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The Intervention of Criteria-Referenced Self-Assessment in Developing the Accuracy, Lexical Resource, and Coherence of Advanced Iranian EFL Learners' Writing: Shared vs. Independent Tasks

Sanaz Sabermoghaddam Roudsari[1], Behrooz Azabdaftari[2,*], and Zohreh Seifoori[3]

[1]Ph.D. Candidate in TEFL, Department of English Language Teaching, Tabriz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tabriz, Iran .Email: sanazsaber92@gmail.com

ORCID: 0000-0001-8696-297X

[2] Corresponding author: Professor of Applied Linguistics, Department of English Language Teaching, Tabriz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tabriz, Iran*

E-mail: dr_azabdaftari@yahoo.com   *ORCID:* 0000-0002-2418-0726

[3] Associate Professor of TEFL, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.
E-mail: zseifoori2005@yahoo.com; ORCID: 0000-0002-4296-8226

Abstract

A controversial issue in language teaching is the extent to which engaging learners in the learning process may enhance various aspects of learners' writing. The current study set out to examine the impact of employing evaluation rubrics as self-assessment devices on advanced EFL learners' writing features. The current study probed the interactive effect of criteria-referenced self-assessment and task type on the accuracy, lexical resources, and coherence. The participants included 60 advanced EFL learners distributed into two experimental groups (30 male and female learners each). The instruments were two writing tasks as pre-test and post-test, assessed based on IDP rubrics evaluating lexical resources, task response, grammatical range and accuracy, and cohesion and coherence. Two-way ANCOVA was administered to analyze the data. The findings revealed significantly more accurate and coherent writing of the criteria-referenced self-assessment group compared to the teacher-assessment group with no significant difference in lexical resources. Moreover, the findings indicated that the participants performed significantly better on shared tasks compared to independent tasks. However, task and assessment types were found to have no significant interactive effect on the writing features in question. The findings emphasize the practical benefits of criteria-referenced self-assessment and shared tasks in promoting Iranian advanced EFL learners' writing accuracy and coherence. The implications will be discussed.

Keywords: Accuracy, Criteria-Referenced Self-Assessment, Coherence, Lexical Resource, Shared tasks, Independent tasks, writing

Introduction

Writing seems to be a formidable task for numerous EFL learners owing to the intricate nature of this skill and the deficiencies in learners' linguistic, organizational, and conceptual resources. Although some courses that aim to prepare applicants for standardized proficiency tests may address various features of writing, the experience of numerous learners suggests that the teaching of writing is usually focused on learning the subcomponents of writing such as grammar and vocabulary with very little or no emphasis on organizational skills that learners need to develop and link ideas coherently (Richards, 2002). One practical approach to enhance learners' writing might be to introduce evaluation rubrics and engage them in the process of scoring so that they can realize what is expected from them and how they can fulfill these expectations. According to Andrade (2008), this might be accomplished if English teachers establish writing capability obviously before developing other test-connected features like tasks and grading/scoring outlines for the validity of the testing and test qualifications. Involving learners in the rubric-based evaluation of their own and their peer's writing is still the principal concern of writing teachers. The importance of engaging learners in the process of evaluation of writing, via introducing rubrics to enhance learners' ability to communicate their ideas effectively, especially in writing, is stressed by Jaidev (2011). He stated that acquaintance with writing skill rubrics similarly aids students become more responsible for their writing, and it permits them to receive a superior sense of possession of what they have written.

According to Zahrotun (2018), one of the best methods of teaching writing to EFL learners, which has been broadly discussed, is collaborative writing. She viewed shared writing as one of the considered methods to be implemented at any level of education. She declared that shared and collaborative writing maximizes learners' engagement and participation in language-learning practices adding that this technique has changed into a valuable, focused, and communicative aim. Dyke (2006) claimed that shared and scaffolded writing tasks, which are performed in pairs and groups, allow reflective interactive and scaffolded assessment. Dyke added that reflection has been a key concern that many philosophers have dealt with, and because of this, it is argued that a more reflective approach to learning helps learners respond and cope better in different situations in life.

Another way, suggested by many EFL scholars and practitioners to assist learners augment their writing skills, is by engaging them in the process of evaluating their written products. Experts in applied linguistics such as O'Malley and Valdez (1996), Mueller (2003), and Jonsson and Svingby (2007) advocated learner engagement in the process of teaching and evaluation. This engagement had previously been referred to as "formative assessment" by Bloom (1968). Bloom took up the term to underscore the efficiency of formative assessment as an instrument for enlightening the teaching-learning procedure for learners. Of course, the formative assessment might be justifiable concerning sociocultural theory and the priority that is given to learning as a mediated undertaking that is best fulfilled with the help of a more knowledgeable person who can identify the inner limits of an individual's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and design appropriate supportive activities that

serve to help him fulfill his potential at the outer limit of the ZPD (Johnson, 2009). Rubric-based self/peer assessment is the artifact that might accelerate learners' achievement of educational goals, and thereby, boost learning outcomes.

Based on the above-mentioned points it can be stated that despite the importance of the English language worldwide and the need to learn this language for personal, academic, and professional reason, most of the EFL learners lack the expected capability to use productive skills, especially writing skill. Moreover, a great deal of EFL learners try to prepare themselves for international proficiency tests such as the IELTS and TOEFL every year, and writing tasks are always a great obstacle for them. Thus, learners have to develop their writing skill to perform accurately and fluently in different domains that require writing proficiency. Accordingly, the major problem tackled in the present study is the tough experience that advanced Iranian EFL learners have in learning how to use their learned knowledge, especially in writing. They mostly find the task challenging and can hardly achieve the minimum proficiency in this productive skill. This problem can partly be attributed to the complexity of the writing skill, as a fundamental skill in any English proficiency test as well as in the fulfillment of educational or everyday needs. Additionally, writing deficiencies experienced by many learners originate from restrictions in lexical resources, incomplete knowledge of English grammar, and lack of knowledge of the organization that leads to failure in generating ideas in an accurate and fluent manner.

