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Introduction

Each educational environment has numerous components whose interactions facilitate learning. This milieu is influenced by various factors such as students' backgrounds and experiences (Anene, 2005). Learners' immediate and tangible learning experience contributes to shaping learner attitudes and motivation, which eventually affects their long-term learning success (Taguchi et al., 2009). Therefore, an educator must clarify the theoretical foundations beyond simple skill-building by helping students to build confidence to learn, perform, and actively engage in the classroom. Learning strategies can facilitate the learning process, helping the learners to become more self-directed and self-motivated (Oxford, 2017). Writing has been considered an adventure through which writers' perspectives develop (Shaffer et al., 2019); that is, writing involves more than a grammar-driven product emphasizing formal language used in lectures and texts. Indeed, writing is a challenging cognitive activity that requires the learner to control various factors, ranging from the writer's academic background and personal interests to psychological, linguistic, and cognitive phenomena (Nunan, 1989). Manchón (2011) makes a distinction between "learning to write" and "writing to learn." This distinction highlights the function of writing given that writing is a tool to express the writer's perspectives (learning to write); at the same time, the process of writing itself and engagement in diverse tasks and activities contribute to enhancing learning in diverse areas (writing to learn). Traditional writing instruction (i.e., top-down and teacher-directed) does not meet learners' needs and expectations, failing to effectively provide students with required writing skills. Therefore, it is the educator's responsibility to provide writing instruction with creative methods and strategies to enable students to excel in higher education and professional careers.

One of the most effective writing strategies and instruction approaches is task-based writing instruction. As Traga Philippakos, Munsell, and Robinson (2017) maintain, one of the ways writing products can be improved is to provide learners with input which can be given to language learners in many different modes. Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is one of the most effective approaches to language teaching. Teachers should provide students with task-based activities which will motivate students to learn (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). According to Ellis (2003), a task is a device that is important for language use and interaction, and it can have a positive effect on improving students' writing. According to Lynch and Maclean (2000), a useful way to improve English learning is by setting up classroom tasks that reflect, as far as possible, the real-world tasks which the learners will perform. Moreover, Ellis (2003) maintains that it is more useful to see language primarily as a meaning structure which is the central tenet in task-based language teaching.

Task-based writing instruction provides educators with effective ways to integrate social and emotional skills with writing skills. Indeed, by solely focusing on rules, grammar, syntax, procedure, and conformity, writing instruction fails to develop essential components of 21st-

century writing skills. A large number of studies have concluded that writing skill is impacted by a variety of factors, including cognitive and social, among others (Kärchner et al., 2021; Sun & Wang, 2020; Zhu et al., 2021). A social cognitive view of literacy asks writing teachers to help students acquire problem-solving strategies rather than rule-based formulas or algorithms and show them how to enter discourse and understand the logic of the practice (Chandrasegaran, 2013). The contemporary philosophy of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) encourages collaboration, participation, and engagement. Teachers who advocate collaboration embrace conflicting opinions, strategies, and inquiries constructively while promoting the development of leadership and interpersonal skills (Graham, 2019). A collaborative educational setting provides tools and techniques that facilitate the interaction of the students with teachers, fellow students, and eventually society. Accordingly, teachers of all disciplines, particularly EFL teachers, must create a collaborative environment that is free of fear to enable the students to develop their skills and abilities.

One of the important writing problems faced by second-language (L2) learners is the lack of self-efficacy and epistemic beliefs (Bandura, 2011). Students need to be helped in order to develop their capacity to navigate, comment, and compose regarding their thoughts and beliefs. Indeed, students need a "coach" to guide them to absorb the rules and procedures typical of collaboration and a positive perspective toward writing. In addition, it is of enormous significance to hear all ideas and perspectives when it comes to instruction and education. Those who deal with different ideas and convictions, give credit to multiple voices, and can write convincingly to pronounce those perspectives make important contributions to the continuation of constructive debates about the concerns important to human society. Furthermore, inexperienced learners might underestimate their own knowledge. Having an impression that they are the main source of their credibility of knowledge instead of teachers or the textbook, underprepared learners might run into some problems (Neely, 2014). This might create issues when it comes to trying to gain a clear picture of vague or conflicting ideas (Ormrod, 2012). Some students might be inexperienced when it comes to associating or making a connection between ideas and interpretations. Put simply, they are immature regarding their ability to think about their thoughts and conceptualize abstractions (Neely, 2014). The widespread use of task-based writing in EFL classes, as well as the growing interest in the role of self-efficacy and epistemic beliefs, beg the question of whether or not such an approach to writing instruction contributes to the learners' self-efficacy, epistemic belief, and eventually their sense of identity and confidence. This study aimed to address this concern.

