Investigating the Effect of Metalinguistic Feedback on Improving Argumentative Writing Proficiency of Iranian High School Students

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ABSTRACT: This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of interactive metalinguistic feedback (IMF) on the Iranian middle school students' ability in argumentative writing. In order to fulfill this purpose, a mixed method design was adopted. The participants of this study were selected based on multi-stage sampling procedure in which, first 5 middle school were selected among the 35 existing high schools in Varamin and then 6 classes were selected from these schools randomly. Finally, 40 EFL students were sampled from the classes as the main participants of this study. In order to collect the required data, two sets of instruments were employed. To collect the quantitative data, a proficiency test, a researcher made writing test, and a self-assessment questionnaire were utilized. In the quantitative phase of the study, before the starting of the treatment, the participants were divided into two groups i.e., Interactive Metalinguistic Feedback Group (IMFG) and Control Group (CG) which were give the writing test as pre-test to ensure the homogeneity of them in terms of initial writing ability. Then, a 12-session treatment was offered to examine the effect of the intervention. At the end of the treatment sessions, a post test of writing was given to the participants to determine the effectiveness of treatment. Furthermore, a self-assessment questionnaire was also administered to collect data on the students' attitudes toward the integration of IMF in the learning process. For the purpose of gathering the qualitative data as the complimentary to the quantitative results, an interview accompanied by an observation was also conducted after the treatment. The findings of this study suggested that integration of IMF had significant impact on the development of argumentative writing ability among the EFL students. It was also found that the Iranian EFL students showed positive tendencies and attitudes toward the using IMF as a teaching procedure in the classroom. They also believed that IMF could potentially provide an opportunity for effective scaffolding; situated learning, meaning construction, social learning, and dialogic interaction.

KEY TERMS: EFL students, argumentative writing, feedback, metalinguistic, interactive, mixed method

INTRODUCTION

Learning how to write a coherent and effective composition or essay is seen as a difficult skill and needs a long period of achievement of cognitive development that contrasts sharply with the acquisition of speaking skill (Kellogg, 2008). It is believed that thinking and writing are considered twins because writing involves not only language systems but also cognitive s the sense that writers turn to account indeed what they have already learned or what they have stored in long-term memory, either by rapidly retrieving it from long-term memory or by actively maintaining it in short-term working memory (Hashemian & Farhang-Ju, 2018). According to this framework sketched by Kellogg (2006), it is proposed that because of the limited capacity of working memory on progression through these stages, English language teachers should be given special attention not only to language generation, but also for planning ideas, reviewing ideas, and coordinating all three processes. Therefore, it is understood that advanced high school and college students will be a proficient writer by going through the first two stages if English language teachers could achieve the necessary cognitive control over their students' cognitive processes by reducing the demands on their central executive working memory (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987). Therefore, writing is recognized as a form of problem-solving through which the problem of content - what to say it - and the problem of rhetoric-how to say it - uses up the writer's attention and other resources of working memory. That is why it is said that writing tasks can help EFL/ESL learners to develop their mental thinking. Abeer and Al-Zoubi (2018) asserted that one of the essential and crucial communicative skills that EFL learners need to be equipped with is writing. Writing is also considered as a multifaceted communicative process including the generation, analysis, synthesis of ideas, the organization of discourse, the control of sentence structure, the control of vocabulary, and spelling (Williams, 2012).

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It is also assumed that one of the hardest areas in a second language to master during the process of language acquisition (L2) is writing, and it is also commonly considered as a challenge for both second and foreign language learners is writing (Williams, 2012). Its saliency among the other skills ultimately results from the fact that it augments and accumulates linguistic features, grammatical structures, vocabulary, collocations, and etc. that EFL/ESL learners have already learned (Ismail, 2011). Therefore, it is crucial for EFL/ESL teachers and practitioners to give more attention to the skill in their classes in order to prepare students to cope with the communicative demands of real-life situations. As Doughty (2003) maintained that one aspect of L2 writing ability is linguistic accuracy and proposed that effective L2 pedagogy should give special attention to linguistic forms when L2 learners engage in the performance of tasks.

Han (2002) asserted that any instruction which is based on free-error correction will result in false fluency, fossilization, and overgeneralization. Metalinguistic feedback, taken as an explicit type of corrective feedback, refers to the use of correct L2 linguistic forms typically in form of a comment (Ellis, 2009). It provides L2 learners with some form of explicit comment about the nature of the errors they have made. Metalinguistic feedback has an effect on L2 learners' explicit knowledge (Bitchener, 2012). Bitchener (2012) claims that metalinguistic explanation promotes the development of explicit knowledge. In this sense, metalinguistic feedback can explicitly provide L2 learners with the opportunity to recognize their ungrammatical statements. Long (2015) explained that focus on form can also be (a) interactive focus on form in which certain attention is given to form that occurs during an activity which is primarily meaning-focused and it includes both communicative or linguistic problem. It can be also non-interactive in which the primary focus is on comprehending the input while learners' attention is also attracted to the target feature(s). On the other hand, many studies conducted in this field considered metalinguistic corrective feedback as an important factor in enhancing EFL/ESL learners' writing ability (Bitchener & Storch, 2015; Ferris, 2004, Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Sheen, 2007; Vyatkina, 2011). According to Pourdana, Nour, & Yousefi (2020), for many EFL professional, the critical concern about written corrective feedback (WCF) has never been whether it is useful or not, but how and when to use it effectively to help students improve their writing performance. Many studies authenticated that the effectiveness of WCF on improving L2 learners writing indicating that WCF can notably draw the language learners' attention to accurate linguistic forms that plays a critical role in facilitating L2 language acquisition (e.g., Farrokhi, Zohrabi & Chehr Azad, 2017; Gholami & Narimani, 2012; Hashemian & Farhang ju, 2018; Pourmousavi & Mohamadi Zenouzagh, 2020). Conversely, Truscott (2007) believed that improvements made during revision through WCF are not the evidence on the effectiveness of correction for improving learners' writing ability. Strong evidence on the necessity to focus on language form, not focus on language forms, is indicated to the French immersion programs in 1974 in Canada, when researchers reported that although learners progressed in fluency, communicative abilities, and their confidence in using French, they commonly failed to master French grammar use even after years of extensive exposure (Harley & Swain, 1984). The focus-on-form movement (Long, 1991; Long, Inagaki & Ortega, 1998) which is based on the assumption that certain attention is given to form that occurs during an activity which is primarily meaning-focused and it includes both communicative or linguistic problem. Therefore, L2 teachers are encouraged to respond with detailed and comprehensive feedback to students' writing with the hope of engaging them with WCF and improving their grammatical accuracy. Supposedly, a variety of WCF practices have been used to attract L2 learners' attention to linguistic structures and to trigger self-monitoring of their process of language learning (Hyland, 2002; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2010). Therefore, in order for EFL students achieve a good degree of argumentative writing ability, it is necessary for English language teachers initially to know how and when to use WCF effectively and secondly to expose learners to real conditions in which the integration of language skills, being problem solver, and the development of cognitive style, considering writing as a social activity, exposing EFL learners to authentic genres occur.Despite the copious studies on the effectiveness of different types of written corrective feedback on L2 writers' proficiency, there is still no consensus on how and which one can actually help learners become more accurate writers in the EFL classrooms (e.g., Ferris, 1999; 2002; Truscott, 1996; 2007). Many studies conducted in this field, most of them considered written corrective feedback as an important factor in enhancing EFL/ESL learners' writing ability (Bitchener & Knoch, 2015; Bitchener & Storch, 2015; Chandler, 2003; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Sheen, 2007; Vyatkina, 2011), while others considered written corrective feedback is ineffective and even harmful in EFL/ESL writing (e.g., Sheppard, 1992; Truscott, 2004; Vengadasamy, 2002). Despite all the aforementioned research works, it seems that there are some serious controversies concerning the effectiveness of corrective feedback and the research findings have yielded mixed results. Furthermore, most of the previously conducted studies have been carried out merely on the empirical bases and the other complementary method of investigation such as identifying the teachers and learners' perceptions and attitudes, as well as the actual observation of the classroom performance have been largely neglected and overestimated. In order to fill the existing gaps in this regard and shed some new lights on the effectiveness of metalinguistic corrective feedback, the present study was conducted. This study was primarily intended to investigate the impact of interactive metalinguistic feedback on the EFL learners' argumentative writing. It was also conducted to identify the EFL learners' perception of the interactive metalinguistic feedback as the most effective approaches to writing as a means of enhancing their proficiency in writing argumentative essay.

