction

The use of English language is more widespread due to the process of globalization. English is used by almost all people in the world because of the huge advances in technology such as internet, and other businesses (Pakir, 2012). It is an undeniable fact

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that English has a very important role in education, and all of the students need to use it effectively (Chen 2007). Many students are capable of understanding the language, but most of them encounter the problem of communicating their ideas in English effectively, and one of the problems lies in the lack of adequate ability to create their ideas in a piece of writing (Hyland 2013).

It has been approved that writing is one of the biggest challenges for many students; therefore, a large number of associations exert their effort to improve learning English (Mourtaga 2010). According to Hyland (2003), writing is "a central topic in applied linguistics and continues to be an area of lively intellectual research and debate in a range of disciplines" (1). Moreover, Richards (2009) remarks that regarding the second language teaching, the teaching of writing has come to assume a much more central position than it occupied twenty or thirty years ago. Furthermore, according to Alderson and Bachman (2000), "writing which was once considered the domain of the elite and well-educated, has become an essential tool for people of all walks of life in today's global community" (56). Many factors attract researchers' interest in writing and make it of overreaching significance to students in EFL academic contexts all over the world (Alderson and Bachman 2002).

Kroll (2001) states that "teaching writing to both native and nonnative speakers of English is an enterprise that unfolds in such a countless variety of settings and classrooms around the world that it is not hard to imagine considerable variation in how writing gets taught" (219). The more sophisticated writing tasks are, the wider range of skills students require to possess in order to write an organized, legible and logical text involving the rules of grammar and syntax, and these requirements make any kind of writing the most complicated use of any language (Manichander, Brindhamani and Marisamy 2015).

Writing in English as a second/foreign language (ESL/EFL) is considered not only as a cognitive and social procedure but also as an intercultural activity (Kroll 2001). A writer has to possess the necessary knowledge of the specific content, the required knowledge of the English language, sufficient knowledge of the particular genre of the target text and the knowledge of the context including all readers' expectation and cultural issues (Hyland 2003). Social conventions and social interactions that the language learners usually associated with definitely affect what the EFL learners finally write, how the EFL learners can write and whom the EFL learners write for (Hayes 1996). To serve any particular and definite purpose of communication, the EFL composition is required to be socially and culturally the most appropriate activity (Gee 2004).

Language teachers, experts, and authors frequently criticize students' inability to write well. The complex nature of the writing skill itself is undoubtedly one of the main reasons (Gautam 2019). According to Rashtchi and Porkar (2020), another source of complexity of writing is due to the fact that the learners must employ multiple tasks while writing in addition to cognitive involvement and mental concentration. Also, English language is used limitedly in daily interactions in EFL contexts, so learning EFL writing is truly a real challenge (Davari and Aghagolzadeh 2015).

Teaching writing skill is really challenging, so many researchers have sought to improve ideas regarding EFL writing instructions in recent years. Writing in EFL contexts includes a broad range of activities from mechanical act of writing to complicated act of composing; therefore, deciding upon both the quality and the quantity of writing instructions seems inconceivable (Spigelman and Grobman 2005). Many instructors investigated learners' writing problems in different EFL contexts (e.g., Al-Khasawneh and Huwari 2013; Jafari and Ansari 2012; Rattanadilok Na Phuket and Othman 2015; Salmani Nodoushan 2018). However, many students do not receive the writing instructions they need or deserve (Graham 2018). It is a fact that teachers are responsible to find some ways to activate the students' passive knowledge in a meaningful way in terms of the writing skill and help students become more proficient by eliminating their writing difficulties (Moqimipour and Shahrokhi 2015). There is no doubt regarding the crucial role of writing skill for Iranian EFL students due to the fact that he learners require English writing for different purposes. However, the majority of Iranian EFL learners are not instructed in terms of writing skill based on a local framework including particular procedures addressing the writing weaknesses of particular learners. This gap prompted the researchers to investigate the effectiveness of a context-sensitive framework of writing on the Iranian EFL learners' writing performance. This study may enable the writing teachers to plan more appropriate curriculum and classroom activities in order to improve the students' writing ability more effectively.

2. Literature Review

Studies on different aspects of writing have grown in recent years. Many researchers in the field of EFL have been trying to solve the English writing difficulties and improve writing ability of foreign students. In a study Assadi (2011) attempted to introduce a discourse- based framework to teach writing based on Systematic Functional Linguistics (SFL). Sixty TEFL students participated in the study; they were assigned to experimental and control groups. All subjects were pre-tested for homogeneity. Then, for ten sessions the experimental group received SFL- oriented

discourse knowledge, while the control group received the traditional method of teaching writing. After the treatment, both groups participated in a post-test, and the results showed that there was a significant difference in the performance of the two groups indicating the great effect of discourse- based teaching on the Iranian TEFL students' writing ability.