One way to resolve such problems can be using rubric-based self/peer assessment. Learners can apply rubrics in their writing while they grow into more experienced learners by examining the quality of their work and improvement. Reviewing the related literature revealed that there are numerous studies that have inspected the role of self-assessment in developing writing skill such as Heidarian (2016), Comert and Kutlu (2018), Fathi, Afzali and Parsa (2021), Bommanaboina and Guduru (2022), and Zhang and Zhang (2022). Moreover, previous research studies have delved into various aspects of writing and evaluation. Writing has been investigated with respect to the use of rubrics as instructional feedback (Butler & Winne, 1995; Bangert-Drowns Kulik, Kulik, & Morgan, 1991), the effects of instructional rubrics (Andrade, 2000), the role of peer interaction in young children (Dyson, 2003; Larson, 1997), and the role of instructional interaction in the classroom (Greenfield, 1994). They all have advocated that involving learners in the assessment procedure by encouraging them to take part in making a rubric facilitates a more profound realization of envisioned results and connected assessment principles.

However, there is a lack of research on investigating the effect of a criteria-referenced self-assessment process that inspects detailed components of accuracy, lexical resource, and coherence along with considering the influence of shared and independent tasks. Thus, the drive of the current study was to examine the interactive effects of criteria-referenced self-assessment on the accuracy, lexical resources, and coherence of advanced Iranian EFL learners' shared versus independent written tasks. It was based on the hypothesis that learners can use rubrics to direct their learning. The criteria designated in a rubric assist learners to reflect on their writing and simplify assigning learning objectives in a specific performance assessment. Through

self-assessment or peer-assessment, learners could apply a rubric in assessing completed works and administer it to guide their planning in learning.

Primarily, the present study is significant in terms of the insights that will be obtained concerning the effectiveness of criteria-referenced self-assessment as a practical device in promoting EFL learners' writing. This can open up a world of possibilities for learners. The findings can help to ameliorate the problems that many advanced EFL learners face in their writing performance. Writing allows a controlled, deliberate, and consequently powerful type of communication, and equipping the learners with the possible criteria for assessing and scoring leads them to gain the required knowledge to create a piece of writing.

To serve the purpose of the study, the following research questions and hypotheses were formulated:

RQ1: Do criteria-referenced self-assessment and task type have any significant interactive effect on the accuracy of advanced Iranian EFL learners' writing performance?

RQ2: Do criteria-referenced self-assessment and task type have any significant interactive effect on the lexical resources of advanced Iranian EFL learners' writing performance?

RQ3: Do criteria-referenced self-assessment and task type have any significant interactive effect on the coherence of advanced Iranian EFL learners' writing performance?

Correspondingly, the following hypotheses for questions were put forward:

H1: Criteria-referenced self-assessment and task type have a significant interactive effect on the accuracy of advanced Iranian EFL learners' writing performance.

H2: Criteria-referenced self-assessment and task type have a significant interactive effect on the lexical resources of advanced Iranian EFL learners' writing performance.

H3: Criteria-referenced self-assessment and task type have a significant interactive effect on the coherence of advanced Iranian EFL learners' writing performance.

Literature Review

Writing empowers learners to construct their own writing fragments in dissimilar genre manuscripts. It is a procedure of discovering, delivering, accumulating, reforming, and revising designs on text (Meyers, 2003). The teacher's mission throughout or at the end of every course is to implement assessment with the intention of estimating the students' success on the way to achieving the objective of the lesson. As a process of formative assessment, Self-assessment is a technique during which the learners appraise the excellence of their works, redirect their learning, identify assets and flaws in their writing, judge reflection about the

obviously specified objectives or criteria, and revise consequently (Andrade & Du, 2007).

With the rise of the assessment paradigm as an alternative to the long-entrenched positivist test paradigm, educators and researchers introduced dissimilar learner-centered assessment types (Pope, 2005). Assessment has been considered an integral element of learning and is argued to positively affect the learning process by enhancing the learning quality and fostering the learners' responsibility and sense of reflection (Orsmond, Merry & Reiling, 2000). In line with this new interest given to assessment, alternative assessment categories, such as self-assessment, peer-assessment, portfolio assessment, and conferencing were widely introduced and occasionally employed by L2 researchers and instructors (Brown & Hudson, 1998; Fathi, Derakhshan & Safdari 2020). Peer-assessment and self-assessment are the most dominant forms of alternative assessment. Theoretically, the present study conforms to Andrade's (2008) criteria-referenced self-assessment orientation. With a sociocognitive approach behind it, he claimed that informing the learners of various features of writing including accuracy, lexical density, and coherence as well as involving them in assessing their own work, equips them to raise more reflective learning and they can explicitly notice and be aware of the essential scoring elements. It enables students to think and recognize the quality of their work based on clearly stated criteria.

Accordingly, learners would be able to assess their own writing using certain rubrics; however, they are expected to develop their language skills, which can be facilitated through different task types. Like all language skills, writing can be enhanced if learners are engaged in performing a wide range of task types. Nation (2009) identified four types of writing tasks that can be employed to improve learners' writing. They include experience, guided, shared, and independent task types. Experience tasks have been described as tasks or activities which encourage learning to write by being done. Guided tasks are the tasks in which the teacher plays only the role of a guide to assist the learners write better. Shared tasks according to Routman (1994), is a collaborative technique teachers use to help students develop ways to improve their writing. It gives students a model of what they are expected to write. In addition, independent tasks, according to Davidson (2007, as cited in Housen & Kuiken, 2009), are tasks that students do by themselves. During independent writing, students are thought to produce their own written texts by drawing on knowledge and skills that have been taught to them.

Writing has been assumed to display a number of features that can be employed both for teaching and for evaluating the written product. According to Polio (1997), major features of writing include accuracy, fluency, complexity, cohesion, coherence, lexical density, and mechanics. These features are normally represented in various rubrics used to evaluate the written product. Cohesion, as another feature of writing, refers to the grammatical and lexical linking within a text or sentence that holds a text together and gives it meaning (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Moreover, coherence, according to De Beaugrande and Dressier (1981) is a state or situation in which all the parts or ideas fit together well so that they form a united whole. Lexical density, as Johansson (2008) mentioned, is defined as the number of lexical words (or content

words) divided by the total number of words. The following part is related to the empirical background of the study.

Ratminingsih, Marhaeni, and Vigayanti (2018) investigated the effect of self-assessment on students' independence and writing competence. In the present study, two groups of junior secondary school students in Indonesia were investigated in their learning of English due to the use of self-assessment towards their independence and writing competence of three genre texts. The research used a post-test-only control group design in which one group was given an experimental treatment using self-assessment, while the other received a conventional assessment utilizing a teacher's assessment. There were two types of instruments used, a questionnaire of students' independence and a writing competence test, which underwent validity and reliability testing beforehand. The data were analyzed using a one-way ANOVA and MANOVA. Before the inferential statistical analyses were conducted, the data were pre-requisitely tested in terms of normality, homogeneity, and multi-co-linearity. The results prove that self-assessment has an effect on the students' independence and writing competence.