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REVIEW OF LITERATURE
Interactive Metalinguistic feedback
One of the pedagogical tools that has recently received substantial attention in second language acquisition (SLA), taken as a focus-on-form instrument is Long's interactive metalinguistic feedback (Hashemian, & Farhang-Ju, (2018) It is highly agreed that L2 teachers use metalinguistic feedback as a pedagogical technique to draw L2 leaners' attention to erroneous utterances. Thus, it aids them to notice L2 features that have not yet been learnt or have been partially learnt. Long views focus on form as an interactional phenomenon that occurs when a communication problem arises and is addressed while learners are interacting with the teacher or other learners and negotiation of meaning occurs (Suzuki, 2004).

According to Long (2009), the interventionist approaches (e.g., GTM, audiolinguliasm, etc.) place central role on the target language by presenting structures, notions, functions or lexical items one at a time with the aim that they might be later used in communication. Therefore, Long (2009) asserted that simply implicit learning is not sufficient for developing native-like proficiency in L2 learners, because adult L2 learner's brain has already lost its flexibility and it has been tuned to the L1, that is the flexibility of the brain cells decreases and the dominance of the mother language has been fixed. Schmidt (1990) noticing hypothesis states that noticing is essential and prerequisite for L2 learning and L2 learners must pay conscious attention to input in order for learning to occur, that is conscious attention or awareness to the form of input at the level of "noticing", is necessary to subsequent second language acquisition (SLA). He hypothesized that noticing is considered a means whereby learners take control over the information or the input they received. This function of noticing is to turn input into intake (Corder, 1967). He suggests that intake is what learners attend to from the input received. Schmidt (1986) claim that noticing is the only factor that empower L2 learners to become aware of the gap between what they hear in the input and what they can actually produce (output) on the basis of their current interlanguage systems: this process is known as Schmidt's (1990) noticing the gap hypothesis.

As a reaction to Krashen's (1985) input hypothesis which was based on the premise that by providing simply comprehensible input in environment second language acquisition will take place, Swain's (1985) output hypothesis characterized that output is essential because it pushes learners to carry out deeper linguistic processing in their productive skills including speaking and writing. Swain's Comprehensible Output Hypothesis (1985) maintains that the development of a learners' communicative competence does not merely depend on comprehensible input but also the learner's output has an independent and indispensable role to play. So the hypothesis claims that the act of producing language constitutes the process of second language learning (Swain 2005). It is believed that when L2 learners produce output, the they may confront and experience difficulties in conveying their intended meaning. In order for dealing with these problems, corrective feedback is necessary, in fact, such corrective feedback from teachers, i.e., interactive metalinguistic feedback, according to the current study, would be taken as a comprehensible input and the L2 learners may process language with focused attention (Abadikhah, & Ashoori, 2012).

The Role of Metalinguistic Feedback from Sociocultural Perspective
According to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1978), L2 learners are collaboratively enabled to do something within a developmental zone that they would not otherwise be able to do on their own. Moreover, the idea of ZPD refers to a domain of knowledge or skills wherein L2 learners are not capable of independent functioning; otherwise they can get the targeted result when they are scaffolded (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). Nassaji and Swain (2000), in a study on the effect of negotiated ZPD-related corrective feedback versus random corrective feedback on the learning of English articles, reported that corrective feedback is effective when provided within learners' ZPD. They argued that teacher's scaffolding refers to a situation where a knowledgeable participant can create supportive conditions in which the novice can participate, and extend his or her current skills and knowledge to higher levels of competence. involved more implicit corrective feedback than explicit corrective feedback, as L2 learners moved towards autonomous use of language structures or self-regulation. According to the sociocultural perspective, second language learning (SLA) is a process attributed to learner's participation in social activities where negotiation of meaning is a key element to effective learning. Accordingly, from a sociocultural perspective, corrective feedback is considered to focus on social negotiation. Consequently, as mentioned in the study interactional view of metalinguistic feedback where feedback takes the form of joint participation and meaning negotiation consequently, meaningful transactions between the learner and the teacher will be established.

Grammatical Knowledge and Metalinguistic Understanding
Further examination of the relationship between grammatical knowledge and meta-linguistic knowledge signifies that explicit grammatical knowledge is commonly referred to as meta-linguistic knowledge which can be achieved through conscious awareness tasks or activities (Myhill & Jones 2015). Such a definition focuses on students' awareness of their declarative knowledge of language. The conception of the central role of metalinguistic awareness is supported by the social cultural view of grammar represented by Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistics and by Vygotsky's (1986) sociocultural theory (Williams, 2012). As observed earlier, Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p. 15) considers grammar as 'abstract semiosis', a resource to assist students in learning how to mean and the 'driving force' for their language development. Becoming meta-linguistically aware and being able to think grammatically about language is based on the assumption that grammar serves as a semiotic mediating tool to develop

knowledge about language (Williams, 2012). Likewise, Vygotsky (1986) argues that what learners will develop as mediational means in writing tasks is influenced by what they have become aware of in language. Consequently, the issue of metalinguistic awareness or language knowledge of grammar as a semiotic tool for writing is an important issue for research into this domain. Additionally, Bialystok's (1987, 1999) study on meta-linguistic development in bilinguals is based on the premise that meta-linguistic awareness involves two related components of language processing, analysis and control, which are responsible for language learning and use (e.g. fluent reading, writing coherent texts). According to Bialystok (1999) the analysis component of language processing can be taken as the ability to represent explicit and conscious knowledge and the control one as the ability to selectively attend to and apply knowledge. Bialystok argues that developments in linguistic abilities are a result of developments of analysis and control. In the proposed study we will examine learners' reflective capacity in talking about writing (analysis) and transferring that meta-linguistic understanding into their own writing (control). The concepts of analysis and control have some resonance with Gombert's division of his definition of meta-linguistic understanding into, firstly, 'activities of reflection on language and use' (1992, p. 13), similar to Bialystok's analysis; and secondly, individuals' 'ability to monitor and plan their own methods of linguistic processing' (1992, p. 13), which is akin to Bialystok's control. Myhill and Jones (2015) maintained that from the Bialystok's analysis, it may be understood that meta-linguistic activity involves both recognizing and identifying patterns of language use, and the ability to regulate learner's own language use and language choices.

