



The Impact of Teachers' Feedback Style and Student Self-Efficacy on Writing Proficiency of Iraqi English Learners

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Abstract in English

Examining the relationships between students' self-perceptions of their writing skills and the methods their English teachers use to provide feedback, this quantitative study examines the experiences of Iraqi college students pursuing English language education. The Teachers' Feedback Style Scale (TFSS), the English Writing Self-Efficacy Scale (EWSES) and a demographic questionnaire were administered to a sample of 300 Iraqi EFL learners from three public universities. A standardized timed writing test was administered and graded using the updated IELTS rubric to determine the level of writing proficiency. The results showed that there was a favorable association between the style of formative feedback and students' self-efficacy and writing proficiency as determined by Pearson correlation coefficients and multiple regression analysis. A modest negative association was observed with a summative feedback style on the other hand. A high level of self-efficacy was identified as a robust positive predictor of proficient writing. A third factor mediating the relationship between formative feedback and writing proficiency was self-efficacy. The findings demonstrate

Paper Info

Keywords

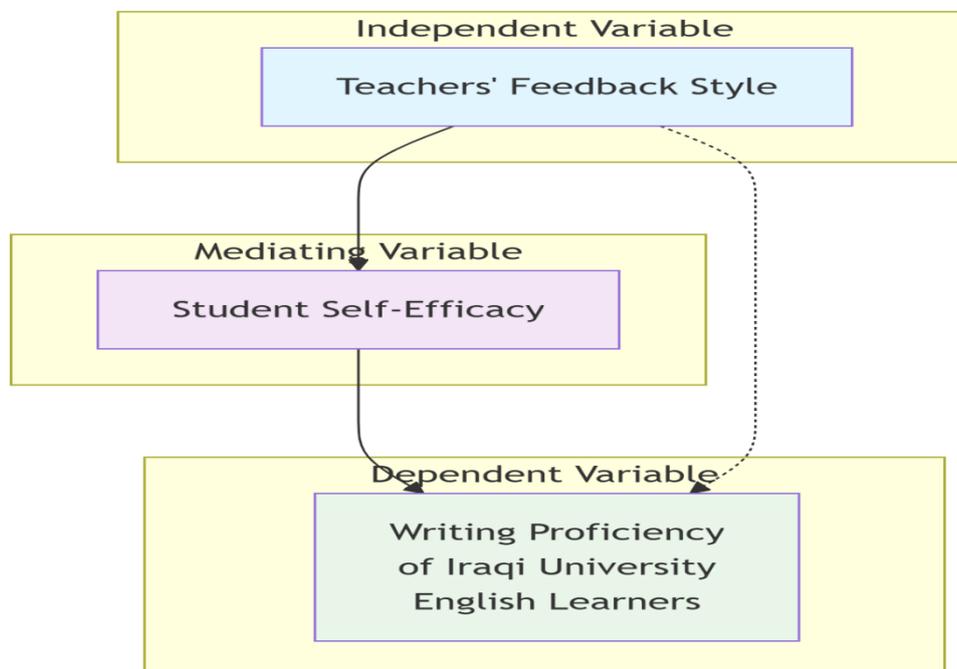
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the efficacy of formative feedback in improving students' self-esteem and writing abilities which has significant pedagogical implications for EFL courses at Iraqi universities.

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1. Introduction

Possessing strong English writing skills is crucial for Iraqi university students' academic achievement and future employment opportunities. Yet, Iraqi university level EFL students often struggle greatly with compositional writing. These issues show how critical instructor feedback is for helping students grow as writers. (According to Lee (2008)). According to Tunstall and Gipps (1996) students' educational journeys can be significantly impacted by the type of feedback they receive whether it's formative (focused on making suggestions for growth) or summative (focused on error correction and assessment). A student's self-efficacy is a strong predictor of academic achievement, it is influenced by both instructional techniques and psychological factors (Bandura, 1997; Pajares, 2003).



