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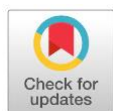
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Exploring the Impact of Learning Activities on Self-efficacy in Academic Writing among Iraqi EFL Learners

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Article History



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Abstract

This study examined Iraqi EFL learners academic writing self-efficacy and learning practices. The research used purposive sampling to recruit 60 undergraduate and graduate students using a mixed method approach. Participants self-efficacy in academic writing is assessed using the validated Self-efficacy in Academic Writing Scale (SEAWS) and Self-efficacy questionnaire, instructors anonymous grading of relevant writing assignments. Participants experiences with learning activities and academic writing self-efficacy are explored in semi structured interviews. Social cognition theory and the model of writing self-efficacy served as the theoretical compass for this investigation. The research collects quantitative data from pre and post experiment surveys on self-efficacy and qualitative data from interviews to provide a complete picture. Data analysis used SPSS Software to analyze learning activities, self-efficacy, and academic writing performance. A statistically significant rise in participants self-efficacy after participating in learning activities was shown by results from pre and post questionnaire analyses ($T = -2.37, p = 0.012^*$). Transcript thematic analysis reveals participant experiences patterns and themes. This research adds to the current body of knowledge by providing new insights into how learning activities affect the academic writing self-efficacy of Iraqi EFL learners.

Introduction

Academic writing is an essential ability for Iraqi EFL students to acquire so they may succeed in college and in the workforce. Academic writing self-efficacy is a key component impacting their success on this often-challenging path. Belief in one own ability to write academic texts well is crucial for motivation, sticking with it when things become tough, and getting the job done. EFL students English is typically unduly concentrated on lessons in class in lieu of actual life interpersonal interaction, with the goal of memorizing words and phrases only. In the setting of EFL education, mastering skills in academic writing is an essential part of being fluent in English. As learning advances, academics and educators are more focused on the

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multiple aspects that influence languages learners educational writing skills and attitudes. The study, which focuses on Iraqi EFL students, looks into the complex relationship between instructional activities and writing for academia self-efficacy. Iraq is rich cultural legacy and past importance make it an ideal setting for language study. According to Matthews & López (2019) and Leona et al. (2021) that on an international basis, English has gained in importance as a mode of interaction and a tool for scholastic success. However, the route to academic writing excellence is not always easy, necessitating much research into successful ways to teach.

Bandura (2006) invented the psychological idea of confidence in oneself, which is described as an individual's faith in his or her capacity to perform a certain task. This concept serves as the foundation for this research. Self-worth impacts trainee desire, commitment, and total proficiency, making it an important aspect of academic writing success (Barrón, 2020). For improved teaching methods and encourage students, teachers must first grasp the factors which impact self-efficacy in writing for school. Learning exercises which employ a variety of teaching methods are critical for boosting EFL students' academic performance and trusting their capabilities. Iraqi social, linguistic, and educational factors may all have an impact on the effectiveness of these activities. This study focuses on Iraqi EFL learners' assessments of their own abilities to generate high quality academic writing.

This study looks into the relationship between learning activities and Iraqi EFL learners' confidence in their ability to write academically. We look beyond traditional teacher centered strategies to find innovative ways to assist students gain a firm understanding of academic writing and, by extension, self-confidence. This study covers a huge information gap in the academic writing self-efficacy of Iraqi EFL learners. It also contributes significantly to the field of language teaching by examining how various learning activities might boost writing self-confidence and success. This study transcends language borders and has global significance for EFL learners. The significance of this research extends beyond the unique context of English as a foreign language training in Iraq. The findings could help educators, curriculum designers, and lawmakers develop more precise and culturally sensitive techniques to improve academic writing skills among EFL students worldwide, align with research from Mohammadkarimi (2023) and Mazlum (2022).

Students who do not have enough practice become too preoccupied with spelling and grammar, losing sight of the value of effective communication (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Derakhshan & Karimian, 2020; Takahashi, 2001). Due to this stress on appearance above substances, penning becomes a lifeless ritual detached from the spontaneous of everyday speech. This critique emphasise the necessity of giving EFL pupils opportunity to utilise English in real life situation besides school. Immersion of learners in everyday interactions through collaborative projects, virtual speaking sections, or simply simulation circumstances can help to bridge the divide among theoretical concept and practical application. By emphasising generating significance above technical memorised, kids can learn that composed is more than merely a test of grammar skills. Keeping mindful that great writted is more than just ensured that the words are correct it also involv really conveyed your ideas in an intrigued and compelled manner. Its past time for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) lessons to leave the school setting and equip children with the skills necessary for success in the true, complicated, ever constantly evolved realm of language.