Argumentative Writing
Argumentative writing is a kind of writing in which the primary assumption of the argumentative genre is audience awareness, therefore the writer tries to convince the reader about his/her opinion with logical claims (Sasaki, 2000). Argumentation is considered as an inevitable genre of human life (LeeKrause & Obrien, 1999). They believed that at the very early stages of life, children try to persuade others for attaining their desires and attaining favor. For this purpose, they apply various strategies such as crying, persisting, and logical reasoning to achieve their aims. By the time they reach high school, students can evaluate themselves in terms of their own argumentative ability. The arguments made to them (Rex et al., 2010). A number of studies signify that however, in an EFL environment, it should be taught systematically, because of the specific genre including register and rhetoric (Lee Krause &Obrien, 1999; Nystrand & Graff, 2000; Olive, Kellogg, & Piolat, 2008; Rashidi & Dastkhezr, 2009). According to Lee Krause and Obrient (1999), audience awareness is the main factor in argumentative writing. Based on this rationale, it is most effective for practitioners and teachers to evaluate their senior secondary school students 'argumentative essays in terms of the employment of meta-discourse features in order to trigger such awareness. The findings of the study clearly revealed that the effective teaching of writing as a process and writing an argument requires the development of sophisticated ideas about the nature and sources of data and therefore the role of language generally. In addition, the results of the study reveal that teaching argumentation is not possible by considering it as a matter of form and text elaboration; rather, it's a matter of idea expansion and interpretation.

The Need to Teach Argumentative Writing
From literature, the researcher believes that argument writing is a kind of skill that students need to know for success in real life and college. The purpose of argument writing is using logic and evidence pragmatically and grammatically to convince an audience of the soundness and validity of claims (Sasaki, 2000). They have an extremely craving for arguing points with their teachers, peers, parents, and siblings, although They do not always acknowledge opposing viewpoints or anchor their arguments with meaningful evidence. Argumentative writing is a kind of writing in which the primary assumption of the argumentative genre is audience awareness, therefore the writer tries to convince the reader about his/her opinion with logical claims (Sasaki, 2000). Argumentation is considered as an inevitable genre of human life (LeeKrause&Obrien, 1999). They believed that at the very early stages of life, children try to persuade others for attaining their desires and attaining favor. For this purpose, they apply various strategies such as crying, persisting, and logical reasoning to achieve their aims. By the time they reach high school, students can evaluate themselves in terms of their own argumentative ability. The arguments made to them (Rex et al., 2010). A number of studies signify that however, in an EFL environment, it should be taught systematically, because of the specific genre including register and rhetoric (Lee Krause &Obrien, 1999; Nystrand & Graff, 2000; Olive, Kellogg, & Piolat, 2008; Rashidi & Dastkhezr, 2009; Sasaki, 2000). Therefore, it is necessary to teach argument writing to high school students and prepare them to broaden their knowledge, develop ideas, and communicate effectively using relevant and authentic evidence to be able to argue logically and thoughtfully in real-world situations, get ready for success in college, and meet the needs of their life. That is why students need explicit instruction and feedback in argument writing as they are not likely to learn to develop strong arguments by themselves.

Studies on the Metalinguistic Feedback and Writing Skill
Ebadi (2014) tried to investigate the possible effects of focused Meta-linguistic highlighted error feedback on grammatical accuracy of writing among Iranian intermediate EFL learners. After selecting 60 homogenous participants among 90 university students attending Ghaemshahr University and randomly assigning them to two intact groups of 30 students, the researcher exposed the participants of the experimental group to 12 sessions of the intended treatment. After the completion of the study and performing

the due data analysis on the results, a significant progress was found among the subjects in the experimental group as compared to the control group.

Saadi and Sadat (2015) investigated the effects of direct and metalinguistic electronic feedback (Efeedback) on Iranian EFL learners' writing accuracy and attitudes toward computer assisted language learning (CALL). Twenty-nine students in two intact English writing classes comprised the participants of the study. A mixed-method design was used for data collection and analysis. In addition to the instruction provided similarly in both classes, based on random assignment, the students in one group received direct electronic corrective feedback (DECF) using Ginger software. In the other class, the students received metalinguistic electronic corrective feedback (MECF) in the form of error codes provided through Markin4 software. Results revealed that the use of E-feedback developed the learners' writing accuracy and attitudes toward CALL. However, there were no significant differences between the final overall writing accuracy scores of the DECF and MECF groups and their gain scores. Regarding writing accuracy components (i.e., structure, vocabulary, and punctuation), although the MECF group obtained higher scores in three components, a statistically significant difference between the two groups was found only in terms of vocabulary gain scores. Finally, in the interviews, the students in both groups referred to some barriers in the implementation of CALL in their context as well as some of its merits.

Hashemian and Farhang-Ju (2018) examined the (possible) effects of metalinguistic feedback on FI/FD intermediate L2 learners' writing accuracy. To this aim, 52 Iranian intermediate L2 learners in intact classes were classified into FI/FD learners through Group Embedded Figures Test (GEFT). They were, then, randomly assigned into 2 experimental and 1 control groups. Experimental groups received metalinguistic feedback and the control group received no feedback. Two sample IELTS tests (i.e., the Writing section) were used as the pretest and posttest to measure the participants' learning of English articles as a result of metalinguistic feedback. Data were analyzed through ANCOVA and post-hoc. Although the results revealed that both the FI/FD learners benefited from metalinguistic feedback, the FD participants outperformed the FI ones.

Benjamin (2020) explored the support for developing graduate students' language awareness in academic writing drafts through the provision of grammar lessons and feedback -- indirect and metalinguistic. The study was conducted in a basic academic writing module, offered to both masters' and PhD students at a university in Singapore. To gauge whether language awareness was supported, students completed three surveys and the researcher analyzed errors and their subsequent revisions in students' written drafts. The survey results showed students' positive perception towards grammar lessons and feedback, in terms of their usefulness and valuable impact on writing skills. Nonetheless, when students' written drafts were examined, it was noted that the impact of feedback was largely centered on the revision of grammar within drafts of the same task, instead of other higher order writing skills or in a new writing task.