Previous research in similar settings has shown a strong relationship between

confidence in one's abilities and how well one writes (Ghonsooly & Elahi, 2010). However, within the context of Iraqi higher education, there is a lack of research into the exact relationship between instructors' feedback approaches, students' self-efficacy and their subsequent writing competency. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to objectively analyze how different types of instructor feedback affect students' self-efficacy and writing skills in an English language learning context at an Iraqi university. The findings will likely shed light on the need for feedback mechanisms that boost both students' skills and their self-confidence which will have a major impact on EFL curriculum development and pedagogy in Iraq.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The English language teaching curriculum in Iraqi colleges often places an emphasis on product-oriented approaches with summative error-centric feedback being the primary means of evaluating student writing. While effective in identifying areas for improvement, this approach runs the risk of ignoring how students' writing grows over time and damaging their self-esteem in the process. When it comes to writing assignments, many Iraqi EFL students show signs of lack of enthusiasm and fear and they also show no improvement in their writing skills. In the Iraqi setting, researchers have mostly ignored the complex relationship between students' self-efficacy, the manner in which teachers provide feedback (feedback style) and their final level of writing skill. Misguided educational strategies that fail to address the fundamental instructional and psychological obstacles to increasing writing abilities may result from a lack of knowledge of these relationships.

1.2. Research Questions

- 1-What is the relationship between teachers' perceived feedback style (formative and summative) and Iraqi EFL learners' writing proficiency?
- 2-What is the relationship between Iraqi EFL learners' self-efficacy and their writing proficiency?

3-To what extent does self-efficacy mediate the relationship between teachers' formative feedback style and students' writing proficiency?

1.3. Research Hypothesis

1-H1: There is a significant positive relationship between a formative feedback style and writing proficiency and a significant negative relationship between a summative feedback style and writing proficiency.

2-H2: There is a significant positive relationship between student self-efficacy and writing proficiency.

3-H3: Self-efficacy partially mediates the relationship between formative feedback style and writing proficiency.

1.4. Significance of the Study

There are multiple reasons why this study is important. To start with, it contributes to the ongoing discussion on second language writing instruction by providing empirical evidence from the under researched Iraqi EFL context. Furthermore, it provides valuable insight for Iraqi EFL educators and curriculum designers looking to shift from summative to formative feedback approaches that foster psychological and linguistic development. Lastly, the study suggests that helping students feel more confident in their writing abilities is just as important as improving feedback in order for interventions to be effective.

1.5. Delimitations of the Study

This study is delimited to:

- ▶ Iraqi public universities in Baghdad.
- ▶ Third year undergraduate EFL students.
- ▶ Academic essay writing as the measure of proficiency.
- ▶ Quantitative data collection methods.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Definition of Key Terms

Teachers' Feedback Style: The predominant approach a teacher uses when responding to student writing. Formative Feedback is defined as commentary focused on improvement providing suggestions and fostering revision Summative Feedback is defined as evaluation focused providing grades and error correction with minimal directive comments.

Student Self-Efficacy: This is how much a student believes they can plan and carry out the steps needed to reach certain goals in English writing.

Writing Proficiency: The ability to write a clear, well-organized and grammatically correct academic essay in English as shown by a standardized scoring rubric.

Improving one's writing abilities is a significant obstacle for Iraqi university students taking English as a foreign language (EFL). Academic success depends on strong writing skills, although many students struggle with composition and finding the right words to describe complex ideas. Research with Iraqi EFL students has shown this to be true (Jameel , 2024). The persistence of conventional , teacher centered approaches in many schools exacerbates this situation. A student's self-efficacy or confidence in one's own talents is a strong indicator of academic achievement according to research on the psychological aspects of learning (Bandura, 1977).

Because of the close relationship between the cognitive and affective domains in writing, it is crucial that instructional methods interact with this psychological factor. For instance , a recent study found that Iraqi students' writing performance was significantly correlated with their metacognitive awareness (Dehham & Abbas, 2025).

A major educational component that can influence students' ability to learn and their sense of self - efficacy is the way in which instructors provide feedback. People can

improve with the use of many forms of feedback, ranging from brief “ Knowledge of Result ” (KR) statements to longer, more in-depth “ explanatory responses ” (ER).