Significance of the Study

This investigation analys the connection among vocal confidence and academic accomplishment in Iraqi EFL students, addressed a large but unmet need. This strategy has the

ability to tackle key challenges in English as a foreign language (EFL) trained in Iraq, wherein documents may act as a springboard to more work and educational possibilities. To increase both educational results and writted value, the programme seeks to uncover informative tactics that boost self-assurance while simultaneously equipped Iraqi academician with the skills need for excellent written engagements. These findings may help Iraqi EFL students overcome their anxiety of put pens to paper for educational purposes by emphasis the importance of confidence plus the underly resolve and tenacity requir. Going across Iraq, the results have broad consequences for enhancing writing for academia self-efficacy and encouraging the establishment of better instructional events for English as a second language curricula. Furthermore, the study encourages learner centered practices in EFL classes and emphasises the crucial role of the classroom environment and instructor help in influencing student achievement. This study has the potential to empower Iraqi EFL learners by increasing their academic writing skills, strengthening their confidence, and, eventually, EFL education in general.

Problem Statement

They struggle to build confidence and perform academically since they don't have many opportunities to practise written work beyond the classroom. Students confidence in their writing abilities takes a hit when they are only given grammar exercises and in class assignments to complete. This might cause them to avoid writing altogether, experience anxiety, and even lower their grades. This study is overarching goal is to help Iraqi English as a foreign language (EFL) students overcome these obstacles, boost their self-efficacy, and develop into competent academic writers.

Research Question

1. What are the different types of learning activities utilized in EFL classrooms in Iraq, and how do they impact student's self-efficacy in academic writing?
2. Do specific learning activities, such as collaborative writing tasks, peer feedback sessions, or technology integrated exercises, hold greater potential for enhancing self-efficacy compared to others?
3. How do factors like individual learner characteristics, teacher support, and classroom environment interact with learning activities to influence self-efficacy development?

Literature Review

Research on Iraqi EFL students learning activities and academic writing self-efficacy has been sparse, despite the growing body of literature on this topic overall. In order to get a better knowledge of the Iraqi environment, this study looks at research that is pertinent to the EFL field as a whole and examines how learning activities affect student's self-efficacy in academic writing.

Psychologist Bandura proposed a learning theory called social cognitive theory in 2006 that people's actions are influenced by a combination of individual traits and their immediate surroundings. Recognition of the importance of internal processes such as ideas, beliefs, and motives in shaping our behaviors sets it apart from behaviorism. According to Farmer et al. (2022) and Maddux (1995) that Social Cognitive Theory, the conviction in one is own abilities to carry out a particular activity is known as self-efficacy, and it is an essential component of drive, perseverance, and success. Physiological factors, social influences, vicarious learning,

and experiences of mastery all contribute to its development. All of these sources are susceptible to direct and indirect effect from learning activities.

Chen & Zhang (2019) Model of Writing Self-efficacy provides a theoretical framework for understanding the many facets of writing and the role that confidence plays in building self-efficacy as a writer. It goes beyond the simplistic idea of "being good at writing" to provide a detailed analysis of the motivational, metacognitive, and cognitive mechanisms that underpin self confidence in various writing assignments. According to Chen & Zhang (2019) Model of Writing Self-efficacy Planning, outlining, drafting, editing, and proofreading are the five pillars upon which this methodology rests. In research by Balaman (2021) and Khosravi et al. (2023) explain that writing self-efficacy is a composite of confidence in one's ability to master each individual subskill. In order to get the most out of learning exercises, they should target each subskill individually.

One of the most important ideas in psychology is self-efficacy, which is defined as the confidence one has in one's own abilities to meet challenges and achieve objectives. As an internal motivator, it influences behaviors and results across multiple areas, going beyond simple self-confidence. Students with a good dose of self-efficacy approach writing projects with a positive attitude, ensuring their success. The inverse is also true: persons who lack confidence in themselves may avoid difficulties because they seem too scary, resulting in poor performance. A person's sense of self-worth affects their physical and mental well-being, their future prospects for employment, and the quality of their interactions beyond school. Mentors and teachers must grasp the factors that impact self-efficacy, research techniques to boost it, and find answers to deal with poor self-belief since fulfilling one's full potential requires establishing an enduring belief of self. People may have the courage to pursue their aspirations and live their days to the fullest by following this comprehensive plan.

Writing for academia is extremely challenging for English language learners. Students frequently suffer with inadequate self-efficacy, which impedes their progress and performance, when confronted with intricate standards, subtle terminology, and new demands. But it's not a road that will be filled with hardship. Teachers have the power to inspire their students to believe in themselves and their abilities, and to develop the self-assurance they need to excel as academic writers, via the deliberate creation and execution of impactful learning activities.