Gorman and Ellis (2019) conducted a quasi-experimental study of integrated form-focused instruction for 33 children aged 9–12 years. They completed four dictogloss tasks designed to elicit the use of the Present Perfect Tense and received instruction consisting of either explicit metalinguistic explanation (group 1), direct written correction (group 2) or no form-focused instruction (the comparison group) between performing the tasks. Accuracy in the production of the target structure across the four tasks was variable and showed no improvement from the first to the last. Nor were there any statistically significant differences in accuracy among the three groups. The results support some earlier studies of young children that have failed to show that FFI benefits young children. This may be because children fail to make use of their metalinguistic knowledge of grammatical features when undertaking meaning-focused writing tasks.

Solhi Andarab (2019) investigated the effectiveness of spatial intelligence-based (SIB) metalinguistic written CF on EFLlearners' development in writing. To do so, 47 intermediate learners were randomly assigned into two groups. The learners in the first group received SIB metalinguistic written CF for their errors in writing, while the ones in the second group only obtained metalinguistic written CF for their errors. Results indicated that the accuracy (mechanics) and style of the writing of the first group of students who received SIB correction for their linguistic errors excelled that of the second group students whose received written correction was only metalinguistic. However, there was no significant difference between the groups in the content, and organization of their writing.

Research Questions

- Does interactive metalinguistic feedback (IMF) have any significant effect on the EFL students' argumentative writing ability?
- What is the Iranian EFL students' attitudes and feelings towards the IMF as a teaching intervention and their proficiency assessment in writing English?
- What is the Iranian EFL students' perceptions of the integrating IMF in the process of writing instruction?

METHOD
Participants

The population of this study was 195 fourth year high school students (pre-university course) in humanities, experimental and mathematical fieldswithin the age range of 15 to 18 who were studying in middle schools of Varamin town, located 35 km from

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Tehran, in the academic year 1399-1400. The participants in the study are male and female who were learning English as a foreign language. That is, the majority of them speak Persian as their mother tongue and a minority of them speak languages other than Persian (i.e., Azari) as their first language.The sampling method was multi-stage cluster sampling. First, out of 35 high-school schools in Varamin town, regardless of the gender of the schools, 5 schools were randomly selected and then from each school two classes are randomly selected out of 5 or 6 classes studying in the fourth year of pre-university course. As a result of such sampling, out of these five schools, three boys 'schools and two girls' schools have been chosen as participating schools in this study. Finally, one class is randomly selected out of two as the experimental written corrective feedback group and one class as the control group. The number of students in each group was20. Some of the participants in the study were EFL learners in private institutes out of their schools, so it is necessary for the researcher to be aware of the homogeneity of the participants and also to reduce the effect of their proficiency level on the results of the study in both groups in all five schools.

Design of the Study

In order to answer the research questions above, a mixed-method studywas designed; more specifically, the convergent parallel design was implemented. This design enables the researcher to combine strengths of the quantitative and qualitative approaches and to avoid weaknesses resulting from sampling and the other sources. To sum it up, the researcher is going to triangulate the data from qualitative analysis of interview and observation together with quantitative analysis of students' pretest and posttest tests scores. That is why in this study, the researcher follows a mixed method approach in which students writing are quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed and compared after implementing metalinguistic feedback treatments to their initial argumentative writings.

Instruments

For the quantitative part of the mixed method study, the researcher used the following instruments and materials: 1) proficiency test; 2) written English tests; 3) Analytic Rating Scale for EFL Argumentative Writing.

Proficiency test: To assure the homogeneity of learners in terms of their level of proficiency, Key English Test (KET) was administered before conducting the study.Students were supposed to take the test in 80 minutes, 70 minutes is allocated to the reading and writing part and 10 minutes for the speaking part. It included three sections, reading and writing, listening, and speaking. Reading and writing includes nine parts: Parts 1-5 tests the reading skill and part 6-9 concentrates on testing the writing skill. Listening includes five parts with a total of 25 questions ranging from short exchanges to longer dialogues and monologues. The speaking part has two sections and lasts for 8-10 minutes. First, learners will interact with the researcher for 3-5 minutes, giving personal information, for example, name, place of origin, study, family, etc. Learners are expected to be able to talk about their daily life, interests, likes, etc. Then, two learners interacted with each other. KET has two cut scores, pass and pass with merit. Those who get 70 pass the test and are placed at pre-intermediate level of proficiency and those who get higher pass the test with merit. Since in this study the listening part is excluded, the cut score was 52.5,corresponding 70 out of 100. Those who got 50-52 would pass the test and were placed at pre-intermediate level of proficiency.

Written English Tests: Two written English tests were prepared. One of these tests fulfilled the pretest goals and the other test served the posttest purposes. The prompts of these tests had three main parts. The first part included the time limit of the test. The second part included the topic on which the test-takers had to write, and the third part showed in how many words the essays had to be composed. To avoid practice effects, the researchers selected two different topics for the tests.

Analytic Rating Scale for EFL Argumentative Writing: This scale was used to score the pretest and posttest essays of the participants. Note should be taken of the fact that in order to develop this scale, the researcher is going to conduct a three-strand mixed methods study prior to the present investigation. Composed of one quantitative and two qualitative strands, this mixed study factor-analyzed 172 ELT experts' analyses of the genre of argumentation, and it content-analyzed 20 authentic and 30 inauthentic argumentative texts. Resulting from two meta-inferences made in the course of this earlier study, the Analytic Rating Scale for EFL Argumentative Writing is constructed. Basically, the researcher used factor analysis in the first strand of this mixed methods study in order to guarantee that the resulting scale would possess acceptable construct validity.

Self-Assessment Questionnaires. The self-assessment questionnaires was another important data source sustaining an improvement in writing proficiency. There were ten items in this questionnaire. The results demonstrate the students' attitudes and feelings towards the teaching intervention and their proficiency assessment in writing English. A Likert scale from one to five is used for each statement of the questionnaires. In the last week and after the treatment, the experimental group wasasked to complete self-assessment questionnaires concerning their improvement of writing proficiency and perceptions of the teaching of writing. The self-assessment questionnairewas administered to the students after treatment for the purpose of gaining an insight into their perceptions of and feeling towards English writing instruction and learning from their experience during the treatment.

Semi-structured Interview. In the current study, the researcher selected semi-structured interviews that mediate the other interviews including unstructured and structured. Semi-structured interviews are based on exploratory techniques that combine pre-

determined open-ended questions. They are conducted two times, in the first session and in the last session, only 20 students will be asked to participate in the interview session to get their experiences, perceptions and feelings about the two approaches to writing argumentative essays. The first interview was held after the participants take the pre-test (second class) to obtain an insight on their experience with writing. The interview also helped the researcher to gain an understanding of the participants' employment of argumentative writing strategies to start and finish writing tasks. The second interview was conducted after the participants write the post-test at the end of the semester to record any changes to the students' use of the argumentative writing strategies they have learned. Although the interviews did not involve all the participants in the experimental group, the collected data were helpful to account for any changes to the students' writing scores and argumentative writing strategies.