Review of Literature

Task-Based Writing Instruction and Collaborative Writing. Various approaches to task-based instruction focus on meaning-based activities and learner-centered curricula (Ellis, 2003). According to Nunan (1991)—as cited in Aziz, Fitriani, and Amalina (2020)—task-based language teaching is closely concerned with the term "pedagogical tasks," which are described as purposeful classroom activities. These activities unfold in an instructional calculated sequence, ranging from pre-tasks through post-tasks. This enables the students to comprehend, figure out, negotiate for meaning, and engage regarding the newly learned language. Indeed, these tasks indirectly draw the learners' attention to the grammar and vocabulary to be learned, with a focus on meaning rather than form. Studies recommend the use of activities in task-based instruction to

respond to second language (L2) needs such as images, texts, stories, etc. (Phillips, 2003). For many years, L2 educators have addressed task-based writing instruction as the ideal method to help students accomplish meaningful writing and conceptual communication (Braun & Clarke, 2006). However, although implementing task-based writing instruction has been documented in many contexts and various practices, few studies directly compared learners' outcomes in multiple contexts, including collaborative ones. A collaborative learning environment offers encouragement for students who typically do not know what to write as it takes the burden of uncertainty off their shoulders (Sawyer, 2014). Instead of feeling like there is nothing to contribute, collaborative writing allows students to pick up where others left off. The emphasis is on discovering and experimenting rather than just doing. As student writers collaborate, "writer's block" diminishes because they can build upon each other's suggestions. Collaborative writing helps underprepared students develop their writing skills and improve their perceptions of themselves in terms of self-efficacy and epistemic beliefs.

In another investigation of the contribution of collaborative writing, Dobao (2012) explored intermediate Spanish students' achievement in a college setting. Students cooperated in teams, dually, or individually to finish a written task after a lesson about a grammatical point. All participants delivered a single, joint writing piece. The recorded connections of all team members and pairs were translated and analyzed for language-related episodes (LREs); moreover, the transcribed texts were investigated to check accuracy level, level of fluency, and complexity. The examinations revealed that the groups created the most exact writings, trailed by the pairs, and afterward the individuals. The teams additionally made a large number of LREs than the pairs and had a greater extent of accurately resolved LREs. This finding proposes that pooled information is an empowering agent in collaborative writing activities, enabling students to deliver progressively authentic texts because of shared learning. In addition, according to Donato (1994) "collective scaffolding," through which students rely on each other's knowledge, allows them to engage in higher levels of interaction.

Many studies have shown that collaborative activities enable learners to have conscious interactions with language, put their hypotheses to the test, and receive constructive feedback. Wigglesworth and Storch (2009) analyzed the execution of two writing tasks by students working either in pairs or separately. They saw a noteworthy distinction between the two groups concerning the level of accuracy, the level of complexity, and fluency. In breaking down the transcripts of the pairs' talk in the task, they found out 30 percent of the discussion involved explicit language concerns indicating the positive effects of collaborative writing activities. Through collaboration and discussion, learners both learn concepts and experience competence. Collaborative discussion is a tool for learners to analyze their advancement toward learning, thus expanding their self-efficacy and epistemic beliefs. Kuhn (2015) remarked that dialogue is likely to create the best route to enhanced essay construction since learners who put forth multiple viewpoints before writing develop broader perspectives than their ideas. As individuals exchange ideas, they establish a common conceptual understanding, challenging each other to go beyond facts to higher-level explanations. Whether learners are speaking about writing or cooperatively writing, the learning process is facilitated, and self-efficacy and epistemic beliefs are improved (Stevens & Slavin, 1995).

Self-Efficacy. A writer's self-efficacy determines the level of engagement or disengagement in a given task (Pajares & Valiante, 2006). The implications of students' writing self-efficacy confirm that teachers play a pivotal role in developing self-efficacy with collaborative feedback and guidance activities as the student navigates the process of writing (Bandura, 2006). Students with negative self-efficacy often move in the negative direction unless they receive positive motivation. Therefore, constructing a supportive learning environment helps the writer develop skills at their self-determined pace and provides the vital foundation with which a student builds self-efficacy in writing. Self-efficacy in writing develops with practice and increases over time. In some instances, the decrease comes after only one specific negative interaction, such as a lower grade than what the students believed they would achieve. Self-efficacy, pointed out by Bandura (1997)—as cited in Wilde and Hsu (2019)—has to do with a person's beliefs and convictions that he/she can carry out any task they would face successfully. According to Degirmenci Mutlu (2016), the individual's perceived efficacy, either positive or negative, is not innate; put it another way, no one is born with an established attitude or perception. Indeed, self-efficacy evolves throughout life and is shaped by the various experiences an individual goes through, such as social events, accomplishments, failures, or psychological changes. In the majority of cases, a negative perception of one's efficacy can be consolidated through being badly treated, which influences other situations as well. Consequently, forming a firm, positive sense of self-efficacy plays an essential role in many aspects of one's life, particularly, when it comes to academic life where the individual needs to have a high level of scholastic achievement. In Lindner and Retelsdorf's (2019) view, self-efficacy can be changed as it is a dynamic belief system that undergoes modifications through gaining new experiences.