Learning activities have a complex effect on self-efficacy, influencing not just cognitive growth but also social and emotional maturation. Group writing assignments, online writing forums, and peer review all help students develop a feeling of mutual support and accountability by positive interdependence and vicarious learning, self-efficacy may be enhanced by constructive peer feedback, leveraging each other's strengths, and seeing peers' achievements (Zha et al., 2021). Students are given more control and agency over their work when they use interactive tools such as wikis, blogs, and online feedback systems. Personalized learning experiences, real time feedback, and self-reflection all work together to improve self-regulation and self-efficacy (Brass et al., 2023). Writing exercises that mimic real life communication, such as creating blog entries, business proposals, or emails, give writing a sense of purpose and importance. A feeling of competence and increased intrinsic drive are outcomes of successfully completing genuine tasks, which in turn boosts self-efficacy (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2021). In order to foster an environment conducive to experimentation and incremental growth, it is helpful to provide tiers of assistance during writing activities, use visual organizers, provide sentence starters, and progressively release responsibilities. Confidence and self-efficacy are enhanced when individuals see their own mastery via supported experiences (Wilson et al., 2020).

Learning activities stimulate development and change they are more than just drills. Students' belief in their own abilities to succeed academically in writing may be greatly enhanced if teachers take the time to plan and execute activities that cater to students psychological, social, and cognitive requirements. Learners can get the confidence they need to face the demanding world of academic writing when they observe their own progress, receive useful feedback, and collaborate on significant projects. The true goals of this path from doubt to confidence are to empower students to express themselves clearly and confidently, to become self-assured communicators in a global setting, and to increase grades. Developing students' belief in their own abilities to thrive academically and in life is an important aspect of developing self-efficacy in academic writing.

Researchers Zha et al. (2021) discovered that writing projects that encourage students to collaborate, such as peer review and collaborative authoring, can boost confidence, writing quality, and positive interdependence. According to Rahimi & Fathi (2022) and Fathi et al. (2019), employing online feedback sites, wikis, and bloggers can increase participants' contribution, regulation by themselves, and self-efficacy in composing. According to Schunk & DiBenedetto (2021) and Papanastasiou et al. (2019), educational activities that revolve around real life duties requiring communicating can boost students feeling of goal, usefulness, and confidence.

Cheng (2003) and Razaghpour et al. (2021) discovered that student's financial circumstances and educational styles had a substantial impact on the efficacy of educational methods for developing self-esteem. Latorre et al. (2023) discovered that when teachers delivered positive feedback, students self-assurance and scholastic stress levels considerably dropped. Ahmed & Osam (2022) investigated the perceptions regarding specific proficiency in writing held by Iraqi students studying English as a foreign language (EFL). Results demonstrated the research respondents writing talents, job morals, promotion, & self-esteem also improved dramatically.

Students in Iraqi English as a Foreign Language programmes reported greater degrees from writing ability (Sabti et al., 2019). They attributed this to students accepting more responsibility for their academics as participating in self-reflection. Ahmed (2020) investigated the use of technology mediated training in Iraqi English as a foreign language (EFL), which included virtual writing workshops and assessment tools. Results indicate trainees felt more secure and inspired for their composing ability after receiving targeted evaluations & the opportunity to enhance their creations.

While that has been little study on Iraqi EFL students and their specific setting, this overview identifies several effective strategies for improving studio competence. The current study may be useful to rectify this information gap from investigating the unique challenges that Iraqi EFL students face while writing essays for educational reasons. The question of how students learn along with what is working in Iraqi classrooms are both distinct though related topics. Attempts to boost students feeling of agency in school by fostering an environment which promotes active engagement and encouragement.

Research Methods

The overall purpose of this study was to establish the link between learning activity and academic writing self-efficacy among the Iraqi EFL learners through the use of mixed method. Stemming from the above research questions, the study also used both quantitative and qualitative approaches that would offer an all-round appraisal of the subjects experience and the database regarding self-efficacy.

Participants

The subjects of this research were 60 Iraqi learners studying in undergraduate and postgraduate levels in EFL at different educational establishments in Iraq. Consequently, purposive sampling method was adopted to enable the Head of the Department to select participants who had different effects of academic writing experiences and engaged in several learning activities. For quantitative, a power analysis was made to assess adequate participant number while for qualitative research a data saturation analysis was made to ensure an adequate number of participants that would be enough to obtain all the relevant results.

Instrumentation

To assess the participant academic writing self-efficacy, and their learning activities experiences, the study employed several instruments. The quantitative data gathering tool used in the study was the self-efficacy in Academic Writing Scale (SEAWS), which is a standardised questionnaire consisting of multiple aspects of self-efficacy in relation to academic writing. This scale was constructed on the ground of relevant prior work and theoretical models, such as Bandura is Social Cognitive Theory and Chen is Model of Writing Self Efficiency. The SEAWS particularly identified confidence in activities such as planning, writing, editing and proofreading academic work. Furthermore, an instructor controlled grading of the participants writing tasks allowed making peer anonymous evaluations to associate self-estimated and self-efficacy with real performance.