Yahyazadeh and Farvardin (2018), also, examined the effects of collaborative meaning-focused and grammar-focused pre-writing task on complexity, accuracy, and fluency of EFL learners' written performances. They selected 113 Iranian EFL learners and randomly assigned them to two experimental groups, grammar-focused and meaning-focused groups, and just one control group. After the pretest which was a writing task, the experimental groups worked on task manipulations in a fifteen-minute phase of pre-writing for seven sessions. Then, the post-test of writing was administered. The findings of the study indicated that the meaning-focused pre-writing tasks significantly affected the participants' writing fluency, while the grammar-focused pre-writing tasks significantly affected the participants' writing accuracy. Moreover, the results revealed that both experimental groups outperformed the control group regarding the complexity of their written works. Nevertheless, there was no significant difference between the experimental groups.

Derakhshan (2018) investigated the effects of summary writing, picture writing, and topic writing tasks on the accuracy and complexity of Iranian intermediate EFL learner' writing performance. Forty-three students (10 males, 33 females), homogenous as intermediate learners, majoring English Literature in Golestan University, Gorgan, Iran, participated in the study. The participants were then randomly divided into three groups of SW, PW, and TW groups. The results of post hoc test illustrated that SW outperformed both TW and PW, and that TW had a better performance than PW. Regarding the complexity of writing products, it was revealed that instruction was effective and statistically significant.
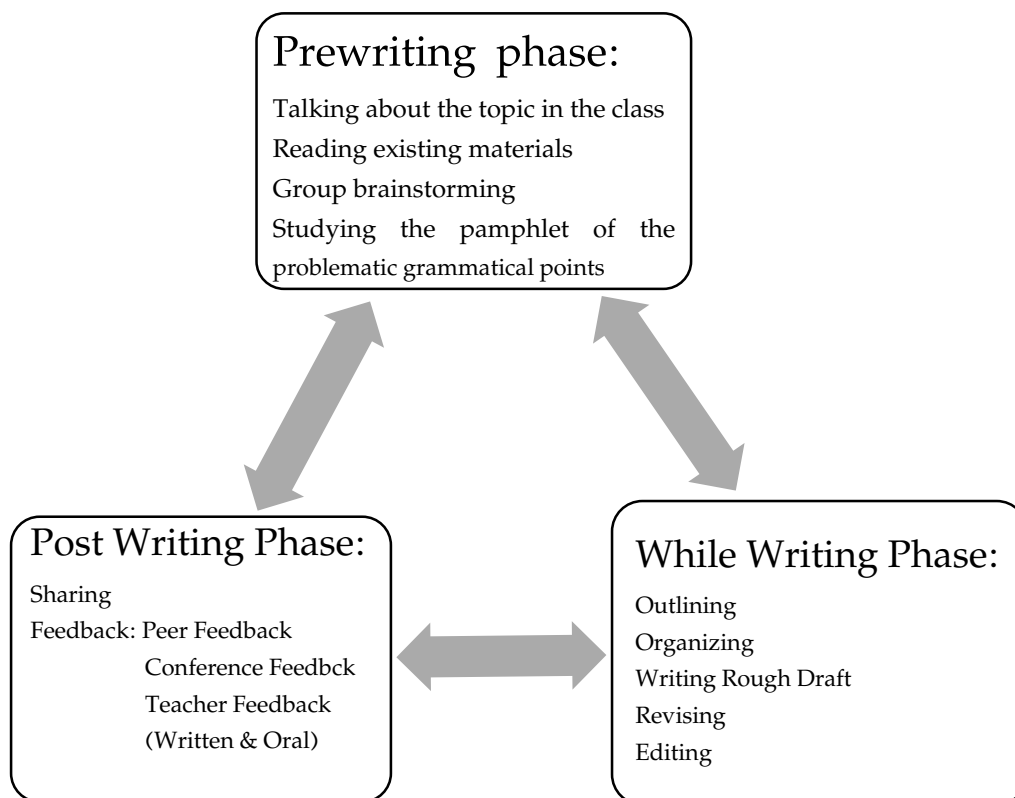
In another study, Liaghat and Biria (2018) compared the effect of mentor text modeling on Iranian EFL learners' accuracy and fluency in writing with process-based and product-based approaches of teaching writing. To this end, 60 Iranian EFL learners in three comparison groups were taught English writing adopting one of the three approaches named above. Results showed that mentor text modeling yielded higher degree of fluency compared to a product-based approach; however, the approach was found to be inferior to a process-based approach in terms of enhancing fluency in writing. Moreover, mentor text modeling was found to be as effective as a product-based approach, and at the same time, more effective than a process-based approach in improving accuracy.