Crucial distinctions exist between summative feedback which evaluates the finished output and formative feedback which offers suggestions for improvement. The way a learner thinks and feels is greatly influenced by these styles. Research in mathematics education has shown that students’ belief in their own abilities to succeed in school is positively correlated with the methods teachers use to provide feedback (Jimin et al., 2023). Based on this correlation , it seems that students’ confidence in their writing abilities can be positively or negatively impacted by the way feedback is presented.

There is strong evidence that student self-efficacy which is characterized as the confidence in one’s ability to plan and carry out the actions needed to accomplish particular objectives (Bandura, 1977) is a key indicator of successful language acquisition. Students with high self-esteem are more likely to take initiative , persevere through challenges and employ effective study techniques. Confidence in your ability to construct arguments , articulate your thoughts and navigate the complex writing process are all aspects of this that pertain specifically to the field of writing. Through their teaching methods , teachers have the power to actively shape this belief. According to research in educational psychology , pupils can directly benefit from their professors’ feedback style in terms of their self - confidence (Zhang, 2024). Because of this , it can be a very effective tool for educators to employ in the classroom.

Improving students’ writing skills relies heavily on the dynamic interaction between instructor feedback and students’ self - efficacy. More than simply a means of error correction, process oriented formative feedback can serve as a source of inspiration and direction. Students’ belief in their own abilities to achieve is enhanced when they receive constructive criticism that highlights their progress and provides specific suggestions for improvement. Because of their newfound self – assurance , pupils are more receptive to criticism and have greater agency in revising their work. Therefore , the usefulness of supportive feedback types in enhancing writing

performance is largely dependent on the writer's self - efficacy. This intermediary function stresses the need of teaching students both the mechanics of writing and their mental make-up in order to produce high quality prose. Finally , there is a noticeable lack of study on the difficulties of teaching writing in an Iraqi EFL setting even though these difficulties have been well documented. Isolated analyses of writing difficulties , comments or self - efficacy have been common in the literature. Few studies have used a quantitative approach to examine the connections between various forms of instructor feedback , students' perceptions of their own abilities and their level of writing competency in Iraqi higher education. As a result , this research is crucial for understanding the relationship between students' self - efficacy and the writing ability of Iraqi EFL learners as well as the correlation between formative and summative feedback types. This study aims to provide a thorough understanding of the factors that impact the development of writing skills in this specific group.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

The idea of self-efficacy put out by Bandura (1997) in his Social Cognitive Theory, is the foundation of this study. It states that a person's motivation, conduct, and performance are significantly impacted by their views about their skills. This corresponds to a student's self-assurance in writing, which impacts their interest, perseverance and performance on writing assignments.

2.3. Related Studies

Learning results are impacted by the sort of feedback according to research. Improvements in both tasks and procedures are directly correlated with constructive criticism as Hattie and Timperley (2007) demonstrated. Comprehensive formative feedback as opposed to simple error correction, results in more meaningful changes and long-term progress in second language writing according to research (e.g., Ferris, 2003; Lee, 2008). Pajares (2003) and others have shown that self-efficacy is a strong predictor of academic success in various contexts. Ghonsooly and Elahi (2010) discovered a robust relationship between the self-efficacy and writing performance of Iranian EFL learners in an Iraqi-like EFL scenario. This study's hypothesized mediation is based on the research of Schunk (2003), who contended that feedback affects performance in part by making people feel better about their own abilities.

The influences of EFL College Iraqi Writing Instructors' beliefs on Feedback of EFL Learners' Writing . It investigated how Iraqi EFL writing teachers' self-efficacy beliefs influence the type and nature of feedback they provide. It discusses how teachers' perceptions and confidence shape feedback practices in writing instruction-a useful Iraqi contextual source. AL-Bou Ali, K., Dabaghī, A., & Brati, H. (2024). The effect of Teacher corrective feedback on writing anxiety, accuracy and motivation among Iraqi EFL Learners. This study found that corrective feedback significantly reduced writing anxiety and increased writing accuracy and learner motivation all key dimensions of how feedback style affects EFL learners.

Saudi, B. R. (2025). The effect of elicitation feedback on grammatical accuracy in writing among Iraqi EFL preparatory school students. Masters' Thesis, College of Education for Human Sciences-Tikrit University. It shows that elicitation feedback positively impacted students' grammatical accuracy in writing tasks connecting feedback type to improved language output.