For the qualitative part, semi structured interviews were used. The interview questions were aimed at ascertaining the participants belief about their academic writing self-efficacy and their interaction with the learning activities undertaken. The questions were designed according to the themes found in the literature and were pre tested with a few students because of their clarity and relevance. Interviews were planned and designed to provide more elaborate information on how these learning activities helped them to build up their confidence and performance on written tasks.

Data Collection

The collection of data was done for a time duration of 14 weeks, that is, during the academic semester period. In regard to the quantitative data, the participants had to fill the SEAWS at the pre and posttest. The pre-experiment questionnaire was designed to assess participant self-efficacy at the beginning of the study. The post experiment questionnaire was also taken after the participants completed the learning activities. These questionnaires were administered and retrieved online to simplify access to and filling of the forms.

The qualitative data were collected using structured interviews involving five participants, who were selected randomly out of all the participants. The interviews were administered towards the end of the study period to elicit the participant experiences of the study period. All the interviews were about 30-45 minutes long, and were conducted face to face or via Skype or email, according to the participants and the researcher convenience. It was considered essential to gain the participants permission to tape record all the interviews and later transcribe them fully.

Data Analysis

For quantitative data the analysis was done using SPSS SQ19 software taken from the SEAWS. The general condition of the participants self-efficacy at both the pre and post intervention assessment was determined by descriptive statistics, averages and standard deviations. A series of dependent sample t-tests were conducted in order to assess the statistical significance of the

difference between the pre and the post intervention scores. The focus for the analysis was to establish whether there were any shifts in self-efficacy that could be associated with the learning activities that were done in the study. In regard to the qualitative data collection, the thematic analysis approach was used in order to analyse the patterns of the participants responses. The data transcription was done manually where the authors first used research questions and interview questions to develop initial codes. These codes were then sorted into generic categories that captured the participants phenomenology and ontologies of their academic writing self-efficacy. The thematic analysis made it possible to have a deeper comparison with the quantitative data, and this made it possible to get a more comprehensive implication of the learning activities on self-efficacy.

Results and Discussion

In order to evaluate the quantitative data compiled from the Self-efficacy in Academic Writing Scale (SEAWS) in identifying the shift in the participants self-efficacy in academic writing before and after the intervention, statistical computations were made on the same data sets. The data was analyzed through the help of SSPS program where quantitative measures in the descriptives statistics and paired sample t-test were used in assessing whether perceptions did change or not.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 provides the mean and standard deviation of the pre and post intervention SEAWS scores. The mean scores depict a general increase in the level of self-efficacy after having attended the learning activities.

Table 1. Mean Scores of SEAWS Pre and Post Intervention

Measure	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Pre Questionnaire	60	61.69	3.47	54.00	68.00
Post Questionnaire	60	65.84	1.24	63.00	68.00

The mean self-efficacy score raised from 61 to 68, meaning that the students self confidence in the factors favouring a positive change enhanced. 69 (SD = 3. 47) in the pre intervention phase to 65. 84 (SD = 1. 24) after the intervention which showed an improvement in the participants self-efficacy in academic writing. The difference in standard deviation in the post intervention scores indicates that standard deviation has reducing which means that after participation in learning activities described in this study, the participants perceived self-efficacy became more homogeneous thus indicating the possibility of the intervention making the playing field to be more levels for students with initially different levels of self-efficacy.

Paired Sample T-Test

In order to establish the level of significance of these changes in self-efficacy another t-test of paired sample was used where two means were compared, namely, the SEAWS score before and after the intervention.

Table 2. Results of the Paired Sample T-test, in Relation to SEAWS Scores

Pair	Mean Difference	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre vs Post Intervention	-4.15	3.14	-2.37	59	0.012*

The paired sample t-test analysis also showed significant difference in the self-efficacy mean scores between pre and post intervention ($t(59) = -2.37$, $p = 0.012$). Based on this result, is

could be inferred that the learning activities had a positive effect on the participants self-efficacy in regard to academic writing. The t-value of the post intervention is < 0 which emphasizes on the effectiveness of the instructional strategies used in this study which heightened the post intervention scores in comparison to the pre intervention scores.

Subgroup Analysis

To determine whether the effect of the learning activities was moderated by the different subgroups of participants, analysis of the results was done based on self-efficacy at the pretest level of analysis with a split into low, medium, and high groups. The results are shown in the following Table 3.