In a study, Omar (2019) focused on teaching pedagogical grammar to help English language learners improve their academic writing. In this qualitative study which was based on the review of the related literature and interviews of nine ELLs regarding their challenges in academic writing, the researcher investigated the role of teaching pedagogical grammar in enhancing EFLs academic writing. Findings showed that lack of grammar was a great challenge for ELLs which led to low- grade writing, and failure in four language skills, so the findings of this study strengthened the recommendations that grammar should be taught to ELLs in order to improve English writing skill.

Rashtchi and Porkar (2020) investigated the impact of integration of technology and brainstorming on the EFL learners' argumentative writing performance. Sixty-eight university students in three intact classes were exposed to mobile-assisted brainstorming (n=26), wordle-assisted brainstorming (n=23), and cooperative brainstorming (n=20) in the quantitative phase. In qualitative phase, each session, the researchers distributed some paper strips with three questions on them among the groups to discover the participants' learning processes and perceptions during the instruction. Sixty-five participants who had attended all treatment sessions took one immediate post-test on a seen and one delayed post-test on an unseen topic. The results revealed that the wordle-assisted brainstorming group outperformed the two other groups in both post-tests.

Though different studies have been conducted to improve writing in general and essay writing in particular, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, no study has tried to develop a model or framework, sensitive to the specific context, for teaching writing based on the learners' writing problems. Therefore, in order to bridge the gap in the literature, the present study addressing this overlooked issue attempts to investigate the efficacy of a context-sensitive framework for practicing writing in the Iranian context. The theoretical framework of this study is based on the social-cognitive perspective of writing which considers writing as a situated cognition and examines how writers form interactive relationships with their teachers, peers, and the contexts which shape their learning and become part of their individual learning (Berkenkotter 1991).

The context-sensitive framework developed by the researchers consists of pre-writing, while-writing, and post-writing phases with different activities in each phase based on the students' problems and difficulties which should be identified at the beginning of each writing course.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Prewriting phase:                   │
│                                     │
│ Talking about the topic in the class│
│ Reading existing materials          │
│ Group brainstorming                 │
│ Studying the pamphlet of the        │
│ problematic grammatical points      │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
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┌──────────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────────┐
│ Post Writing Phase: │   │ While Writing Phase: │
│   │   │   │
│ Sharing   │ ◄────►   │ Outlining   │
│ Feedback: Peer Feedback │   │ Organizing   │
│   Conference Feedbck│   │ Writing Rough Draft   │
│   Teacher Feedback │   │ Revising   │
│   (Written & Oral) │   │ Editing   │
└──────────────────────────┘   └──────────────────────────┘

Figure1. The three-phase context-sensitive framework for practicing writing

In the present study the researchers attempted to investigate the effect of this framework on the improvement of Iranian EFL learners' writing performance. Accordingly, this study had the following research questions:

1. Does context-sensitive framework of writing have any significant effect on the intermediate EFL learners' writing performance?
2. Does context-sensitive framework of writing have any significant effect on the upper-intermediate EFL learners' writing performance?
3. Is there any significant difference between the writing performance of the intermediate and the writing performance of the upper-intermediate EFL learners after receiving treatment with context-sensitive framework of writing?

3. Method

3.1. Design

The present study adopted a quasi-experimental design including a pretest and a post-test with the participants of two intact classes randomly assigned into experimental and control groups.

3.2. Participants

The participants of the study were 60 male and female students (38 male and 22 female) in two intact classes taking essay writing course. They were fourth- semester undergraduate students majoring in English language translation at Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon branch. Their age ranged from 19 years to 39 years old.

3.3. Instruments

The instruments to gather data included an Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT), a pretest of writing, a post-test of writing and a writing rubric. OQST, retrieved from https://elt.oup.com/feature/global/oxford-online-placement/ was developed by Cambridge ESOL and Oxford University Press (2004) and validated in 20 countries by more than 6000 students. It is a standardized placement test in English. This test consisted of 60 questions in vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension, and cloze test. The participants had one hour time to fill the test. It was administered to check the proficiency level of the participants and classify them in two groups of intermediate and upper-intermediate according to the participants' score and the related criteria provided in the guidelines of the OQPT.

Table1. Oxford placement test scoring criteria

Scoring	Proficiency Level
0-16	A1- Elementary
17-27	A2- Pre-intermediate
28-36	B1- Intermediate
37-44	B2- Upper- intermediate
45-54	C1- Advanced
55-60	C2- Proficient

The next instrument was a pretest on "*Write an essay about one of your good habits*" selected from 501 writing prompts. The researchers selected this topic because it was a general one and did not need any technical information. The participants had one hour time to write the essay. The other instrument was a post-test of writing on a new topic (*Write an essay convincing your best friend to try your favorite brand of junk food*). Writing on a new topic could decrease the practice effect and increase the internal validity of the study.