Yang, Y. C. (2008). Enhancing EFL writing self-efficacy through templates and teacher feedback. *English Language Teaching* , 18(12), 55-66. Found that teacher feedback combined with instructional strategies improve both writing proficiency and writing-related self-efficacy, making it directly relevant to your research variables.

In another study, Gan, Y., et al. (2023). Understanding the impact of teacher feedback on EFL students' use of self-regulated writing strategies. *Journal of Second Language Writing* . It shows how specific feedback practices influence the use of self-regulated writing strategies, which are linked to both writing proficiency and self-efficacy beliefs.

Zhang, H., & colleagues (2024). Relationships between teacher feedback and English writing proficiency : The mediating effect of writing SRL strategies. *System*, 123, Article103338. This recent study highlights that self-regulated learning strategies mediate the impact of teacher feedback on writing proficiency, suggesting that bridges feedback and learner belief performance.

Effect of Self-Regulated Learning-Based Instruction (2024). Enhancing writing skills across self-efficacy levels. *Asian-Pacific Journal and Foreign Language Education*. Found strong evidence that students with higher self-efficacy levels benefit more from SRL interventions in writing connecting self-efficacy directly to writing performance gains.

Wicaksono, H, et al. (2023). EFL learners' voices about self-assessment and self-efficacy in online instruction. *Language Testing in Asia*, 13, Article 37 . Although focused on assessment, this study shows that self-efficacy significantly influences EFL learners' engagement and resilience concepts relate to writing confidence and performance.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The participants were 300 third-year EFL students (180 female, 120 male) randomly selected from the Colleges of Education at three major public universities in Baghdad, Iraq. Their ages ranged from 20 to 22 years ($M = 21.4$, $SD = 0.68$). All participants had completed at least two years of university level English instruction.

3.2. Instruments

3.2.1. Teachers' Feedback Style Scale (TFSS): An updated version of a 20 item Likert-scale survey from Tunstall and Gipps (1996) with two sections for formative and summative feedback, formative feedback (e.g., "My teacher mainly corrects my grammatical mistakes") and formative feedback (e.g., "My teacher gives me suggestions on how to improve my ideas").

3.2.2. English Writing Self-Efficacy Scale (EWSES): For example, "I can write a well-organized paragraph with a clear topic sentence" is one item on an 18-item scale that assesses students' self-assurance in completing particular writing assignments (modified from Woodrow, 2011).

3.2.3. Writing Proficiency Test: A common topic ("The benefits and drawbacks of social media") is the subject of a 60 minute timed argumentative essay. Two separate

raters assigned each essay a score out of 100 based on the following criteria: Task Achievement, Coherence and Cohesion, Lexical Resource, Grammatical Range and Accuracy and Modified IELTS Writing Task 2. Cohen's $\kappa = .88$ indicates strong inter-rater reliability.

3.3. Procedure

Gathered in a lecture hall, participants were asked to wait for institutional approval. Before giving their informed consent, they were told on the purpose of the study. It took them about 25 minutes to finish the TFSS and EWSES surveys. They had a brief break and then finished the 60 minute writing test. Consistency was ensured by collecting all data in a single session.

4. Data Analysis

Results were interpreted with the help of SPSS 27. For every variable descriptive statistics were computed. The TFSS and EWSES were subjected to reliability analysis using Cronbach's Alpha. For the purpose of answering Research Questions 1 and 2, Pearson correlation coefficients were utilized. To answer Research Question 3, we used Hayes' PROCESS macro (Model 4) to do a mediation analysis and see if self-efficacy was a moderator in the relationship between formative feedback and writing proficiency.

4.1. Reliability of the Scales

Cronbach's Alpha for the scales indicated high internal consistency: TFSS-Formative ($\alpha = .89$), TFSS-Summative ($\alpha = .82$), EWSES ($\alpha = .91$).

Table 4.1.