Babaii and Adeh (2019) examined the effect of paired peer-assessment, teacher feedback, and group peer-assessment on EFL learners' writing ability. In so doing, sixty-nine university students of the English major were assigned to three experimental classes. Class one received regular teacher feedback, class two was taught to work in pairs and assess each other's writing tasks, and participants of class three were divided into groups of four members and a group leader was assigned to each group by the instructor. Group leaders' responsibility was evaluating and giving feedback on their group members' writing tasks. The findings revealed progress in the writing performance of the participants in the paired peer-assessment group compared with the other two groups. Furthermore, it was found that the in-group peer-assessment class, the leaders of the groups outperformed their peers. Nevertheless, the general performance of the class was lower than paired peer-assessment class.

Kim (2019) proposed training using a rubric-referenced self-assessment for a collection of nineteen Korean students to investigate if this worked in her class and how they thought about the rubric. The learners were asked to draft their essay several times founded on the provided rubric and the progress was seen in the consecutive drafts. With this strong impact on their essay quality, the learners found it interesting in using the rubric and presented their positive attitudes towards using this as a learning strategy to improve their essays. Therefore, this group of high school students is similarly able to enhance the use of rubrics to simplify their learning procedure.

Fathi and Khodabakhsh (2019) examined the effectiveness of alternative assessment in second language (L2) learning; they evaluated the effect of peer-assessment and self-assessment on writing performance. Forty-six English major learners at an Islamic Azad University were employed and divided into two intact groups. They were randomly assigned to a self-assessment group (N=22) who were trained to self-assess their writing tasks and a peer-assessment group (N=24) who were taught to assess the writings of their peers. The treatment took a period of one university semester. The data were collected through two timed-writing essays

managed as the pre-test and post-test of the study. The results exposed that both self-assessment and peer-assessment were effective in developing the writing skills of the participants. Nevertheless, it was established that the learners in the peer-assessment group had better performance than the learners in the self-assessment group concerning writing skill, signifying that peer-assessment was more efficient than self-assessment.

Farooq, Ahmed, and Farooq (2020) shared a single essay written rubric for both the teacher and students with criteria like language, organization, and vocabulary and they used a questionnaire trying to provoke the learners' attitudes for self-assessment. They used the same cycle to assess an essay in class flowing like this: Writing an essay- students' self-assessment - backwash effect - teacher assessment in three weeks. The outcome exposed that the students could evaluate their essays with guidance and instructions. They tended to use the rubric with little help afterward. They gave more marks for their essays in the first time assessment than the second time. When looking into inter-rater reliability between the students' assessment and the teacher's assessment, for the first time, they exposed an enormous statistical difference. The second time, both assessments were still statistically different, but the gap was smaller due to the students' familiarity with the rubric. In terms of teachers' ratings, the first time and the second time, it was found that the consequences were no statistical difference in assessment.

Fathi, Afzali, and Parsa (2021) explored the effect of implementing self-assessment and peer-assessment practices on writing performance and writing self-efficacy of EFL learners in Iran. Accordingly, 36 homogeneous learners at intermediate proficiency levels were designated and assigned to a self-assessment group (N= 17) and a peer-assessment group (N= 19), randomly. As for the treatment of the current study, the participants of the self-assessment group were taught to self-assess their writing tasks, while the participants of the peer-assessment group were taught to assess the writings of their peers. Two timed-writing essays and the Writing Self-Efficacy Scale (WSES) were administered to collect the data. The results obtained from performing paired samples t-tests and ANCOVA indicated that both self- and peer-assessment activities significantly contributed to improving the writing performance and writing self-efficacy of the participants. It was revealed that the participants in the peer-assessment group performed better than those in the self-assessment group in terms of both writing performance and writing self-efficacy, showing that peer-assessment activities were more effective than self-assessment activities in increasing the writing competencies and self-efficacy of the participants.

Zhang and Zhang (2022) conducted a quasi-experimental method to implement an intervention based on self-assessment in EFL writing classes in China. The results designated that compared with the comparison group, the intervention group showed greater growth in holistic writing tasks and accuracy in rating. Moreover, the qualitative conclusions exposed learners' improved accuracy in rating. The results contribute to the study of self-assessment within the EFL writing field, and it offers considerable empirical confirmation for the probable price of student-centered maintainable evaluation methods like self-assessment.

Method

Participants

The original population of the current study included 90 male and female advanced EFL learners whose proficiency level was determined based on the Oxford Placement Test (OPT). They were selected via a stratified sampling method. This study was done in the classes at *Goldis Language Institute*. The classes were held two days per week for 90 minutes each session. The choice of advanced proficiency level was for making the purpose of the study achievable as well as gaining more authentic data. To this end, 90 graduate advanced learners were selected and after giving the Oxford Placement Test in order to certify the learners' homogeneity, the researcher excluded 30 of them whose score was below or above 1 standard deviation. The researcher later divided them into two experimental groups (consisting of 30 male/female learners each). All the available advanced learners were taken as the focus of this study and the researcher did not assign an active role to the 'gender" or "age" variables in this study.

Materials and Instruments

The first instrument of the current study included Oxford Placement Test (OPT) used for ensuring homogeneity. This test had 60 multiple-choice items that assessed the learners' knowledge of grammar and vocabulary.

The main instruments were two writing tasks written by the learners as the pre-test and post-test of the study. The participants' writing performance was measured through essay writing in the form of argumentative writing. The researcher selected the topics based on learners' proficiency level. The topics for the pre- and post-test were designed by the researcher who had taken great care of their development. During the pre-test, the learners were asked to write about "The advantages and disadvantages of working away from their family". The topic that the learners were asked to write in the post-test was "The advantages and disadvantages of the early education of the children (at the age of 4)". These writings were assessed by the researcher in accordance with idp rubrics evaluating task response, lexical resources, grammatical range and accuracy, and coherence and cohesion. The participants were allocated thirty minutes to write a 150-250-word essay.

The main material of the study was a pamphlet implemented by the researcher to teach writing skill. This pamphlet was developed by the researcher and extracted from the book entitled *A Comprehensive Guide to IELTS Academic Writing Task 2* by Daniel Shimarz, which was validated by the supervisor and advisor of the study.