The writing rubric which was used to rate the writings was Jacob's five-component rubric (1981 appendix A). Before rating the writings, the raters reviewed the

components and elements of the rubric and arrived at an agreement regarding how to correct the essays.

3.4. Materials

The course book was Practical writer with readings (Bailey and Powel 2008). The researchers also used a series of topics from 501 writing prompts to practice writing in the classroom.

3.5. Procedure

The study was conducted with 60 participants in two EFL intact classes at Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon branch. At first, the OQPT was administered to help the researchers assess the participants' degree of homogeneity and classify them in intermediate (receiving 28-36 out of 60) and upper-intermediate (receiving 37-44 out of 60) groups. This rating was based on the criteria mentioned in guidelines of the OQPT. Then, each group was randomly assigned into control and experimental groups including 15 students each. Afterwards, the participants sat for the pretest. They had to write an essay on "*Write an essay about one of your good habits*" selected from 501 writing prompts. The pre-tests of writing were rated by two raters based on the Jacob's five component rubric (1981). The components and elements of the rubric were explained for the participants before the pretest. The raters were the researcher (PhD candidate in TEFL) and a faculty member of English Language Department at Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon bracnch, who held PhD in TEFL. A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to check the inter-rater reliability (r= .84).

In the second session, the researcher instructed on essay writing covering the first chapters of the course book for both experimental and control groups. From the third session the treatment began. During the treatment, the students in experimental groups practiced essay writing based on the context-sensitive framework proposed by the researchers. This framework consisted of three phases: pre-writing phase, while-writing phase and post-writing phase.

In the pre-writing phase, the students and the researcher talked about the topic (selected from 501 writing prompts) on which they had to write an essay either in Persian or in English. All of the students had to participate in the class discussion. Furthermore, students could not only search on the internet and gain more information about the topic but also read the essays written by other students, available in the writing center of the English Language Department. Then, during the brainstorming activity the students listed all random thoughts that came to their mind without worrying about spelling, grammar, and other stylistic issues. Their ideas could be

written on the board. Additionally, the students were given a teacher-made handout to practice conjunctions and their rules of punctuation.

In while- writing phase, the students outlined their essay and grouped the related ideas and thoughts they came up with while brainstorming. Students individually or in small groups decided how to classify the most related ideas and organized the five-paragraph essay in its three major parts: introduction, body, and conclusion. In this stage the students wrote the text concentrating on just the content without thinking about grammar or mechanical aspect. They wrote the introduction paragraph beginning with a motivator trying to entice the readers to continue reading, a thesis statement to state the main idea, and at least three blue prints, three aspects of the thesis statement selected to talk about. Then, they wrote body paragraphs, each discussing one aspect of the general idea. As it was instructed to them, for each body paragraph they had to write a topic sentence and enough supporting sentences of different techniques. They were informed that using different conjunctions and discourse markers to logically connect sentences and paragraphs in order to have a cohesive piece of writing was very important. Finally, they wrote the conclusion paragraph to signal the readers that the essay was going to end. They were advised to include summative remarks and the key ideas of the text in the conclusion paragraph and finish it with a powerful statement. Finally, the students had to go over their essays once or twice to revise the content and be sure they wrote what they had intended. They had to check whether they actually wrote on the particular required topic and used relevant supporting arguments, whether each topic sentence was supported adequately, whether some parts could be deleted or moved to somewhere else, and whether there was logical relation among the paragraphs. For revising, the students had to consider the word choice, sentence type, sentence length, and varied vocabulary in order to enrich the text. Then, the students had to edit the written text and judge them for the language, writing techniques, and grammar, punctuation and capitalization instead of content.

In post- writing phase, the students submitted their essays to the researcher in order to be shared with the group. The researcher showed the students' essays to the class by a video projector or published them online in their *what's app* group in order to check and explain the mistakes so that the writers could receive both oral and written corrective feedback from the researcher and other students. On the other hand, the students in control groups were asked to write a five-paragraph essay without any discussion about the topic in the class; however, they were allowed to use their mobile phones to search for some information about the subject. What they did in order to write the essay was not divided in three phases as it was for the experimental groups.

However, if any student had asked any question about the topic, sentence structure, punctuation, and any other point, the researcher or other students could have answered. Then, the written essays were collected, corrected by the researcher, and given back to the students in the next session. The students in the control groups received just written feedback from the researcher. After 12 sessions of practicing writing, the post test was administered. All of the participants were asked to write an essay on "*Write an essay convincing your best friend to try your favorite brand of junk food*" (selected from 501 writing prompts). To rate the participants' performance on post-test, Jacob's five-component rubric (1981) was used. The post-tests were rated by the same two raters. A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was also computed to check the inter-rater reliability (r= .80) for the post-test scores.