The Reliability of the Scales

Instrument / Scale	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (a)	Level of Reliability
Teachers' Feedback Style	10	.89	High

Scale (TFSS)- Formative Teachers' Feedback Style Scale (TFSS)- Summative English Writing Self-Efficacy Scale (EWSES)	10	.82	High
	18	.91	Excellent

The results summarized in Table 1 indicate that all scales demonstrated high to excellent levels of reliability.

4.2. Test of Normality

There was a departure from normalcy shown by the significance of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test ($p < .05$). However parametric tests were considered adequate due to the high sample size ($N=300$) and their robustness to modest breaches of normalcy such as Pearson correlation. Approximate normalcy was also hinted at by visual examination of Q-Q graphs.

4.3. Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

Table 4.3.

Descriptive Statistics for Key Variables (N=300)

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Formative Feedback	3.85	0.72	1.80	5.00
Summative Feedback	4.10	0.68	2.20	5.00

Self-Efficacy	3.45	0.81	1.50	5.00
Writing Proficiency	68.50	9.45	45.00	88.00

4.4. Results of First Question

A Pearson correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between feedback styles and writing proficiency. There was a strong positive correlation between formative feedback and writing proficiency $r(298) = .65, p < .001$. There was a weak negative correlation between summative feedback and writing proficiency, $r(298) = -.22, p < .001$.

Table 3:

Pearson Correlation Coefficients between Feedback Styles and Writing Proficiency (N = 300)

Variable	1	2	3
Formative Feedback	-		
Summative Feedback	-.18	-	
Writing Proficiency	.65	-.22	-

Note: $p < .001$

The correlation between Formative and Summative Feedback is included for a more complete picture showing they are distinct opposing construct

4.5. Results of Second Question

A Pearson correlation revealed a strong positive correlation between student self-efficacy and writing proficiency $r(298) = .71, p < .001$.

Table 4.5.

Result of the correlation between student self-efficacy and writing proficiency

Variable	1	2
Student Self-Efficacy		
Writing Proficiency	.71	

Note: $p < .001$

4.6. Results of Third Question

A mediation analysis was performed using PROCESS Model 4 with 5000 bootstrap samples. Formative feedback was a significant predictor of self-efficacy (a-path: $B = 0.59, p < .001$). When both formative feedback and self-efficacy were included in the model self-efficacy was a significant predictor of writing proficiency (b-path: $B = 7.12, p < .001$) and the direct effect of formative feedback on writing proficiency remained significant but was reduced (c'-path: $B = 2.45, p < .01$). The indirect effect was significant ($B = 4.20, \text{Boot SE} = 0.75, 95\% \text{ Boot CI} [2.85, 5.78]$), confirming that self-efficacy partially mediates the relationship between formative feedback and writing proficiency.

Table 4.6.

Results of the Mediation Analysis Testing the Effect of Formative Feedback on writing proficiency through Self-Efficacy

Path / Effect	Coefficient (B)	Standard Error(SE)	P-Value	95% Bootstrap Confidence Interval
Direct and Path Effect				
a-path(FF → SE)	0.59	0.05	< .001	[0.49, 0.69]

a-path(SE → WP)	7.12	0.52	< .001	[6.10, 8.14]
C'- path(Direct: FF → WP)	2.45	0.88	< .01	[0.72, 4.18]
C- path(Total: FF → WP)	6.65	0.45	< .001	[5.77, 7.53]
Indirect Effect				
a b (FF → SE → WP)	4.20	0.75		[2.85, 5.78]

5. Discusion, Conclussions and Pedagogical Implications

5.1. Restatement of the Study

This quantitative study aimed to investigate the interrelationships between teachers' feedback styles, student self-efficacy and writing proficiency among 300 Iraqi university EFL learners.

5.2. Summary of the Findings

1-Formative feedback showed a strong positive relationship with writing proficiency, while summative feedback showed a weak negative one.

2-Student self-efficacy demonstrated a strong positive relationship with writing proficiency.

3-Self-efficacy was found to be a significant partial mediator in the relationship between formative feedback and writing proficiency.