Observation Scheme. Observation is used as a tool for data collection in the context of this particular study. The observation that used in this study was a participant and overt one, as the researcher joins the classes he observes, interacted with them, participates in their activities, and writes notes, and later reflects on his observations and the participants are also aware that they are being observed. The purpose of using observation was to understand the context of this study and to explore the students' experience and feelings across the writing course about the two approaches to writing argumentative essays. In this research, the researcher uses observation checklists to initially investigate the relationship between students' participation and interest in learning process and to secondly investigate the extent of the effect of both interactive metalinguistic feedback and genre based instruction on participants' argumentative writing.Observation checklists help the researcher to collect data through observing which types of activities are occurring in the setting. It allows the researcher to record information quickly about how students perform in relation to specific outcomes from the program of studies (Kawulich, 2012).

Estimating the Reliability and Validity of the Research Instruments
The following sections demonstrate the results gained from the analysis of the reliability of the instruments used in this study obtained in the piloting stage. In order to calculate the reliability of the research instruments including written English tests, analytic rating scale for EFL argumentative writing, self-assessment questionnaires, and observation scheme.

Table 1. Reliability Indices of Research Instruments

Instruments	Items	r
Written English tests	20	.78
Analytic rating scale	18	.83
Self-assessment questionnaires	10	.85
Observation scheme	13	.79

As shown in Table1, the reliability indices of the research instruments are satisfactory to be utilized in the current study. In addition to the above research instruments, in the second phase of the study, the researcher personally carried out a semi-structured interview with the participants. The interview sessions were conducted in the hope to bring about reliable and valid results. To this end, the researcher initially created a friendly atmosphere to make the students feel comfortable. Having introduced himself, the interviewer informed the interviewees of the purpose of the interview but avoided providing too much information about the research study in order to preclude the formation of bias in the respondents. In a bid to gauge the reliability of the interview questions, two language experts in Applied Linguistics were requested to evaluate the relevance and appropriateness of the questions through a short interview session. The amount of consistency and agreement in the experts' responses was measured and considered as the yardstick for the reliability.

Procedures of analyzing concurrent quantitative and qualitative data
The study was directed by the six steps recommended by Creswell and Clark (2011) to analyze quantitative and qualitative data. *First*, preparing data for quantitative data analysis involves converting the raw data obtained from the results of the writing pre-tests and post-tests data into numeric values for each student. For doing so, after checking the homogeneity of all groups, initially the researcher gave the participants of the experimental group, a pretest in the second session of the course of the study. In the pretest, they were asked to write on the topic "*Holidays and Birthdays Are Moments to Come Together. How Are You Adapting During the Pandemic?*" using between 150 and 200 words within a time limit of 45 minutes.

On the one hand, in the second session onwards, in each session, the researcher initially gave participants of the metalinguistic feedback group one topic. The topics were chosen such that they would elicit students' arguments or view points on a topic that should be presented in the form of claim (Paul & Elder, 2008). Next, the learners write on the topic out of class. One of the topics, for example, require them to write an argumentative essay, is about *"Is Online Learning as Good as Face-to-Face Learning?"*. The other topics, likewise,are "Should Everyone Learn at Least One Other Language?", What Role Will Technology Play in Our

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Education during the Pandemic?,At What Age Should Children Be Allowed to Go Places Without Adult Supervision?, and Should High Schools Do More to Prepare You for Careers?

After writing the essays, the students handed in their products through Whats App or Email and the researcher then provided the learners with metalinguistic feedback in a form of comments and explanations of errors. During the study, lasted for 12 weeks, these participants composed five argumentative essays on five different topics assigned by the researchers according to the participants'' needs and motivation. In this study the researcher will follow Harmer' (2007) concept of four stages in the writing process: planning, drafting, editing, and final version, in order to teach argumentative writing through interactive metalinguistic feedback approach.The participants in the control group did not receive any feedback and were instructed in the classroom through conventional methods. At the end of the treatment sessions, a writing post-test were given to the both groups of the participants to determine the effect of the treatment. Furthermore, a self-assessment questionnaire was administered to the experimental group to identify the tendency an attitude toward the integration of IMF as a teaching and learning strategy in the classroom. Having finished the quantitative data collection, an interview accompanied by observation was conducted to obtain much more complimentary findings concerning the perceptions of the participants in the experimental group about the employing IMF in the English classes. After finishing the data collection, the obtained data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, as well as them-based analysis.

RESULTS

Homogeneity of the Participants in terms of Writing Skill

Before conducting the main analyses, it was necessary to investigate the homogeneity of the participants in terms of initial writing skill to ensure that there was not any pre-existing difference between the participants in this regard before the intervention. In order to make sure that all the participants possessed the similar level of writing ability before the treatment, an independent sample t-test analysis was conducted and the summary of results was presented in the following tables. The descriptive statistics for the participants' scores on the pre-test of the writing was demonstrated in the table 3 below.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for the Participants' Scores on Pre-test of Argumentative Writing

Test	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test (Writing)	Control	20	4.02	2.09	.38
	IMFG	20	4.39	1.72	.31

- IMFG: Interactive Metalinguistic Feedback Group

As can be seen obviously in Table 3 above, the mean scores of the control group (M = 4.02, SD = 2.09) and IMFG (M = 4.39, SD = 1.72) did not differ greatly on pre-test of writing. However, in order to ensure the significance and meaningfulness of the descriptive findings, the results illustrated in the t-test table should be taken into account.

Table 3. Independent Sample T-test Analysis Means Score of the Writing Pre-test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference		Low	Up
Pre-Test (Writing)	Equal variances assumed	55	.460	.806	58	.423	4	49		.59	.39
	Equal variances not assumed			.806	5.91	.424		49		.59	.39

As displayed in Table 4, t value and significance level (t (58) = 0.805, p = 0.423, p > 0.05) were indicative of no significant difference between the control group and experimental group in terms of initial writing skill. Thus, it can be inferred that the participants in the two groups have approximately similar writing ability before the main phase of the study.

Main Analysis

In this section the research questions of the present study were answered and the null hypotheses were rejected on the basis of the conducted statistical analyses.

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Investigating the First Research Question

The first research question sough to investigate whether interactive metalinguistic feedback have any significant effect on the EFL learners' ability in argumentative writing skill. In order to answer the research question, an independent samples t-test analysis was conducted. The descriptive statistics was presented in the following table.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for the Participants' Scores on Post-test of Argumentative Writing

Test	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test (Writing)	Control	20	5.11	1.02	.41
	IMFG	20	8.75	2.32	.28

- IMFG: Interactive Metalinguistic Feedback Group

As the above table indicates, the mean score of the IMGF (M= 8.75, SD= 2.32) was considerably higher than the control group (M= 5.11, SD= 1.02) in the writing post-test. To ensure the significance of this difference, the results presented in the t-test table (Table 6) should be scrutinized.