3.6. Data Analysis

The present study attempted to investigate the effect of a context-sensitive framework of writing on the Iranian EFL learners' writing performance at intermediate and upper-intermediate levels of proficiency. In order to measure the writing performance of the experimental groups and that of the control groups, a writing task was administered to groups as pretest and post-test. Paired sample t-tests were used to analyze the data gathered from the writing tasks in pretests and post-tests of all groups and to determine whether there was a significant difference between pretest and post-test results of each group. Independent sample t-tests were used to compare the post-test scores of experimental groups and control groups to find out whether there were significant differences between the post-test scores of experimental groups and control groups. An independent sample t-test computing gain scores was used to compare the post-test scores of experimental groups to determine whether there was any significant difference between the post-test scores of intermediate and upper-intermediate experimental groups.

4. Results

First of all, the descriptive statistics of the four groups' writing pretests and posttests were computed.

Table2. Descriptive statistics for the four groups' writing pretest and posttest scores

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest	intermediate (Exp. G)	15	58.6667	2.69037
	intermediate (CG)	15	58.0667	2.46306
	Upper- intermediate (Exp. G)	15	59.2000	2.07709

	Upper-intermediate (CG)	15	58.5333	2.82506
	Total	60	58.6167	2.49808
Posttest	intermediate (Exp. G)	15	67.5333	2.72204
	intermediate (CG)	15	59.3333	2.09307
	Upper- intermediate (Exp. G)	15	68.6000	3.26890
	Upper-intermediate (CG)	15	59.6000	2.61315
	Total	60	63.7667	5.09026

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics of pretest and post-test scores of experimental and control groups. The table indicates that means of pretests and post-tests of control groups at both intermediate and upper-intermediate levels are close to each other. In fact, there is a little difference between pre- and post-test means in control groups. However, after treatment, there is a great difference in the means of pretest and post-test means of experimental groups.

The first null hypothesis:

H01. Context-sensitive framework of writing does not have any significant effect on the intermediate EFL learners' writing performance. In order to examine whether the treatment had significant impact on the intermediate experimental group's writing performance, first, pretest and post-test scores of intermediate control group and those of experimental group were compared using paired samples t-test. Tables 3 and 4 depict the results.

Table 3. Paired sample t-test for the intermediate experimental group

		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Experimental group	pretest - posttest	-8.866	2.8751	.74237	-10.458	-7.274	-11.94	14	.000

According to table 3, there is a statistically significant increase in experimental group's writing test scores from pre-test (M =58.66, SD = 2.69) to posttest (M = 67.53, SD = 2.72), t (14) = - 11.944, p= .000. The mean increase in writing test scores is 8.86 with a

95% confidence interval ranging from -10.45 to -7.27. The calculated eta squared statistic also demonstrates a large effect size (0.91).

Table 4. Paired sample t-test for the intermediate control group

		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	pretest posttest	-1.266	2.5485	.6580	-2.678	.1446	-1.92	14	.075

Based on the result of the paired samples t-test in table 4, there is no significant difference in control group's writing test scores from pre-test (M =58.06, SD = 2.46) to post-test (M = 59.33, SD = 2.09), t (14) = - 1.925, p = .075. The mean increase in writing test scores is 1.26 with a 95% confidence interval ranging from – 2.67 to .14.

An independent sample t-test was performed on the writing pretest scores of the experimental and control groups at intermediate level to test if there was any significant difference between the intermediate control and experimental groups before applying the context-sensitive framework of writing.

Table 5. Independent sample t-test for intermediate learners' pretest cores

		Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Pretest	Equal variances assumed	.047	.830	.637	28	.529	.6000	.9418	-1.329	2.529
	Equal variances not assumed			.637	27.78	.529	.6000	.9418	-1.329	2.529

According to table 5, the significant value for Levene's test is larger than .05, indicating that the assumption of equal variance is not violated. Furthermore, the result demonstrates no significant difference in pretest scores for the control group (M = 58.06, SD = 2.46) and experimental group (M = 58.66, SD = 2.69; t (28) = .637, p = .529).

The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = .60, 95% Cl: - 1.32 to 2.52) was small (eta squared = .01).

In order to show the significant impact of context-sensitive framework of writing, the posttest scores of intermediate experimental and control groups were compared using an independent sample t-test.

Table 6. Independent sample t-test for intermediate Learners' posttest scores

		Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference		Lower	Upper
Posttest	Equal variances assumed	2.475	.127	9.249	28	.000	8.2000	.8865		6.3839	10.0160
	Equal variances not assumed			9.249	26.267	.000	8.2000	.8865		6.3785	10.0215

Table 6 presents the result of the independent sample t-test conducted on the writing post-test scores of the two groups. As indicated in the table 6, the assumption of equal variance is not violated as the significant value for Levene's test is larger than .05. The result of t-test for equality of means shows that there is a significant difference in post-test scores for the control group (M = 59.33, SD =2.07) and experimental group (M = 67.53, SD = 2.72; t (28) = 9.249, p= .000). Also, t observed (9.249) is larger than t critical (2.48).