Design

The purpose of this quasi-experimental pre-test post-test study was to investigate the effect of employing criteria-referenced self-assessment on shared

versus independent task performance of advanced Iranian EFL learners to see whether making the EFL learners aware of the criteria listed in the rubrics proposed by idp, British Council, and the University of Cambridge enhances their writing composition.

Procedure

To meet the purpose of this study, the researcher chose the sample of the study via stratified sampling method. They were both male and female graduates aged 18-40. In order to ensure that they are homogeneous, the Oxford placement test was administered and 30 people whose scores were ±1 Standard Deviation were excluded. Then a test of English composition was administered to the 60 remaining participants as their pretest. Two teachers, one being the researcher and the other being a teacher (rater), scored the compositions. The two raters scored the compositions according to the criteria mentioned in the IELTS writing task 2 descriptors by idp to ensure inter-rater reliability by Pearson Correlation Coefficient. The correlation between the two raters was found to be 0.81.

Succeeding the administration of the pretest, writing classes started and the first three sessions were held for all of them. The 60 remaining participants were randomly assigned to two experimental groups (30 people each). Both groups were taught 12 sessions. The first three sessions started with teaching theoretical knowledge about the elements of writing. Each session lasted 90 minutes.

After the three preliminary sessions, the participants of the main experimental group were divided into two groups, which were later re-divided into two sub-groups that were asked to participate in independent and shared writing tasks. The first sub-group in the first main experimental group included the participants that wrote tasks independently and assessed their own writings. The second sub-group in the first main experimental group included the participants who wrote tasks with their peers (shared tasks) and assessed their own writings. The first sub-group in the second main experimental group included the participants who wrote tasks independently and were not asked to apply the self-assessment practice. The second sub-group in the second main experimental group included the participants who wrote tasks with their peers (shared tasks) and were not asked to apply the self-assessment process.

For the remaining 9 sessions, the researcher asked experimental group 1 to attend the class on Saturdays and Tuesdays, while the participants in experimental group 2 were asked to attend the class on Sundays and Wednesdays. The researcher then re-divided the participants in both experimental groups into two subgroups of independent and shared writing task groups namely 1i, 1s, 2i, and 2s (15 people each). It is worth noting that in this study criteria-referenced self-assessment concept is considered in terms of grammatical accuracy, lexical resources, and coherence, which are presented to the participants during treatment sessions. All nine sessions for both

groups consisted of three stages. In the first stage, the rubrics, which are considered in the IELTS compositions, were fully described to both groups, and some sample low-scored and high-scored compositions were shown to them by being projected on the wall. In the second stage, the participants were exposed to a low-scored and a high-scored sample composition. In the third stage, participants in groups 1i and 2i were asked to write an independent composition at the end of each session for twenty minutes, while participants in groups 1s and 2s were asked to write a shared composition at the end of sessions for twenty minutes. In addition, there was a fourth (last) stage, which was only done for the participants in experimental group 1 (subgroups of 1i and 1s). The participants in the groups 1i and 1s received an extra treatment which was operationalized as employing the idp designed rubrics and scoring criteria for the IELTS writing task 2. They were asked to self-assess their own/peers' compositions based on the idp band descriptors. Their drafts were also graded by the teacher at the end of each session. The teacher controlled the self-assessment that learners made. The scoring in both groups was completed based on a similar scoring rubric. Participants in all groups were asked to write a composition as their homework as well and the participants in groups 1i and 1s had to self-assess their compositions while the participants in groups 2i and 2s had to write compositions and their teacher assessed their compositions.

After the treatment, all the participants in all groups were asked to write a composition as their posttest. They were assessed and scored by their teacher (researcher) as well as another experienced rater to ensure inter-rater reliability. Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to calculate the inter-rater reliability in this phase. The correlation between the two raters was found to be 0.81.

Data Analysis

Pearson Correlation Coefficient was applied to evaluate inter-rater reliability. The collected data were analyzed by SPSS version 24. To address the research questions two-way covariance analysis (two-way ANCOVA) was administered.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The following table shows the results related to the correlation between the scores of the first and second raters to test the reliability of the accuracy, lexical resources, and coherence in the pre-test and post-test.

Table 1

Reliability of the Accuracy, Lexical Resources, and the Coherence in the Pre-Test and Post-Test

		Accuracy Score of Teacher 1	Accuracy Score of Teacher 2
Accuracy Score of Teacher 1 (pre-test)	Pearson Correlation	1	0.81
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.000
	N	60	60
Accuracy Score of Teacher 2 (post-test)	Pearson Correlation	0.84	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	.
	N	60	60

		Lexical Resources Score of Teacher 1	Lexical Resources Score of Teacher 2
Lexical Resources Score of Teacher 1 (pre-test)	Pearson Correlation	1	0.82
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.000
	N	60	60
Lexical Resources of Teacher 2 (post-test)	Pearson Correlation	0.88	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	.
	N	60	60

		Coherence Score of Teacher 1	Coherence Score of Teacher 2
Coherence Score of Teacher 1 (pre-test)	Pearson Correlation	1	0.81
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.000
	N	60	60
Coherence Score of Teacher 2 (post-test)	Pearson Correlation	0.86	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	.
	N	60	60

As illustrated in Table 1, there is a strong significant relationship between the first and second raters' scores in the pre-test and post-test. Therefore, the scores of grammatical accuracy, lexical resources, and coherence of the learners' writings have relatively high reliability (r>0.8, P<0.05).

Table 2 shows the results related to the distribution of grammatical accuracy, lexical resources, and coherence among language learners in two groups of criteria-referenced self-assessment and teacher-assessment with independent and shared tasks in pre-test and post-test.