Table 3. Seaws Subgroup Analysis Results: Effects of Initial Self-efficacy Level on the Seaws Score

Initial Self-efficacy	N	Pre Mean	Post Mean	Mean Difference	SD	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Low (54-58)	15	55.73	63.92	8.19	3.01	-3.45	0.002**
Medium (59-64)	25	61.26	65.28	4.02	2.65	-2.15	0.038*
High (65-68)	20	66.55	66.92	0.37	1.01	-0.67	0.506

Subgroup analysis by self-efficacy shows the learning activities had a significant effect for participants with low self-efficacy at pre-test (mean difference = 8.45, $p = 0.002$). These figures point out that the greatest boost occurred among students who have travelled the least distance namely, those who initially expressed the least confidence in their work implying that the intervention could have been most effective with students who experienced specific obstacles towards academic writing. As can be seen in the table, participants with medium initial self-efficacy also had a significant, though slightly lesser, increase (mean difference = 4.15, $p = 0.038$, hence, showed that the learning activities offered a positive enhancement. However, participants who were rated high for initial self-efficacy did not evidence any change in self-efficacy levels (mean difference = 0.37, $t(19) = -0.67$, $p = 0.506$). For the rest of the students, the results indicates that the intervention could have reached an upper limit in those subgroups as there was no significant improvement in the means of those groups compared to the overall means of the whole sample as computed by the GPSAC 2 total raw scores of respectively 506].

Learning activities should therefore be modified to suit the different learners since the effect of interventions differs in learners grouped in subcategories. As the study proved that the taskbased intervention increase the self-efficacy of low self-efficiency students, the high self-efficiency students might need a higher level of job difficulty or more challenging tasks in order to boost their self-confidence and skills up.

First Obstacle in Writing for Academia

Respondents without exception stated that efforts made during their earlier years harmed academic writing, owing mainly to their low self-esteem in language mastery. Many students complained of difficulties understanding the words used in the text as well as constructing coherent syntactic forms to voice one or the other idea.

"I always thought that my vocabulary was very poor it was almost impossible to express what I wanted to say, so writing was incredibly painful to me. I do not know how to write a good academic paper."

I chose this quote in order to demonstrate the powerful and negative effect of the lack of vocabulary on the student's perceived efficacy. The loathing of the participant is suggestive of the fact that in the absence of mastery as well as proficiency in language, the complex

undertaking that is academic writing can actually demoralize and compel the writer to lose their marbles. This implies that exercises that help increase the amount of words a student knows and strategies that can be used to help specific students develop better command of language might be fundamental to the process of improving the self-esteem of all the writers and their writing abilities.

“Grammar was always a concern of mine due to which I used to spend a lot of time on grammatical corrections and still did not feel that it was sufficient. As a result, I used to write less frequently.”

It is important to note that this concept reinforces the observation that the fear of committing grammatical mistakes can greatly reduce the desire of a student in doing writing tasks. The participant's obsessiveness about getting perfect not only wasted time but also led to avoidance behaviour that hindered skill acquisition in addition. From this it can be deduced that overcoming these barriers involves trimming down on the pressurization of students to be perfect and increasing the amount of practice they undertake.

“I had some idea of how I wanted to express myself, but translating it into words was the most challenging area of the entire process, for it seemed that my intellectual abilities have betrayed me, and this was very depressing.”

This statement reflects a common struggle among EFL students how the divide between ideas and language can be. This means that even with clear ideas in their heads, the failure to express same does result in a big demoralization. The participant experience shows that student are able to hold clear ideas but expressing these ideas is a hustle. This is why language development should be well incorporated with the content learning in order to ensure the gap is closed and the student confidence in their writing improved.

Positive Change as Due to Structured Learning Activities

Of the study's learning activities, it was the more structured learning activities that exerted the biggest influence over participants self-efficacy, particularly where it related to efforts to unpack the processes involved in writing at university level. The activities included writing exercise such as planning of developing an academic text, writing an academic text, and revision of an academic text that enabled the participants to keep abreast with what is expected of them in the course of writing their assignments.

“Before, I hardly made any connections between the various stages of a paper writing process, for instance between the introduction and the conclusion, but the step by step guidance helped me to appreciate the coherence between these two parts of writing. The kind of guidance given motivated me to grab the task by its horns, as it were, and was responsible for the aura of confidence that encircled me before undertaking the task.”

In accordance with the aforementioned interpretation, the strategies unravel instances when the cueing of the approaches into smaller and more facile components enhances the feasibility and decreases the feeling of oppressiveness of academic writing. When the participant was more familiar with the structure of the paper, he was much more confident, or less intimidated, to work on it. This provides credence to the argument made here that actual instructions of the process that the students need to take in order to build self-efficacy in writing is paramount.

“What really helped me is that when I came to write each section, I knew (or was told what) to include and that helped a lot because it was like following a to do list and that erased most of the tension I have when it comes to writing.”