Table 5. Independent Sample T-test Analysis Means Score of the Writing Post-test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means					Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Difference		Low	Up
Pre-Test (Writing)	Equal variances assumed	55	.000	-7.89	38	.001	3.67	29		.96	.58
	Equal variances not assumed			-7.89	37	.001		29		.96	.58

It was illustrated in the above table that the difference in the mean scores of the writing post-test for IMGF and control groups was statistically significant ((t (38) = -7.89, p = 0.00, p < 0.05). It implies that the IMFG outperformed the control group in the regulative writing test and this superiority is statistically significant. In other words, those group of EFL learners who underwent the interactive metalinguistic feedback compared to the EFL learners who were taught writing courses through conventional methods without any feedback produced much better piece of regulative writing.

Investigating the second Research Question

The second research question sough to identify the participants' level of attitudes toward the integration of interactive metalinguistic feedback in the process of writing instruction in the classroom. In order to come up with the participants' attitudes, the descriptive results of the Self-Assessment Questionnaire were calculated for each items and presented in the following table.

Table 6.The Descriptive Statistics of the Questionnaire in IMFGs

Item	SA	A	F	SD	D	Mean	St.D
1. Classroom instruction is enough to improve my grammar in argumentative writing.	-	%2	%3	%10	%85	2.48	1.087
2. can write a thesis statement in a well-formed structure when the teacher provides an environment where I can practice how to write it. (Situated Learning).	%90	%6	%4	-	-	2.78	1.358
3. I am able to write English correctly after the teacher provides me with metalinguistic feedback in the form of comments on my grammatical errors. (ZPD).	%94	%4	%1	-	%1	3.39*	1.982

4. My writing skills will be improved when the teacher gives me a clue and let me fix the mistake on my own. (ZPD).	%97	%2	%1	-	-	3.55*	1.592
5. My writing skills will be improved when teachers fix the mistake by providing the correct target form.	-	%7	-	%89	%4	3.97	1.295
6. I can write a thesis statement in a well-formed structure when the teacher introduces it in an argumentative essay model and asks me to reconstruct it with the help of others. (Social Learning)	%97	%2	%1	-	-	2.22	1.767
7. I can write about advantages and disadvantages of doing something when I learn it through guided learning. (Situated Learning)	%97	%2	%1	-	-	2.26	1.204
8. Working with the teacher or in collaboration with others allows me the opportunity to be successful in writing my first draft (Social Learning).	%96	%3	%1	-	-	3.88	1.537
9. I can't write my first draft effortlessly based on my friend's questions, comments, and corrections.	-	-	%1	%96	%3	2.41	1.654
10. I can write an argumentative essay when the teacher directs and guides me to create a new one that matches with the target genre (ZPD).	%96	%3	%1	-	-	2.21	1.865
11. Metalinguistic feedback increases my confidence about my argumentative writing (ZPD).	%96	%3	%1	-	-	2.07	1.733
12. When I have lack of knowledge about an error, then interactive metalinguistic feedback won't be effective for me because it will make me confused.	-	%7	-	%89	%4	2.15	1.198
13.I feel relaxed when I write in English when the teacher provides me with the direct correct answer on my erroneous linguistic feature.	-	%4	-	%89	%4	2.19	1.005
14. I am able to write English correctly when teachers provide help but allow me to discover answers by myself. (ZPD).	%90	%6	%4	-	-	2.67	1.842
15. I can clearly understand the procedures of the argumentative essays when learning happens through cooperative or collaborative dialogue where the teacher corrects my errors indirectly. (Social learning)	%90	-	%6	%4	-	3.64*	1.987
16. Explicit correction may be more effective for me to make me a proficient argumentative writer than giving me interactive metalinguistic feedback.	%95	%4	%1	-	-	2.09	1.101
17. When I have lack of knowledge about an error, then interactive metalinguistic feedback will be effective for me because it will make me informed. (Dialogic Interaction).	%92	%4	%4	-	-	2.55	2.540
18. My writing skills will be improved when the teacher provides a dialogic situation where I experience how to write and how to correct my writing errors with the help of my teacher. (ZPD).	%93	%3	%4	-	-	2.49	1.806

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According to Table 4.18, the analysis of the results revealed that most of the participants in the second experimental group believed in the efficacy of the instruction based on the interactive metalinguistic feedback in development of the argumentative writing among Iranian EFL learners. In fact, in some of the items, the higher mean scores showed the participants' beliefs. The following items had the higher mean scores than other items: **Item 5** (M=3.97, SD=1.295, *My writing skills will be improved when teachers fix the mistake by providing the correct target form*), **Item 8** (M=3.64, SD=1.987, *Working with the teacher or in collaboration with others allows me the opportunity to be successful in writing my first draft (Social Learning)*), **Item 15** (M=3.88, SD=1.537, *I can clearly understand the procedures of the argumentative essays when learning happens through cooperative or collaborative dialogue where the teacher corrects my errors indirectly. (Social learning)*). **Item 4** (M=3.55, SD=1.9592, *My writing skills will be improved when the teacher gives me a clue and let me fix the mistake on my own*. (ZPD)), and **Item 3** (M=3.39, SD=1.982, *I am able to write English correctly after the teacher provides me with metalinguistic feedback in the form of comments on my grammatical errors. (ZPD)*). All in all, the results revealed that the participants had positive perception and attitudes toward using interactive metalinguistic feedback in the classroom.

In order to further explore the participants' attitudes and overall perceptions concerning the effectiveness and efficiency of IMF, an interview and observation was also carried out to gain much more complementary results in this regard.

Investigating the Third Research Question

The third research question evaluated how middle school students perceived interactive metalinguistic feedback as the most effective approach to writing to enhance their proficiency in writing argumentative essay. The results from the interviews and observations were gathered and reported to answer this question. In the following paragraphs, first, the interviews are presented, then, the findings from the observation are touched upon. As far as the efficacy of interactive metalinguistic feedback (IMF) is concerned, the data revealed some main themes. Each theme is discussed here and some related interview excerpts alone with the code are touched upon. Regarding the first theme, **Social learning**, the analysis of the interviews indicated the *Exchanging work in pairs* as the first code of this them. As one of the interviewees argued that:

(1)

We are asked to exchange our work in pairs. We can give comments, questions, suggestions, and corrections about the content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanic on our partner.

In addition, another respondent declared that:

(2)

When I am asked to exchange my work in pairs. It becomes easy for me to give comments on, questions, suggestions, and corrections about the content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanic to my partner.

The second code of the Social learning is related to *Learning through cooperation.* The participants empathized the significance of collaboration and cooperative learning. As one of them maintained that:

(3)

It promotes collaboration and cooperative learning. During the interaction, students can teach each other and utilize the synergy that comes from working together. Students who are working together can discuss and often figure out what to do without teachers' interaction.

The third extracted code from the interviews in this theme is *Constructing knowledge in interaction with peers.* Highlighting the constructing the knowledge during the interaction, one of the interviewees believes that:

(4)

I can express my feeling towards the things I like and do not like when I construct knowledge of my own in interaction with my peers. I have learned some useful words and phrases that will help say exactly what I think or feel and express my opinions clearly. In terms of the fourth code, *Reconstructing an argumentative essay with the help of others*, most of the participants pointed out that:

(5)

It will become easy for me to write an essay when the teacher introduces its structures in an argumentative essay model and asks me to reconstruct it with the help of others.