Table 2

The Distribution of Grammatical Accuracy, Lexical Resources, and Coherence among the Learners in Two Groups of Criteria-Referenced Self-Assessment and Teacher-Assessment with Independent and Shared Tasks in Pre-Test and Post-Test

Variables	Activity	Groups		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Accuracy	Independent	Experimental 1	Pre-test	15	4.8	0.28
			Post-test	15	5.78	0.33
		Experimental 2	Pre-test	15	4.83	0.39
			Post-test	15	5.26	0.29
	Shared	Experimental 1	Pre-test	15	4.78	0.39
			Post-test	15	6.01	0.6
		Experimental 2	Pre-test	15	4.91	0.57
			Post-test	15	5.38	0.46
Lexical Resources	Independent	Experimental 1	Pre-test	15	4.61	0.35
			Post-test	15	5.15	0.33
		Experimental 2	Pre-test	15	4.53	0.41
			Post-test	15	4.95	0.33
	Shared	Experimental 1	Pre-test	15	4.76	0.3
			Post-test	15	5.61	0.42
		Experimental 2	Pre-test	15	4.4	0.36
			Post-test	15	5.31	0.35
Coherence	Independent	Experimental 1	Pre-test	15	4.71	0.32
			Post-test	15	5.43	0.38
		Experimental 2	Pre-test	15	4.86	0.28
			Post-test	15	5.33	0.33
	Shared	Experimental 1	Pre-test	15	5.03	0.28
			Post-test	15	6.1	0.24
		Experimental 2	Pre-test	15	4.96	0.24
			Post-test	15	5.91	0.27

According to Table 2, the mean score and standard deviation grammatical accuracy, lexical resources, and coherence among language learners in two groups of criteria-referenced self-assessment and teacher-assessment with independent and shared tasks in pre-test and post-test are illustrated. The following table illustrates the

findings related to the presumption of normality of the data using the Shapiro-Wilk test.

Table 3

Shapiro-Wilk Test Results

Variables	Activity	Groups		df	Statistics	Sig
Accuracy	Independent	Experimental 1	Pre-test	15	0.87	0.063
			Post-test	15	0.86	0.056
		Experimental 2	Pre-test	15	0.89	0.08
			Post-test	15	0.8	0.065
	Shared	Experimental 1	Pre-test	15	0.94	0.41
			Post-test	15	0.95	0.56
		Experimental 2	Pre-test	15	0.93	0.27
			Post-test	15	0.94	0.43
Lexical Resources	Independent	Experimental 1	Pre-test	15	0.87	0.063
			Post-test	15	0.7	0.054
		Experimental 2	Pre-test	15	0.83	0.062
			Post-test	15	0.89	0.06
	Shared	Experimental 1	Pre-test	15	0.84	0.061
			Post-test	15	0.89	0.07
		Experimental 2	Pre-test	15	0.84	0.063
			Post-test	15	0.92	0.25
Coherence	Independent	Experimental 1	Pre-test	15	0.76	0.061
			Post-test	15	0.92	0.2
		Experimental 2	Pre-test	15	0.71	0.059
			Post-test	15	0.84	0.061
	Shared	Experimental 1	Pre-test	15	0.81	0.06
			Post-test	15	0.83	0.059
		Experimental 2	Pre-test	15	0.84	0.061
			Post-test	15	0.81	0.064

As illustrated in Table 3, it can be seen that the assumption of the normality test of the variables is confirmed (p>0.05). As a result, parametric tests have been used to answer the research questions.

Testing Research Questions

RQ1: Do criteria-referenced self-assessment and task type have any significant interactive effect on the accuracy of advanced Iranian EFL learners' writing performance?

First, the assumption of Levene's test was performed. Table 4.4 illustrates the results of Levene's test that was used to assess the equality of variances.

Table 4

Levene's Test Results

F	df1	df2	Sig
3.33	3	56	0.02

As it is demonstrated in Table 4 the pre-assumption of Levene's test based on the equality of the groups' variances is confirmed (p>0.01).

Table 5

Two-Way Covariance Analysis Comparing the Effect of Criteria-Referenced Self-Assessment and Teacher-Assessment on the Accuracy of the Learners' Writing based on the Type of Independent and Shared Tasks

Variables	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig	Eta
Group	6.11	1	6.11	76.65	0.000	0.58
Activity	0.32	1	0.32	4.12	0.04	0.07
Group* Activity	0.14	1	0.14	1.81	0.18	0.03

Table 5 illustrates the results of a two-way covariance analysis comparing the effect of criteria-referenced self-assessment and teacher-assessment on the accuracy of the learners' writing (F=76.65, p<0.05, Eta=0.58). That is, there is a significant difference in improving the grammatical accuracy of the learners' writing performance based on criteria-referenced self-assessment and teacher-assessment methods.

According to the results in Table 5, to compare the grammatical accuracy of the learners' writings based on the type of their independent and shared activity, the main effect is significant (F=4.12, P<0.05, Eta=0.07). That is, there is a significant difference in improving the grammatical accuracy of the learners' writing based on the type of their independent and shared task.

However, when the interactive effect of the type of assessment (self-assessment and teacher-assessment) and the type of task (independent and shared) on the improvement of learners' writing accuracy was considered, as illustrated in Table 5, no significant difference is observed (P>0.05, F=1.81). This indicates that there is no significant difference in the effect of the type of assessment (self-assessment and teacher-assessment) and the type of task (independent and shared) on the improvement of the learners' writing accuracy.

Table 6

The Mean Score and Standard Deviation of the Scores of Criteria-Referenced Self-Assessment and Teacher-Assessment on the Accuracy of the Learners' Writings

Group	Mean	Std Error	95% confidence interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Self-assessment	5.93	0.05	5.83	6.03
Teacher-assessment	5.29	0.05	5.18	5.39

Table 6 displays that the grammatical accuracy score of the writing performance in the criteria-referenced self-assessment group with a mean score of 5.93 is higher than the criteria-referenced teacher-assessment group with a mean score of 5.29. As a result, the criteria-referenced self-assessment method has been effective by 58% in improving the grammatical accuracy of the learners' writing performance.

Table 7

The Mean Score and Standard Deviation of the Scores of Writing Accuracy of the Learners in Independent and Shared Tasks

Activity	Mean	Std Error	95% confidence interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Independent	5.53	0.05	5.43	5.64
Shared	5.68	0.05	5.58	5.79

The information in Table 7 shows that the grammar accuracy score of the writing performance in the group with the shared task is higher with a mean score of 5.68 than the group with the independent task with a mean score of 5.53. As a result, the shared task has been effective by 7% in improving the grammatical accuracy of the EFL learners' writing performance.

Table 8

The Mean Score and Standard Deviation of the Interactive Effect of Criteria-Referenced Self-Assessment and Teacher-Assessment and Independent and Shared Tasks on the Improvement of Writing Accuracy

Group	Activity	Mean	Std Error	95% confidence interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Self-assessment	Independent	5.81	0.07	5.66	5.95
	Shared	6.05	0.07	5.91	6.2
Teacher-assessment	Independent	5.26	0.07	5.12	5.41
	Shared	5.31	0.07	5.16	5.46

According to the information in Table 8, it can be seen that the learners' writing accuracy score in the criteria-referenced self-assessment group with the independent task has a mean score of 5.81, the criteria-referenced self-assessment group with the shared task has a mean score of 6.05, the criteria-referenced teacher-assessment group with the independent task with the mean score of 5.26, and the criteria-referenced teacher-assessment group with the shared task with the mean score of 5.31 are close to each other. As a result, no significant difference is observed between the learners' writing accuracy scores based on criteria-referenced self-assessment and teacher-assessment with independent and shared tasks.