This interpretation points to the fact that, with no ambiguous rules to confuse people and make them anxious, everyone will know what they should do. In particular, the participants experience indicates that guided by a checklist, students can be less concerned about a writing task as the checklist removes uncertainty that writing involves. This points to the fact that detailed instructions can be useful from the perspective of increasing students confidence and their output rates.

“Planning has been absolutely difficult for me before this course like not knowing where to start and how to arrange ideas and information and so on the activities helped to guide me where to start and what to do therefore it was helpful.”

This interpretation promotes a view according to which, in academic writing, there should be some kind of scaffold for the thoughts. Considering the participants pre writing difficulties in how to begin and organize thoughts and materials to write, it is evident that writing is difficult and almost overwhelming without structure. The participant was able to say explicitly when the structured activities offered the structure they needed in order to clearly think through an issue and write about it not just ramble and thus write in a manner that caused the participant less stress. This puts emphasis on the fact that the instructional strategies which are effective especially teaching and learning of writing should involve planning.

Collaborative Learning Promotes Self-efficacy which has the Following Functions

Another theme that was identified by the participants is collaboration in which they indicated that contributions from peers and group projects helped in boosting their writing self-efficacy. Participants reported that CL not only give them feedback but also gave them what they needed to know – you are not the only one facing such issues.

“I found it very beneficial to work with my colleagues since we exchanged feedback, and it is reassuring when one only knows one thing for sure: that others are struggling, too, so it is possible to get better.”

On this quote, one can observe peer collaboration as a positive mechanism through which feelings of isolation may be addressed to and belongingness encouraged. The realization made by the participant with others undergoing through the same ordeal gave the subject a boost in confidence and faith developed in their capability to change for the better. This implies that collaborative learning environment is critical in boosting the students self-efficacy because of the academic and emotional support that is accorded to them.

“Receiving feedbacks from my classmates was quite informative as what my classmates noticed that I missed out really helped to provide a different perception of my work I thus acquired more self confidence to revise my work.”

This perspective draws emphasis to the fact that the process of revision requires the input of multiple individuals using multiple perspectives. An aspect that was of equal value for the participant was the recognition by classmates the needed improvements next to the enhancement of the works they did share, not to mention the boost of confidence due to being able to distinguish and analyze the flaws on their own. This implies that the feedback from the peers is good instruments that enhanced critiquing and self rating, which are useful for the development of a writing self-efficacy.

“The group discussions were very productive I got to people’s ideas and ways of handling their writing and that made me feel better with the knowledge that everyone is having a tough time.”

This interpretation promotes the benefits of discussing groups and the ability given to students to find out effective strategies with the help of their peers. The participants account of confidence build up through these exchanges supports the argument that observing other ways to approach writing reduce its mystery. This means that more use of group discussions and collaborative learning activities in writing as illustrated in the study could be helpful in boosting student's self-efficacy as they are presented with a diversity of tools and viewpoints. The findings of this study provide strong supportive data about the involvement of structured learning activities and collaboration as a way of increasing self-efficacy of the Iraqi EFL academic writers.

A rise in self-efficacy scores after the structured learning intervention shows that such activities have the capability of enhancing academic related self-beliefs of EFL learners. The structured academic writing approach, which entailed the provision of guidelines in the form of sub tasks, is congruous with the Wette (2019) scaffolding theory as well as the more recent work focusing on the effectivity of the step by step instructional directions given in the context of constructive learning environments advanced by Archambault et al. (2022). However, as demonstrated by the results, the approach benefits the students with initially low self-efficacy, however, relying on structured learning has its ceiling among students with high levels of self-efficacy. This raises a critical issue for educators: this has created the need for differentiation of instruction with a view of addressing the diversity of students. Similar to Ziernwald et al. (2022) and Magableh & Abdullah (2021), it has been established that in mixed ability classrooms, the teaching that is provided has to be differentiated to adapt to the students. The conclusion drawn from this study is consistent with and even complements this view noting that while the style of enrolment nurtures progressive skill development, structured learning may not be enough for students as soon as they are prepared to be challenged further.

Academically, this entails that EFL educators should embrace smart Learning tools that offer what has been termed as 'smart' difficulties given real time analysis of the learner is challenges (Huh & Lee, 2020). Such technologies could assist in narrowing the chasm between the highly structured input that serves lower achievers and the higher cognitive challenge which the higher achieve students require. Using empirical evidence for development of the classroom environment and learner outcomes can contribute to developing empowered learning environments that challenges all the students for growth without stagnation.

According to the present study, the results derived from the qualitative analysis support the assertion that collaborative learning is helpful in improving self-efficacy. These advantages of peer feedback and group work go beyond the mere cognitive aspect of the processes being significant for learner affective and interpersonal development, as has been underlined by current research in the area of cooperative learning (Panadero & Alqassab, 2019; Ion et al., 2019). Here the participants experiences show that collaboration expected to offer not only support in terms of learning but also contributed significantly to overcome other factors related to learning EFL, such as loneliness or the sense of self-doubt in knowledge (Rahimi & Fathi, 2024).