Moreover, it was revealed that the magnitude of the mean difference was large (mean difference = 8.20, 95% Cl: 6.38 to 10.01; eta squared = .75). As a result, the first null hypothesis is rejected, and it can be concluded that context-sensitive framework of writing has a significant effect on the intermediate EFL learners' writing performance.

The second null hypothesis:

H02. Context-sensitive framework of writing does not have any significant effect on the upper-intermediate EFL learners' writing performance. In order to find out whether the context-sensitive framework of writing was effective on the writing

performance of the upper-intermediate experimental group, pretests scores of the experimental and control groups were compared using an independent t-test.

Table 7. Independent sample t-test for upper-intermediate learners' pretest scores

		Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference		Lower	Upper
Pretest	Equal variances assumed	2.010	.167	.736	28	.468	.666	.9053		-1.187	2.521
	Equal variances not assumed			.736	25.71	.468	.666	.9053		-1.195	2.528

According to table 7, the levene's test shows that the assumption of equal variance is not violated as the significant value is larger than .05. The result of t-test for equality of means also indicates no significant difference in pretest scores for the control group (M = 58.53, SD = 2.82) and experimental group (M = 59.20, SD = 2.07; t (28) = .736, p = .468, two-tailed). The magnitude of the difference in control and experimental groups' means is .66 with 95% confidence interval, ranging from -1.187 to 2.521. The eta squared statistics also shows that the mean difference was fairly small (0.02). Also, two paired sample t-tests were run between the scores of pretests and posttests of upper-intermediate control and experimental groups to see how the two groups' performances changed from writing pretest to posttest. Tables 8 and 9 present the results.

Table 8. Paired sample t-test for upper-intermediate experimental group

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
pretest – posttest	-9.400	2.5298	.65320	-10.800	-7.999	-14.391	14	.000

As table 8 shows, there is a statistically significant increase in experimental group's writing test scores from pre-test (M =59.20, SD = 2.07) to posttest (M = 68.60, SD = 3.26), t (14) = - 14.391, p= .000. The mean increase in writing pretest to posttest scores is 9.40 with a 95% confidence interval ranging from -10.80 to -7.99. The estimated eta squared statistic (.93) also indicates a large effect size.

Table 9. Paired sample t-test for upper-intermediate control group

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
pretest – posttest	1.06667	2.86523	.73980	-2.65338	.52004	-1.442	14	.171

Based on the results in table 9, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in control group's writing test scores from pretest (M = 58.53, SD = 2.82) to posttest (M = 59.60, SD = 2.61), t (14) = - 1.442, p = .171. The mean increase in writing test scores is 1.06 with a 95% confidence interval ranging from – 2.65 to .52. Finally, the scores of the upper-intermediate control and experimental groups were compared using an independent t-test. Table 10 presents the results.

Table 10. Independent sample t-test for upper- intermediate learners' post-test scores

	Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.817	.374	8.329	28	.000	9.000	1.080	6.78656	11.21344
Equal variances not assumed			8.329	26.705	.000	9.000	1.080	6.78172	11.21828

Table 10 shows that the significant value for Levene's test is larger than .05, demonstrating that the variance of scores for the two groups is equal. The result of t-test for equality of means indicates that there is a significant difference in posttest scores for the control group (M = 59.60, SD = 2.61) and experimental group (M = 68.60, SD = 3.26; t (28) = 8.329, p = .000). Also, t observed (8.329) is larger than t critical (2.48). The magnitude of the difference in the means is 9 with 95% confidence interval, ranging from 6.78 to 11.21. Eta squared was also calculated and the result indicates that the mean difference was large (0.71). Consequently, the second null hypothesis is rejected, and it can be concluded that context-sensitive framework of writing has a significant effect on the upper-intermediate EFL learners' writing performance.

The third null hypothesis:

H03.There is not any significant difference between the writing performance of the intermediate and the writing performance of the upper-intermediate EFL learners after receiving treatment with context-sensitive framework of writing.

In order to find out whether the context-sensitive framework of writing had equal effect on lower-intermediate experimental group and upper-intermediate experimental group of the study, their gain scores were computed, and an independent sample t-test was run between two sets of gain scores.

Table 11. Descriptive statistics for the two groups' writing gain scores

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Gain score	Intermediate	15	8.8667	2.87518	.74237
	Upper-intermediate	15	9.4000	2.52982	.65320

As table 11 shows, the mean gain score for upper-intermediate participants (M=9.40, SD=2.52) was higher than the mean gain score for intermediated participants (M=8.86, SD=2.87). To see whether this mean difference was statistically significant, an independent samples t-test was performed.