5.3. Discusion

the First researech question the results of Ferris (2003) and Hattie and Timperley (2007) are corroborated by the strong positive link between formative feedback and writing proficiency. This data reveals that students' writing improves when their Iraqi EFL instructors offer comments that are predictive, suggestive and process oriented. It appears that relying only on grading and error correction may not be enough to help students acquire complex writing skills. This could lead to demotivation or superficial corrections without fostering deep learning as indicated by the modest negative connection with summative feedback.

Concerning the second research question the findings of Bandura (1997) and Pajares (2003) are consistent with the high degree of association between self-efficacy and writing proficiency (2003). The results show that students' confidence in their writing abilities is a significant predictor of their performance in Iraqi EFL classes. If students have faith in themselves, they will be more motivated to persevere through challenges, employ effective tactics when writing and ultimately produce higher-quality work.

Regarding the last reserch question the fact that self-efficacy plays a role as a partial mediator is an essential finding. It shows that formative feedback has a dual effect, increasing students' self-confidence and immediately improving their writing through advice. Teachers seem to convey a strong message to their students when they offer task-focused, constructive criticism, "You are capable of improving." When they have more faith in themselves, they are able to accomplish more. This finding lends credence to the hypothesis that feedback and self-efficacy are causally related as put forth by Schunk (2003).

5.4. Conclusion

Results show that psychological factors (self-efficacy) and instructional techniques (feedback style) are interdependent and critically related to Iraqi EFL students' ability to improve their writing. Many conventional settings such as Iraq may be making a mistake by placing too much emphasis on summative evaluations. For both its

immediate instructional benefits and its capacity to generate the key psychological resource of self-efficacy, a pedagogical move towards formative feedback is advised.

5.5. Pedagogical Implications

► **Teacher Training:** Iraqi universities should implement professional development workshops to train EFL instructors in the principles and practices of effective formative feedback.

► **Curriculum Design:** When creating a curriculum, curriculum developers should include rules that promote a balance between summative assessment and ongoing formative feedback during the writing process.

► **Building Self-Efficacy:** Teachers should plan activities and give feedback that encourages a growth mindset, praising progress and effort to help students build their writing self-efficacy over time.

5.6. Recommendations for Research

Research that builds on previous qualitative work to delve further into how Iraqi educators and students view and interact with different forms of feedback. Research examining the relationship between formative feedback, student self-efficacy, and writing outcomes in the context of a specific teacher-training intervention. The feedback proficiency relationship is being investigated, along with other possible mediating variables such as writing anxiety and motivation. The purpose of this study is to track participants' relationships from the beginning of their college journey all the way through to graduation.

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Abstract in Arabic

تتناول هذه الدراسة الكمية العلاقة بين تصورات الطلاب الذاتية لمهاراتهم الكتابية والأساليب التي يستخدمها معلموا اللغة الإنجليزية لتقديم التغذية الراجعة، أيضا هي تبحث عن تجارب طلاب الجامعات العراقيين الذين يدرسون اللغة الإنجليزية. تم تطبيق مقياس أسلوب التغذية الراجعة للمعلمين، ومقياس الكفاءة الذاتية في الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية واستبيان ديموغرافي على عينة من 300 طالب عراقي يتعلمون اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية من ثلاث جامعات حكومية. كما تم إجراء اختبار كتابة معياري محدد بوقت، وتم التحديث لتحديد مستوى الكفاءة الكتابية. أظهرت النتائج وجود ارتباط إيجابي بين أسلوب التغذية الراجعة التكوينية وكفاءة الطلاب الذاتية وكفاءتهم الكتابية، وذلك وفقاً لمعاملات ارتباط بيرسون وتحليل الانحدار المتعدد. في المقابل، لوحظ ارتباط سلبي طفيف مع أسلوب التغذية الراجعة التجميعية. وقد تبين أن ارتفاع مستوى الكفاءة الذاتية مؤشر إيجابي قوي

على الكتابة المتقنة. كما تبين أن الكفاءة الذاتية عامل وسيط ثالث في العلاقة بين التغذية الراجعة التكوينية والكفاءة الكتابية. تُظهر النتائج فعالية التغذية الراجعة التكوينية في تحسين تقدير الطلاب لذاتهم وقدراتهم الكتابية، وهو ما له آثار تربوية هامة على دورات اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في الجامعات العراقية.