This is consistent with Farmer et al. (2022) theory of self-efficacy, where social modelling advantage experiences are major determinants of people's perceived capabilities. Findings of the study show that a well design structure of collaboration can lead to identification with model behaviour where students gain perceptions from other students achievements and come to expect success for themselves. But it is essential to point out that the quality of peer interactions is critical without any form of direction, such group initiatives end up contributing

to biased contribution which only intensifies the already existing magnitude of the difference in self-efficacy among students (Double et al., 2020).

Thus, an important practical recommendation for teachers is to apply such concepts of peer assessment as organising the assessment criteria and teaching the constructive feedback skills (Latorre et al., 2023). They may be useful in making certain that all students are able to benefit from a collaborative process not only those who tend to do most of the talking and lead most of the discussion. Further, the educators can also try to use the technological tools that enable the positive interaction between the students, especially in the online or blended classrooms. Google Docs for example, for Peer grade kind of platforms present more structure and an asynchronous approach, thus it would be easier to monitor whether all students in the group are actively participating, and whether all of them are receiving the feedback they need (Yousef et al., 2021).

The differences in the effects of the intervention according to the level of the initial self-efficacy suggest that the process of self-efficacy change in EFL context is multifaceted and cannot be easily influenced. Of special note is that students with low self-efficacy at the onset of the study reported meaningful gains after the intervention keeping with the notion that CBI offered the structured learning activities these learners needed. This study also agrees with the proposition of Schunk (2023) who argued that early achievement was pivotal in enhancing self-efficacy. Yet the trend, which shows that opportunistic resources significantly affected students with low initial self-efficacy but not so with students who self-reported high self-efficacy, suggests that such creatures are needed to provide more challenging and self-directed forms of learning. Such a shift in the concept of self-efficacy is particularly relevant to EFL learners and the mental and emotional stress that they go through. Beliefs such as concern with language proficiency or speaking a second language, first language fear, and pressure to express yourself coherently in a second language pull down self-efficacy (Daymiel et al., 2022). The results of this study indicate that while formal learning may reduce such worries by offering the sequences, they are not wished valid for all learning.

Teachers should, therefore, try to adopt strategies that would help in catering for both the cognitive and emotional domain. For instance, formative assessment practices which include Self-assessment and Reflective journals are very effective since they assist the students to observe their learning processes and achievement, thus increasing their self-efficiency (Ayalon & Wilkie, 2021; Alserhan et al., 2023). Also, annual appointments with licensed practitioners, as well as the application of curriculum based mindfulness and stress reducing activities could alleviate the affective burdens of writing. Such comprehensive strategies acknowledge that learning is not just a cerebral phenomenon but also an affective one especially for students learning EFL since they may be prone to anxiety in classroom.

Towards More Adaptive and Holistic Work Style

As a result of the present study, there are important implications for the teaching of EFL. Having staked our claim on the merit in structured learning and collaborative approaches to learning, it is hereby in order to proffer instructional approaches that are encouraging and sensitive. In this context, it could be freeing oneself from the strict linear models of teaching, and embracing what in nowadays is called 'flexible instruction' that might include concepts such as differentiated instruction aimed at students or their knowledge abilities (Tyagi et al., 2020). This corresponds to current tendencies in educational practice, which emphasizes individual approaches to students and learning conditions that are regarded as influential in the variety of difficulties the learners encounter nowadays (Horwitz, 2020).

A very good example of the way forward can be seen in the integration of a form of which is the blending learning mode where face to face comprises of an organized instructional process integrated with technology aided self-paced learning. Models of this kind enable students to move forward at their own pace, review material that is difficult for them and accelerate through other sections that may not pose as much difficulty to them. In as much as this approach favours differentiation it also promotes greater independence, which is paramount in enhancing students self-efficacy especially for the gifted who may need stiffer challenges.

In addition, the study forms a good foundation by pointing toward the necessity of attending to the affective aspects of learning. This is especially so for EFL learners because such feelings can jeopardize the learners' performance of academic assignments. Teachers should, therefore, ensure that the learning environment is one that triggers the intellectual needs of the learners as well as assure safety on the emotional needs. This could include the use of social emotional learning (SEL) which has been found to foster academic achievement and also help in the development of student personality (LaBelle, 2023). SEL could also be likely to support EFL education by fostering student personal resources, coping readiness and canonical outlook on learning which all collectively contribute to the self-efficacy increase. From the results of the present investigation, the following research directions can be proposed. By citing the above and others, there is a paucity of research focused on how self-efficacy changes with different instructional approaches and hence the need to provide solutions to the research gap. Perhaps, more effective could be the longitudinal researches that could give more information about the changes in self-efficacy in years that are due to the structured learning and collaboration, and how these changes may depend on the context of education and the characteristics of learners. Such system reinforcement becomes especially relevant for EFL classes because the learners self-confidence could vary depending on how they deal with new communities and language/cognition demands (Qin et al., 2022).