RQ2: Do criteria-referenced self-assessment and task type have any significant interactive effect on the lexical resources of advanced Iranian EFL learners' writing performance?

First, the assumption of Levene's test was performed. Table 4.9 illustrates the results of Levene's test that was used to assess the equality of variances.

Table 9

Levene's Test Results

F	df1	df2	Sig
0.53	3	56	0.65

As it is demonstrated in Table 9 the pre-assumption of Levene's test based on the equality of the groups' variances is confirmed ($p>0.01$).

Table 10

Two-Way Covariance Analysis Comparing the Effect of Criteria-Referenced Self-Assessment and Teacher-Assessment on the Lexical Resources of the Learners' Writing based on the Type of Independent and Shared Tasks

Variables	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig	Eta
Group	0.18	1	0.18	2.1	0.15	0.03
Activity	2.54	1	2.54	28.53	0.000	0.34
Group* Activity	0.01	1	0.01	0.18	0.67	0.003

Table 10 illustrates the results of a two-way covariance analysis comparing the effect of criteria-referenced self-assessment and teacher-assessment on the lexical resources of the learners' writing (F=2.1, p>0.05). That is, there is no significant difference in improving the lexical resources of the learners' writing performance based on criteria-referenced self-assessment and teacher-assessment methods.

According to the results in Table 10, to compare the lexical resources of the learners' writings based on the type of their independent and shared activity, the main effect is significant (F=28.53, P<0.05, Eta=0.34). That is, there is a significant difference in improving the lexical resources of the learners' writing based on the type of their independent and shared task.

However, when the interactive effect of the type of assessment (self-assessment and teacher-assessment) and the type of task (independent and shared) on the improvement of learners' lexical resources was considered, as illustrated in Table 10, no significant difference is observed (P>0.05, F=0.18). This designates that there is no significant difference in the effect of the type of assessment (self-assessment and teacher-assessment) and the type of task (independent and shared) on the improvement of the learners' lexical resources.

Table 11

The Mean Score and Standard Deviation of the Scores of Criteria-Referenced Self-Assessment and Teacher-Assessment on the Lexical Resources of the Learners' Writings

Group	Mean	Std Error	95% confidence interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Self-assessment	5.31	0.05	5.2	5.42
Teacher-assessment	5.2	0.05	5.08	5.31

Table 11 displays that the lexical resources score of the writing performance in the criteria-referenced self-assessment group with a mean score of 5.31 is close to

the criteria-referenced teacher-assessment group with a mean score of 5.2. As a result, the criteria-referenced self-assessment method has no significant effect on improving the lexical resources of the learners' writing performance.

Table 12

The Mean Score and Standard Deviation of the Scores of Lexical Resources of the Learners in Independent and Shared Tasks

Activity	Mean	Std Error	95% confidence interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Independent	5.05	0.05	4.94	5.16
Shared	5.46	0.05	5.35	5.57

The information in Table 12 shows that the lexical resources score of the writing performance in the group with the shared task is higher with a mean score of 5.46 than the group with the independent task with a mean score of 5.05. As a result, the shared task has been effective by 34% in improving lexical resources of the EFL learners' writing performance.

Table 13

The Mean Score and Standard Deviation of the Interactive Effect of Criteria-Referenced Self-Assessment and Teacher-Assessment and Independent and Shared Tasks on the Improvement of Lexical Resources

Group	Activity	Mean	Std Error	95% confidence interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Self-assessment	Independent	5.12	0.07	4.97	5.28
	Shared	5.5	0.08	5.34	5.66
Teacher-assessment	Independent	4.97	0.07	4.82	5.13
	Shared	5.42	0.08	5.26	5.58

According to Table 13, it can be seen that the learners' lexical resources score in the criteria-referenced self-assessment group with the independent task has a mean score of 5.12, the criteria-referenced self-assessment group with the shared task has a mean score of 5.5, the criteria-referenced teacher-assessment group with the independent task with the mean score of 4.97, and the criteria-referenced teacher-assessment group with the shared task with the mean score of 5.42 are close to each other. Thus, no significant difference is observed between the learners' lexical resources scores based on criteria-referenced self-assessment and teacher-assessment with independent and shared tasks.

RQ3: Do criteria-referenced self-assessment and task type have any significant interactive effect on the coherence of advanced Iranian EFL learners' writing performance?

First, the assumption of Levene's test was performed. Table 4.9 illustrates the results of Levene's test that was used to assess the equality of variances.

Table 14

Levene's Test Results

F	df1	df2	Sig
0.81	3	56	0.49

As it is demonstrated in Table 4.14 the pre-assumption of Levene's test based on the equality of the groups' variances is confirmed ($p > 0.01$).

Table 15

Two-Way Covariance Analysis Comparing the Effect of Criteria-Referenced Self-Assessment and Teacher-Assessment on the Coherence of the Learners' Writing based on the Type of Independent and Shared Tasks

Variables	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig	Eta
Group	0.42	1	0.42	6.45	0.014	0.105
Activity	3.13	1	3.13	47.55	0.000	0.46
Group* Activity	0.01	1	0.01	0.18	0.66	0.003

Table 15 illustrates the results of a two-way covariance analysis comparing the effect of criteria-referenced self-assessment and teacher-assessment on the coherence of the learners' writing ($F=6.45$, $p<0.05$, Eta=0.105). That is, there is a significant difference in improving the coherence of the learners' writing performance based on criteria-referenced self-assessment and teacher-assessment methods.

According to Table 15, to compare the coherence of the learners' writings based on the type of their independent and shared activity, the main effect is significant ($F=47.55$, $P<0.05$, Eta=0.46). That is, there is a significant difference in improving the coherence of the learners' writing based on the type of their independent and shared task.

However, when the interactive effect of the type of assessment (self-assessment and teacher-assessment) and the type of task (independent and shared) on the improvement of learners' coherence was considered, as illustrated in Table 15, no significant difference is observed ($P>0.05$, $F=0.18$). This designates that there is no significant difference in the effect of the type of assessment (self-assessment and

teacher-assessment) and the type of task (independent and shared) on the improvement of the learners' coherence.