Being successful in writing when working in group is another code obtained from the interviews analysis. Concerning this code, one of the respondents answered:

(6)

Interactive metalinguistic feedback boosted my writing since during discussions the learners made use of each other's strengths to address their uncertainties and ambiguities and by interaction and collaboration, individual students could move from other regulation to self-regulation state and improved their writing and revision skills.

The fourth code included the claim that *Learning happens through cooperative or collaborative dialogue.* Supporting such claim, one of the learners argued that

(7)

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I can clearly understand the procedures of the argumentative essays when learning happens through cooperative or collaborative dialogue where the teacher corrects my errors through comments.

The second main theme extracted from the interviews was **Situated Learning.** The first code for this theme is*Learning in Context*. As two of the interviewees believed that:

(8)

Learning to write becomes easy when an authentic sample of an argumentative essay is presented to us and we are asked to read it and analyze it with the help of the teacher.

(9)

Writing becomes easy for me when the researcher gives an argumentative essay model as an authentic material in order to immerse us into the real usage of English communication.

Immersing students into the real usage of English communication is another code of the Situated learning theme. One the participants maintained that:

(10)

I can write my first draft paying attention to the different moves and sequences of the genre of an argumentative essay when I have learned them in an authentic essay.

The third code of this theme is *Learning through an argumentative essay model*.

(11)

I can write a thesis statement in a well-formed structure when the teacher introduces it in an argumentative essay model.

The fourth code is *Providing an environment where practicing how to write*. As one of the respondents explained:

(12)

It will be easy for me to learn how to write when the researcher provides an environment where I can practice how to write it.

Another obtained code from the interviews is *Understanding the targets through providing students with a model text*:

(13)

I clearly understand the whole structure of an argumentative essay when the teacher provides us with a model text and analyze it in context.

The final code is called *Feeling relaxed when we are presented with a model text.* In relation to this code, one of the participants maintained that:

(14)

I feel relaxed when we are presented with different parts of the schematic structure of an argumentative essay with its different moves using the model text.

Scaffolding was the third theme extracted. *Helping students to understand sth* was the first code related to this theme. As two respondents confirmed:

(15)

The researcher explains the nature of an argumentative essay, and also gives a sample of an argumentative essay purpose, the function, the generic structure, and the language features to us in order to make us understand them.

(16)

The researcher gives us some topics to write and allows us to work with him in order to practice the task of writing.

Other participants argued that they were scaffold via interactive metalinguistic feedback:

(17)

The researcher provides us with corrective feedback in a form of comments and explanations of errors when we have problem in writing.

(18)

When I have lack of knowledge about an error, then interactive metalinguistic feedback will be effective for me.

The third theme is **Dialogic Interaction**,which include two codes asMotivating participants and Learning writing skills through interaction with and assistance from peers:

(19)

The researcher interacts with students to motivate participants to the topic of the sample essay by relating it to their lives.

(20)

The topic, function, generic structure, and the language features of the sample will be analyzed in groups of two or three through negotiation of meaning.

Final theme is ZPD. Regarding this theme, providing suitable input and support were the main codes. This is clearly stated by the interviewees:

(21)

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The researcher explains the purpose, the function, the generic structure, and the language features of the sample essay to provide suitable input in order to make them understand them.

(22)

The researcher provides us with supports to the extent that make it easier for us to understand the generic structures of an argumentative essay.

(23),

We can write our draft based on our friend questions, comments, and corrections, then the researcher provides us with metalinguistic feedback in a form of comments and explanations of errors and allow us to discover solutions by ourselves.

RESULTS OF THE OBSERVATIONS

After analyzing the interviews, the results from the observations of Interactive Metalinguistic Feedback Groupwere analyzed and reported to either verify or nullify the previous findings. The findings from the observation were demonstrated in the following table.

Table 7. Occurrence of Type of Teaching Sessions in Interactive Metalinguistic Feedback Group

No.	Type of Teaching	Frequency	Percent
1	Scaffolding	4	30.7
2	Situated Learning	2	15.3
3	Meaning Construction	2	15.3
4	ZPD	2	15.3
5	Social Learning	1	7.6
6	Dialogic Interaction	1	7.6
	Total	**13**	**100**

DISCUSSION

The current study was set to examine whether were there any significant differences between argumentative writing competence of the participants before and after treatments of interactive metalinguistic feedback instruction. In addition, it evaluated how middle school students perceived interactive metalinguistic feedback as approaches to writing as a means of enhancing their proficiency in writing argumentative essay.

The first major finding of this study suggested that the EFL learners who underwent the interactive metalinguistic feedback had much better performance in the argumentative writing test compared to the participants who did not receive any kinds of feedback in the classroom.It means that

The results in this section are consistent with Ebadi's (2014) study in which he found an effective role for focused Meta-linguistic error feedback on grammatical accuracy of writing. The finding is also in line with Kheradmand Saadi and Sadat (2015) who revealed that the use of E-feedback developed the learners' writing accuracy and attitudes toward CALL. In the same vein, Hashemian and Farhang-Ju's (2018) study also support the obtained results.They revealed that both the FI/FD learners benefited from metalinguistic feedback in terms of promoting the writing performance. However, the findings are not consistent with those of Solhi Andarab's (2019) who investigated the effectiveness of spatial intelligence-based (SIB) metalinguistic written CF on EFL learners' development in writing and found that there was no effect of the metalinguistic feedback on the content, and organization of their writing. By the similar vein, the findings of Gorman and Ellis (2019) did not support the obtained results in this study. They found that the writing accuracy in the production of the target structure across the four tasks was variable and showed no improvement from the first to the last.

One of the reasons to explain the results obtained is the learner's age. Ausubel (1964) argues that adult L2 learners, unlike children, can benefit from grammatical explanations. This is especially true if the contact between adult L2 learners and L2 is limited to the L2 classroom (DeKeyser, 2000). This may be the reason why the impact of metalanguage feedback on current study participants was more pronounced. Another reason that can cause results is the depth of processing facilitated by metalanguage feedback (Carroll, 2001) compared to the process facilitator with direct feedback (Panova & Lyster, 2002). Carroll (2001) suggested that adults have "mature metalanguage skills" that help them "represent language units as conceptual categories." Therefore, basically and obviously, feedback can also be used to learn the properties of the target system "(p.244). This problem is closely related to analytical ability as adult L2 learners rely on cognitive resources. Therefore, their analytical ability is central to their learning.