Table 12. Results of independent sample t-test

	Levene's Test		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	.134	.717	-.539	28	.594	-.5333	.98883	-2.558	1.492
Equal variances not assumed			-.539	27.55	.594	-.5333	.98883	-2.560	1.493

According to table 12, it can be observed that there is no statistically significant difference between the gain score means of the two groups, t observed is equal to -.539 which is smaller than t critical (2.48), and p value is equal to .594 which is larger than .05, so the third null hypothesis is not rejected. It means that the improvement in the overall writing performance of the participants at the two proficiency levels was almost similar, and the implementation of context-sensitive framework was equally effective in both groups.

5. Discussion

The results of the analyses of the first question show that the means of pre- and post-test of writing in intermediate control group are close to each other, and there is a little difference between pre- and post-test scores of intermediate control group. While in the experimental intermediate group, after treatment (practicing writing based on context-sensitive framework), the mean of post-test of writing increased nearly 9 scores. Moreover, the result of the independent sample t-test between the post-scores of intermediate experimental and control groups indicated that there is significant difference between the means of the intermediate experimental and control groups of the study after receiving treatment with context-sensitive framework.

As for the second research question, results indicate that in upper-intermediate control group, there is no significant difference between pre- and post-test of writing without treatment. While in the upper-intermediate experimental group there is a significant difference between pre- and post-test scores of writings after treatment

(practicing writing based on context- sensitive framework). In addition, based on the result of the independent sample t-test, it is revealed that there is significant difference between the means of the upper- intermediate experimental and control groups of the study in terms of writing posttest scores after receiving treatment with context-sensitive framework. As a result, practicing writing based on context-sensitive framework is effective.

Regarding the third research question, the findings revealed that there is no significant difference between the post-test scores of intermediate and upper-intermediate experimental groups indicating that practicing writing based on context-sensitive framework is equally effective for intermediate and upper-intermediate levels of proficiency.

The findings of the present study are in line with Lee (2020), who states that a writing framework helps a writing teacher plan the writing classroom particular program and see where the students are and where they need to be. The framework consists of pre-writing, while-writing, and post-writing phases with different activities in each phase based on the students' problems and difficulties. In other words, the framework is context-sensitive. The findings of this study are also in line with those of Yahyazadeh and Farvardin (2018) who revealed the effects of collaborative meaning-focused and grammar-focused pre-writing task on complexity, accuracy, and fluency in EFL learners' written products. Moreover, results of the present study support the study of Soltani and Kheirzadeh (2017) who explored the significant difference between the writing performance of reading-to-write and writing-only task groups of Iranian EFL learners and revealed that students in reading-to-write group performed better than students in writing-only group.

6. Conclusion and Implications

The current study was conducted to investigate the effect of a context-sensitive framework of writing on Iranian EFL learners' writing performance. The results obtained from the study reveal that there is a positive effect of a context-sensitive framework on writing performance of EFL learners at intermediate and upper-intermediate levels of proficiency. Based on the results of this study, a writing framework definitely prompts a writing teacher to think about the opportunities he is trying to provide for the students to improve their writing ability. A writing framework highlights how different tasks can become more context-sensitive to focus on the particular knowledge and skills the students need to acquire (Wixson, et al. 2013). This study is in line with the post-method recommendations that support locally-driven techniques and ways that have to take into account the particularity of

each particular group of students with particular features in any particular context (Kumaravadivelu 2001). The most important implication of this study is that in EFL writing classrooms, instructors can first ask the students to state their writing problems and then, based on these problems, choose the most appropriate classroom tasks and procedures. A context-sensitive framework, in fact, embodies some interwoven steps that students require to take in order to develop their capabilities to write perfectly.

Like other experimental studies, the present study suffers from some limitations. First, the study was conducted in just one university and with 60 participants in two intact classes. The second limitation concerns the level of proficiency. The study was conducted at just intermediate and upper-intermediate level of proficiency. The proposed framework for practicing writing needs to be flourished by future studies. More studies can replicate this study with a larger number of students. The other suggestion is that the framework can be trialed on students of different majors other than TEFL to find out their problems in writing their technical texts in English and specify particular tasks and remedial practices to help them overcome their writing difficulties.