Table 16

The Mean Score and Standard Deviation of the Scores of Criteria-Referenced Self-Assessment and Teacher-Assessment on the Coherence of the Learners' Writings

Group	Mean	Std Error	95% confidence interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Self-assessment	5.78	0.04	5.68	5.87
Teacher-assessment	5.61	0.04	5.51	5.7

Table 16 displays that the coherence score of the writing performance in the criteria-referenced self-assessment group with a mean score of 5.78 is higher than the criteria-referenced teacher-assessment group with a mean score of 5.61. As a result, the criteria-referenced self-assessment method has been effective by 10% in improving the coherence of the learners' writing performance.

Table 17

The Mean Score and Standard Deviation of the Scores of Coherence of the Learners in Independent and Shared Tasks

Activity	Mean	Std Error	95% confidence interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Independent	5.45	0.04	5.35	5.54
Shared	5.94	0.04	5.84	6.03

The information in Table 17 shows that the coherence score of the writing performance in the group with the shared task is higher with a mean score of 5.94 than in the group with the independent task with a mean score of 5.45. As a result, the shared task has been effective by 46% in improving the coherence of the EFL learners' writing performance.

Table 18

The Mean Score and Standard Deviation of the Interactive Effect of Criteria-Referenced Self-Assessment and Teacher-Assessment and Independent and Shared Tasks on the Improvement of Coherence

Group	Activity	Mean	Std Error	95% confidence interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Self-assessment	Independent	5.55	0.07	5.41	5.69
	Shared	6.01	0.06	5.87	6.14
Teacher-assessment	Independent	5.35	0.06	5.21	5.48
	Shared	5.87	0.06	5.73	6.004

According to the information in Table 18, it can be seen that the learners' coherence score in the criteria-referenced self-assessment group with the independent task has a mean score of 5.55, the criteria-referenced self-assessment group with the shared task has a mean score of 6.01, the criteria-referenced teacher-assessment group with the independent task with the mean score of 5.35, and the criteria-referenced teacher-assessment group with the shared task with the mean score of 5.87 are close to each other. As a result, no significant difference is observed between the learners' coherence scores based on criteria-referenced self-assessment and teacher-assessment with independent and shared tasks.

Discussion

The current research is an effort to explore the interactive effect of criteria-referenced self-assessment and task type on the accuracy, lexical resources, and coherence of advanced EFL learners' writing performance.

The first research hypothesis examined the interactive effect of criteria-referenced self-assessment and task type on the accuracy of advanced EFL learners' writing performance. The outcomes obtained from the first research hypothesis exposed that there is a significant difference between criteria-referenced teacher-assessment and self-assessment, in which criteria-referenced self-assessment shows a higher mean score. Moreover, the results showed a significant difference between independent and shared tasks in which the shared task type had a higher mean score. Finally, considering the interactive effect of task type and assessment type, the results revealed no significant difference.

The second research hypothesis investigated the interactive effect of criteria-referenced self-assessment and task type on the lexical resources of advanced EFL learners' writing performance. The outcomes attained from the second research hypothesis revealed that there is no significant difference between criteria-referenced teacher-assessment and self-assessment. Moreover, the results showed a significant difference between independent and shared tasks in which the shared task type had a

higher mean score. Finally, considering the interactive effect of task type and assessment type, the results revealed no significant difference.

The third research hypothesis investigated the interactive effect of criteria-referenced self-assessment and task type on the coherence of advanced EFL learners' writing performance. The outcomes obtained from the last research hypothesis exposed that there is a significant difference between criteria-referenced self-assessment and teacher-assessment, in which criteria-referenced self-assessment shows a higher mean score. Moreover, the results showed a significant difference between independent and shared tasks in which the shared task type had a higher mean score. Finally, considering the interactive effect of task type and assessment type, the results revealed no significant difference.

Grounded on the outcomes obtained from the study, it can be maintained that being aware of the grammatical and linguistic criteria implemented in writing assessment can help EFL learners to create more accurate and coherent texts. Moreover, working cooperatively in producing and assessing a text can expand the lexical capacity of the learners. However, it is an undeniable fact that learners need a perfect role model in their learning process to receive corrective feedback for their language use; besides, despite being able and knowledgeable in self-assessment, on most occasions, receiving effective comments from the teacher can flourish learners' progression and ensure their learning. Conversely, as the findings revealed learners had acted better in improving their grammatical accuracy and coherence when self-assessing their essays. This can be due to the exclusive concentration of the learners on the assessment criteria provided for them, which is also evident in accomplishing shared tasks. That is to say, when learners are left responsible for evaluating their own products, they will pay more attention to the linguistic and grammatical aspects, and working with their peers augment their consciousness in assisting their peers and receiving information from them to create and assess the essays. This point affirms the ideas of Andrade (2008), which claimed that self-assessment enables students to think and identify the quality of their work founded on clear and specified criteria. Additionally, the findings revealed that learners have better performance in expanding their lexical resources when working in pairs. This can be related to the point that learners need a superior figure in their learning process to develop their knowledge; this figure might be their teacher or their peer at a higher proficiency level.

In general, the findings of the study can be best clarified by Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD) and scaffolding concept. Since ZPD concentrates on what a learner can do by themselves versus what they can do with the help of someone else. That is to say, the role of teachers and others in supporting the learner's progress and providing support structures to get to subsequent phases or levels are rudimentary notions in learning contexts. To help learners realize learning independence, Vygotsky (1962) stated that scaffolding is a tool for progression. This can be accomplished by completing minor, manageable stages for the learner in order to reach a specific goal. In this regard, working in cooperation with more knowledgeable peers or skilled instructor aid learners make links among different concepts, here specifically, grammatical accuracy, lexical resources, and writing coherence. In the current study, criteria-based self/peer-assessment is in fact the artifact that might boost

learners' writing performance. This improvement can be justified with reference to sociocultural theory and the help of a more knowledgeable person who can identify the weaknesses and strengths of an individual by focusing on their ZPD and providing applicable support.

Moreover, in terms of grammatical accuracy and writing coherence learners in the self-assessment group showed better performance in their writing than the learners in the teacher-assessment group. Thus, based on the findings self-assessment technique was effective in developing learners' writing skill. This finding can be elucidated under the shadow of the self-regulation concept; that is to say, through self-regulation, learners attempted to understand how they can take control of the factors and issues intervening in their learning process. Self-regulation has been associated with the manifestations of the control learners apply over their behavior, cognition, and motivation in terms of learning progression (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2011).