Another quantitative finding indicated that most of the participants who were received the interactive metalinguistic feedback (IMF) believed in the efficacy and effectiveness of the instruction based on this feedback type in development of the argumentative writing among Iranian EFL learners.Metalinguistic feedback is salient to L2 learners because it explicitly provides them with the opportunity to diagnose their ungrammatical utterances. Thus, pointing out the grammatical explanation explicitly increases salience. Also, the

context of the study, being Iran, suggests that L2 learners are in favor of corrective feedback types that include explanations (i.e., metalinguistic feedback), which is probably due to the fact that they receive a substantial amount of formal L2 grammar instruction (Ferris, Liu, Sinha, & Senna, 2013). As put by Witkin, Moore, Goodenough, and Cox, 1977), "if certain cues have a history of relevance in the experience of the learner, their salience may be enhanced" (p. 26). Therefore, the explicit grammatical explanation that is relevant to the experience of EFL learners enhances salience. Therefore, it can be claimed that as the effect of cue salience (i.e., the explicit grammatical explanation) was more pronounced for the FD learners, they benefited more from metalinguistic feedback. Further, as FI learners are in contrast to their FD counterparts, they learn better when more implicit types of corrective feedback are provided (Rassaei, 2014), whereas FD learners are more likely to benefit from more explicit types of feedback. To conclude, the findings of this study along with the findings of prominent researchers (e.g., Daniels & Moore, 2000; Rostampour & Niroomand, 2014; Worley & Moore, 2001) may allow us to adopt a perspective on SLA that reflects that L2 learners' factors (in this case, FI/FD cognitive styles) must be carefully taken into consideration.

The results of the qualitative analysis obtained from interview and observation were also revealed that After analyzing the interviews, the results from the observations of Interactive Metalinguistic Feedback Group were analyzed and reported to either verify or nullify the previous findings. First, it was observed that based on *situated learning*, a number of authentic samples of an argumentative essay were presented to the participants who were asked to read it and analyze it with the help of the researcher. Second, it was seen that the researcher gave a sample of an argumentative essay to provide authentic material in order to immerse participants into the real usage of English communication, verifying the principals of *situated learning*, as well. Third, the researcher interacted with students to motivate them to the topic of the sample essay by relating it to their lives. Here, a kind of *dialogic Interaction* was provided. Fourth, it was observed that the participants were asked to answer questions with the help of the researcher in order to model context of culture, situation, and text features so that the learning context was *scaffolded*. Sixth, to have a kind of ZPD, the researcher explained the purpose, the function, the generic structure, and the language features of the sample essay to provide suitable input in order to make them understand them. Seventh, it was seen that the researcher allowed the participants to work with him in order to practice the task. Thus, *scaffolding* was also occurred. Eight, the researcher encouraged the participants to make an outline individually that includes thesis statement and supporting ideas based on what have learned in order to analyze their output (*Monitoring Output*). Ninth, the researcher gave the participants one topic to write argumentative essay in class. This provided the participants to *construct the meaning*. Tenth, based on *Social learning*, the participants were asked to exchange their work in pairs. They could give comments, questions, suggestions, and corrections about the content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanic on their partner. Eleventh, the researcher provided the participants with metalinguistic feedback in a form of comments and explanations of errors. (*Scaffolding*). Twelfth, the commentary feedback was dialogic and collaborative which provided the interactive nature of argumentative writing. (*Scaffolding*). Thirteenth, the researcher provided students with supports working within their *ZPD*. Finally, it was observed that the participants were then asked to compose their first draft carefully, find, and edit their grammatical, lexical, and mechanical errors before delivering their final work. (*Meaning Construction*). To have a vivid picture of the observation results in this group, the type of teaching session is calculated and ranked based on the frequency of occurrence.

CONCLUSION

There is an increasing research focus on affective instructions such as genre based and interactive metalinguistic feedback instructions on students' writing development (e.g. Ferris, 2006; Hyland & Hyland, 2006). This has been influenced by the process approach, which considered students' errors as part of their learning process and not a negative factor. Thus, the focus shifted from the product to the process of writing and to the cognitive behavior of students before, while and after writing. According to Hyland and Hyland (2006), feedback was originally introduced into L1 contexts on the assumption that good strategies in L1 were automatically good in L2. Some of the research on genre based and interactive metalinguistic feedback instructions has found that it has social and cognitive advantages; for example, through using their peers' comments in re-drafting, students can improve their revision and produce better drafts (e.g.Rollinson, 2005; Villamail & de Guerrero, 1996). In addition, from a socio-cognitive point of view, feedback is a "formative developmental process" (Hyland & Hyland, 2006, p. 26), which means that writers develop the ability to exchange views on how they interpret the writings of other students and how other students interpret their writing. Other studies, however, have either raised more research questions on feedback (e.g.Connor & Asenavage, 1994) or found it of limited use (e.g. Flower, 1994; Spear, 1988). As stated, recent studies on genre and interactive metalinguistic feedback have focused on studying the interactions of peers in writing sessions. For example, Villamil and de Guerrero (1996) argue that peer responses observed in a writing workshop have a number of qualities, such as social affectivity through which students develop good communication. There are also other studies such as Rollinson (1998) and Caulk (1994), which found that their students made many valid and correct comments on their classmates writing. Berg (1999) and Chaudron (1984) argue that students make more specific comments to their peers' writing and, therefore, they consider feedback complementary to teacher feedback. Although genre based and interactive metalinguistic feedback instructions can be effective because there are no psychological boundaries between peers,

and this makes their interactions comfortable and, therefore, becomes influential, the ongoing debate on genre and interactive metalinguistic feedback has not yet suggested that these types of instructions has a better influence on students' writing than other types of instruction.

In traditional EFL classrooms, though teachers give feedback to the learners in the form of written comments, underlining, coding or correction, there is little evidence on genre based and interactive metalinguistic feedback instructions in such contexts. The learners are not usually asked to hand in a second draft of their writings, which does not encourage them to benefit from their peers' interaction and feedback. In fact, since classes are mostly teacher-centered the teachers do not allocate classes to discuss the EFL learners' main errors and there are no peer interaction and conferencing sessions to discuss errors and writing problems. With regard to interviews findings, it seemed that weaknesses in teaching L2 writing had an influence on learners' performance. Interviews showed that they lacked motivation and enthusiasm in traditional contexts. The EFL learners did not participate in classroom discussion even when the teacher was brainstorming with them before assigning the writing tasks. The argumentative writing tasks are not undertaken enthusiastically as the focus in teaching and giving interaction and feedback is mainly on grammar and vocabulary and in some cases the EFL learners do not even hand in the first draft. It seemed that the EFL learners do not benefit from the feedback probably because of a lack of motivation and follow up as mentioned. Furthermore, the EFL learners suffered from many weaknesses in writing and teachers in return focused on grammar explanations to solve this problem. There was a positive and negative emotional reaction toward genre based and interactive metalinguistic feedback instructions. Schmidt and Bjork (1992) and Schooler and Anderson (1990) found that feedback was more effective in facilitating independent performance than providing other types of feedback because the it fostered dependence. Because of the communicative nature of feedback studies, there were more positive reactions toward peer feedback. However, participants' interviews did reveal why most of them preferred genre based instruction. These participants noted that genre based instruction allowed communicative activities to continue without interruption and stress. Moreover, some participants also mentioned a preference for interactive metalinguistic feedback instruction since it allowed them to focus on feedback without being distracted by the communicative pressures in communicative tasks given by the instructors.

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