Appendix A. Jacob's five-component rubric of writing

ESL Composition Profile (Jacobs *et al*, 1981, in Weigle, 2002; Boardman & Frydenberg, 2002)

Category	Score	Criteria
CONTENT	25-21	**EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD:** knowledgeable • substantive •thorough development of thesis • relevant to assigned topic
	20-16	**GOOD TO AVERAGE:** some knowledge of subject • adequate range • limited development of thesis • mostly relevant to topic, but lacks detail
	15-11	**FAIR TO POOR:** limited knowledge of subject • little substance •inadequate development of topic
	10-0	**VERY POOR:** does not show knowledge of subject • non-substantive • non pertinent • OR not enough to evaluate
ORGANIZATION	25-21	**EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD:** fluent expression • ideas clearly stated/ supported • succinct • well-organized • logical sequencing • cohesive
	20-16	**GOOD TO AVERAGE:** somewhat choppy • loosely organized but main ideas stand out • limited support • logical but incomplete sequencing
	15-11	**FAIR TO POOR:** non-fluent • ideas confused or disconnected • lacks logical sequencing and development
	10-0	**VERY POOR:** does not communicate • no organization • OR not enough to evaluate
LANGUAGE USE	25-21	**EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD:** effective complex constructions • few errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, article, pronouns, prepositions
	20-16	**GOOD TO AVERAGE:** effective but simple constructions • minor problems in complex constructions • several errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, article, pronouns, prepositions but meaning seldom obscured
	15-11	**FAIR TO POOR:** major problems in simple/ complex constructions • frequent errors of negation, tense, number, word order/function, article, pronouns, prepositions and/ or fragments, run-ons, deletions • meaning confused or obscured
	10-0	**VERY POOR:** virtually no mastery of sentence construction rules • dominated by errors • does not communicate • OR not enough to evaluate
VOCABULARY	15-13	**EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD:** sophisticated range •effective word/idiom choice and usage • word for mastery • appropriate register
	12-10	**GOOD TO AVERAGE:** adequate range • occasional errors of effective word/idiom form, choice, usage but meaning not obscured
	9-7	**FAIR TO POOR:** limited range • frequent errors of effective word/idiom form, choice, usage • meaning confused or obscured
	6-0	**VERY POOR:** essentially translation • little knowledge of English vocabulary, idioms, word form • OR not enough to evaluate
MECHANICS	10	**EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD:** demonstrates mastery of conventions • few errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing
	9-8	**GOOD TO AVERAGE:** occasional errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing but meaning not obscured
	7-6	**FAIR TO POOR:** frequent errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing • poor handwriting • meaning confused or obscured
	5-0	**VERY POOR:** no mastery of conventions • dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing • handwriting illegible • OR not enough to evaluate

Appendix B. A sample pretest and post-test of experimental group

One of My Good Habits

Good habits are very important to be successful person in life. A person with good habits makes progress in studies, career, personal life, and all. On the other hand, a person with bad habits, however talented, one day will lose the success. It is important for everyone no matter child or adult, to have a good habit. I also have good habits. One of my good habits is that I exercise one hour a day. Exercising has some good advantages: It improves your mental health, keeps you healthy, and helps you control your weight.

The first, exercise improve your mental health and mood. During exercise your body release chemicals that can improve your mood and makes you feel more relaxed. This helps you deal with stress and reduces depression. It makes you feel fresh and energetic. Being energetic has positive effects on your behavior with others.

The second, exercising keeps you healthy and prevents some diseases. Having a healthy body is very important and valuable. Exercising reduces the risk of heart diseases such as heart attack and high cholesterol. This good habit also strengthens your muscles and bones.

Finally, exercise helps you control your weight and prevents obesity, which leads to the lots of diseases. Along with diet, exercise also helps you lose weight and get fit and being fit really gives you confidence. Good habits are very important to be successful in life. If you keep your habits good, you will keep moving up in your life and gain respect. You can easily make a good habit. To make a good habit, you must do that for two months and after that, you will do it automatically because you get used to doing it. Think about a good habit now and start doing this.

Convincing my Best friend to Try My Favorite Junk Food

Junk foods are known as fast food. There are so many kinds of junk food in our city and one of them is KFC. KFC is very popular here and it serves fried chicken. My best friend, Sara, isn't a fan of junk food, and she doesn't like eating out, but I want to convince her to try my favorite brand of junk food for some reasons: the food is very delicious, the place is very comfortable and attractive, and KFC is very popular restaurant.

The first reason I want to convince Sara to eat junk food is that the food is very delicious. The chief in this restaurant is very expert. He uses new kind of recipe that everyone likes. The chickens are made very crispy. I'm sure you will like it.

The second reason is that the restaurant is very comfortable. The atmosphere of the restaurant is very beautiful and attractive. The restaurant is decorated in the best way.

In addition, the waiters are very polite and professional. Eating in this restaurant is going to be fun because there is live music too.

The last reason is that KFC is very popular restaurant in the world. KFC attracted public attention in its early days. Most of the people who have tried the fried chicken in this restaurant were very satisfied. I hope I can convince Sara to come with me and eat junk food because it is really good restaurant and I like my friend to try that food and enjoy it.

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