The future research should focus on the abilities of technology in supporting the self-efficacy. Given that digital tools are more utilized in learning environment, there is demand and interest in how the technologies can be utilized to foster instructions and learning that addresses self-efficacy (Cai et al., 2021). Future studies in this particular field could look into the possibilities that exist in organizing adaptive learning platforms, or online collaboration tools, and other forms of technology that will allow for more flexible pathways in learning. Last but not the least, the undertaking in the present study of the emotional aspects of self-efficacy indicates a call for the further exploration of affective aspects of learners. Further research and better classification of few academically related emotions like anxiety, frustration or motivation in relation to self-efficacy might help to create broader interventions to foster students not only knowledge and skills but also their emotional resources needed to succeed in academically demanding settings (Skinner et al., 2020). These questions could also help refine the approaches to the implementation of the SEL interventions in EFL learner context that makes the educational intervention even more effective.

Conclusion

The present paper provides some important and insightful information and discussion on the role of structured learning approaches and collaborative learning to increase self-efficacy of the Iraqi EFL learners in the context of academic writing. In this way, although the quantitative measures pointed at the improvements in self-efficacy, the study demonstrated itself as sensitive to the multiple ways in which the instructional strategies impact learner's confidence and behaviours. Beyond these findings, the present study carries a number of implications for

educators as well as researchers focusing on the education of the learners who have multiple needs and come from multilingual background.

Analysis of findings the quantitative study showed that structured learning activities, with special regard if the needs of EFL learners when implemented can enhance the self-efficacy of the learners. The overall enhanced performance most especially for the learners who had low confidence at the beginning of the experiment justifies the need to create logic learning routes that may make the process of academic writing easy to understand. However, the stagnation observed among higher self-efficacy students points to a critical oversight in conventional instructional design the belief that one strategy is sufficient to meet the needs of all the learners. This actually leads us to think of more complex, if not personal, approaches to learning that would challenge all learners, including the gifted, to higher levels of learning and self-development.

The findings presented above are complemented qualitatively to enhance our evaluation by providing the participant's statement on the impact of collaborative learning in enhancing self-efficacy. Feelings and interpersonal relationships, thus the affective and socio aspects of learning, which are frequently left out of traditional paradigms, were central here. From participants' ideas resulting from peer feedback and group cooperation, such events are not only helpful for receiving better results but also develop feelings of belonging, decrease anxiety levels and promote resilience. Such findings disrupt the common and rather individualistic paradigm of academic writing and embraces a more socially grounded, dialogical approach that embraces learners as co-constructions with community learners.

From the theoretical point of view, this work enriches the context of the phenomenon of self-efficacy in the modern discussion because it pays decisive attention to the contingency of the process and its potential for influenced modifications. The findings support Farmer et al. (2022) statement that self-efficacy is not an absolute as it is a changeable concept influenced by socio cognitive and affective processes. Furthermore, the specificity of the target participants in the presented study the EFL learners contributes to the extension of knowledge regarding multilingual education. These contributions compel educators to pay attention to the notion of learning holistically in such a way that encompasses emotional and social support systems.

In a practical sense, the study seeks to promote a change of track in the ways instructors explain concepts and disseminate information in the classroom. I would dare to state that the oneway transmission is becoming more and more unsustainable in the increasingly heterogeneous classrooms. Teachers, on the other hand, are asked to engage with the idea of differentiated instruction, using the technology along with the concerns of the CMD's results to deliver the learning tailored to a child's needs while helping her overcome the gap between where she is and where she can be. SEL as a pedagogy becomes a fundamental aspect of this new discursive practice especially for EFL learners, not only are they to be prepared with relevant and relevant academic skills but they must also be emotionally equipped to face the new challenging academic arenas.

In the future, the study provides several directions for the further investigation. There is a glaring lack of studies that will assess its sustainability over time it is for this reason that there is a need to conduct longitudinal research that will determine if the level of self-efficacy improves over the years especially as student progress to the late academic years and professional practice. The Next Generation Digital Environment and Learners Engagement and Achievement Directions for Future Research The potential of technology for differentiation and personalization of instruction in EFL settings should also be explored. Furthermore, the specifics of interactions between cognitive and affective components of self-efficacy are a

promising area with regards to which factors one should pay attention to while working with the students who have essential barriers to learning English as a foreign language in their way.

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