The findings confirmed the efficiency of criteria-referenced self-assessment in developing learners' writing skill. Self-assessment as one of the authentic assessment techniques has been presently executed in EFL pedagogy to contribute further vision to the learners to contemplate their own learning and improvement. It can make the learners aware of their mistakes in grammatical structures supported by the checklist and rubric designed for them. Normally, the learners frequently get a score lacking a sufficient understanding of what mistakes they have made and what errors they have had in their written products; thus, being aware of the assessment criteria can expand the learners' consciousness toward certain syntactic and semantic features. This finding is in line with the study directed by Ratminingsih, Marhaeni, and Vigayanti (2018), which demonstrated that self-assessment affects the learners' writing competence.

Furthermore, the self-assessment process develops a sense of responsibility among EFL learners. Through self-evaluation, they will be able to judge their own works based on the task requirements considering the criteria provided for them. They can comprehend the standards of performance anticipated from them, control their own performance and search the ways to improve their linguistic and communicative skills. When learners are responsible for their performance and have the required criteria to assess their work, they will instinctively try to expand the superiority of their work and recognize the ways to achieve high performance with less supervision specified by the teacher or peers. Subsequently, they will find it stress-free to undertake their tasks promptly. This result is in line with Wang and Wang's finding (as cited in Ratminingsih et al., 2018), showing that the learners had a positive reaction on the way to the use of self-assessment during the entire progression of writing, and it was significantly supportive of self-editing and revising. Furthermore, the learners in the experimental group disclosed dynamic participation through their contribution in the course of learning to write and practicing assessment on their own writing. Consequently, they become more responsible and independent in their own learning.

The results of this current study support the previous research by Farooq, Ahmed and Farooq (2020) and Fathi, Afzali, and Parsa (2020), in terms of proving the effect of self-assessment on the learners' writing performance. Furthermore, the

outcomes are slightly consonant with the outcomes of previous investigations that specified that peer-assessment is better than self-assessment, significantly, in refining EFL writing results (e.g., Fathi & Khodabakhsh, 2019). When they were given the opportunity to self-assess their work, good writing was produced since the learners attend the criteria provided for them. Learners also have the opportunity for feedback. That is to say, the learners conducting self-assessment acquired regular feedback from self-awareness of grammatical and linguistic rules after scrutinizing their own writing by means of the analytical scoring rubric and checklist. This process is also reinforced with the peer's feedback and teacher's feedback during the writing process, consequently, the learners can diagnose their powers and faults that require improvement from numerous ways of instruction. This will finally help them to be more active, participative, and motivated to learn and write accurately (Nedzinskaite, et al., 2006).

Conclusion

The present study was an attempt to investigate the interactive effect of criteria-referenced self-assessment and task type on the accuracy, lexical resources, and coherence of the advanced EFL learners' writing performance. The findings exposed that employing criteria-referenced self-assessment and shared tasks significantly contributed to augmenting the writing performance of Iranian EFL learners at advanced proficiency level.

Considering the accuracy and cohesion components, the findings exposed that there is a significant difference between criteria-referenced self-assessment and teacher-assessment, in which criteria-referenced self-assessment shows a higher mean score. However, there is no significant difference between criteria-referenced self-assessment and teacher-assessment regarding the lexical resources component. Moreover, in terms of task type, the results of accuracy, lexical resources, and coherence components showed a significant difference between independent and shared tasks in which the shared task type had a higher mean score. Finally, considering the interactive effect of task type and assessment type, the results revealed no significant difference regarding the accuracy, lexical resources, and coherence components of the learners' writing.

Grounded on the findings it can be concluded that EFL learners at advanced proficiency level typically possess sufficient linguistic and metalinguistic knowledge that can assist them to precisely evaluate their language learning. Thus, they do not have to be contingent completely on their teachers to provide them with feedback and instruction. Conversely, they can enlighten their peers, improve each other's performance during class activities, and be more conscious of their own individual learning problems and needs. This process can be more effective by noticing certain components and criteria that are applied in the assessment of language skills. Concerning the influence of self-assessment on writing performance, it is perceptible that the writing standards provided for the self-assessment process can enhance accurate writing. By having a group of fixed criteria, learners will know how their works are judged based on certain elements, checklists, and rubrics, which can be ultimately used by the learners. Self-assessment helps the learners to internalize the

criteria by which their performances are judged and assessed. In this case, learners can write well by comparing their writing contrary to the criteria, reflecting, and doing the necessary revisions. These criteria can act as role models in the place of teachers and they can manage and assess their own performance.

Considering the pedagogical implication of the study, it can be argued that EFL teachers have to know to what extent learners can assess their own work and performance in different skills and subskills. Additionally, EFL stakeholders, curriculum developers, teacher education courses, and methodologists give thoughtful consideration to alternate assessment forms and their sub-categories comprising peer- and self-assessment in EFL educational contexts. Informing learners about the required criteria in assessment and empowering them to employ self-assessment procedures in their writing performance can expressively contribute to writing development.

Further empirical studies can simply explore and compare criteria-referenced peer- and self-assessment among EFL learners at different proficiency levels. In this regard, certain variables like gender can be inspected. Moreover, the role of particular individual differences and personality traits can be added in future studies. Such studies can provide us with an inclusive understanding of EFL learners' feelings, thoughts, and perceptions in approaching self-assessment.

Like any other study, the current study suffered from several limitations, the most noteworthy of which included the limited size of the participant sample and the impracticality of selecting a random sample.

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Authors' Biographies

Behrooz Azabdaftari is the emeritus professor of Applied Linguistics at University of Tabriz. He holds a Ph.D. in Applied linguistics from College of Education, University of Illinois, America, 1976. He has published and presented numerous papers and books in different international journals and conferences. His main research interests are alternative linguistics, language teaching, literature, and translation.

Sanaz Sabermoghaddam Roudsari is a Ph.D. Candidate in TEFL at Islamic Azad University, Tabriz Branch, Iran. She received her B.A. in English Literature and M.A. in TEFL. Her research interests include Applied Linguistics, English for Specific Purposes, and Educational Psychology in foreign language learning and teaching.

Zohreh Seifoori is an associate professor in TEFL at Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Tehran Branch. Her main interests are language skills, methodology, and Task-based language Teaching. She has published many articles and participated in many national and international conferences.