The Writing Self-Efficacy Scale (WSES) questionnaire, initially discussed by Pajares and Johnson (1994) and expanded by Jones (2008), identifies four aspects as causes of self-efficacy: a) positive experiences or skills-related outcomes, b) vicarious experience, c) verbal reinforcement and d) reduction of stress. As a result, due to the fragile nature of self-efficacy in writing development, an educator's strategy must outline a collaborative and supportive environment that reinforces positive interaction in the writing process while working with students individually in specific areas of writing skills. Self-efficacy influences how people deal with tasks. This perspective impacts how learners are driven to decide about the course and the continuation of their actions (Bandura, 2006). Giving the learners the process goals and equipping them with useful writing strategies, along with constructive feedback, will enable them to foster their writing self-efficacy (Pajares, 2003).

Epistemic Beliefs. Epistemic beliefs refer to the individual's viewpoint regarding one's knowledge, including the authority of knowledge, the cause of knowledge, and the perceived usefulness or limitations of knowledge (Lahtinen & Pehkonen, 2013). In the same vein, Aditomo (2018) characterizes epistemic beliefs as an individual's beliefs regarding the nature of knowledge, the standards for the learning process, and how knowledge is construed by the individual. Although various theorists are different in their expanse of epistemic beliefs, all agree that mature epistemic beliefs are manifested when a person can balance conflicting opinions through critical thinking (DeBacker et al., 2008). It has been argued that logical consideration and having an open mind to reasoned arguments pave the way for the enhancement of effective epistemic beliefs (Kuhn, 2015). Academic writing skills are closely related to epistemic beliefs because mature epistemic beliefs enable learners to try other viewpoints more objectively and

compose better and more complex analyses (Neely, 2014). According to Shirzad et al. (2021), there has been growing research on the possible relationship between learners' epistemic beliefs and the learning process. Learners who suffer from poor academic skills often have naïve conceptualizations of knowledge, thinking that knowledge must be seen as monolithic rather than tentative (Neely, 2014). Inadequate background knowledge and deductive beliefs might create problems in making a comparison between several perspectives on concepts or issues (Kember et al., 2008). The attainment of versatile academic writing skills and sophisticated epistemic beliefs requires the capability of thinking through competing ideas rather than condoning one viewpoint (Kember et al., 2008; Kuhn & Weinstock, 2002). The Epistemological Beliefs Survey (EBS), designed by Wood and Kardash (2002), draws on a combination of previous studies on multi-layered conceptualizations of knowledge (Duell & Schommer-Aikins, 2001). It is comprised of the following five subscales: a) features of successful learners, b) knowledge build-up and changes, c) pace of knowledge gain, d) structure of knowledge, and e) achievability of objective truth.

Empirical Studies. The previous studies on self-efficacy and epistemic beliefs in the context of L2 learning have mainly focused on the relationship between these constructs and language skills. For example, an investigation conducted by Pajares (2003) revealed a positive correlation between the participants' writing self-efficacy and their writing performance. In their study, Sanders-Reio et al. (2014) sought to examine a model which was claimed to predict writing performance based on the learners' self-efficacy related to writing. The findings showed that the students' beliefs regarding writing and their writing self-efficacy can predict the quality of their writing. Furthermore, their beliefs about writing could serve as a modest predictor of their written work. Kärchner et al. (2021) investigated the effects of L2 students' beliefs and epistemic beliefs on their performance and competence. The results confirmed the existence of such an effect. Sumarsono et al. (2020) carried out a study to examine the effect of task-based teaching on L2 learners' speaking, as well as the effect of self-efficacy on speaking. The results showed that the participants' self-efficacy influenced their speaking performance. The investigation conducted by Cheng (2020) revealed that learners' self-efficacy enhances academic performance both directly and indirectly, which is mediated by positive self-efficacy on self-concept.

The studies linking epistemological beliefs to students' performance on a writing task found that aspects of students' epistemological beliefs influence their productivity (Kardash & Scholes, 1996; Mason & Boscolo, 2004; Schommer, 1993). Kardash and Scholes (1996) found that students' beliefs about specific knowledge, together with the need for cognition and preliminary thoughts about the topic, predicted the quality of concluding paragraphs. Schommer (1993) echoed the link between students' epistemological beliefs and performance on a concluding paragraph writing task. The students noted that participating in a task-based writing class provides them with tools that lead to enhanced confidence for carrying out writing tasks and displaying writing skills (Schommer, 1993). Many studies have assessed students' papers for explanatory quality and evidence of students' epistemological position. The qualitative analysis supported strong relationships between students' epistemological beliefs and the quality of their essays, with students holding more constructivist epistemologies writing essays of higher logical quality (Hays et al., 1988). To the best knowledge of the researcher, few, if any, studies have been conducted on the effect of task-based writing instruction on EFL learners' self-efficacy and epistemic beliefs. Accordingly, this study aimed to address this gap by investigating the

mentioned effect on the Iranian Intermediate EFL learners. The following research questions were formulated in this study:

1. Is there any improvement in the Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' writing skills after participation in a writing course with a task-based instruction approach?
2. What are Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' experiences in task-based writing instruction?
3. Do Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' self-efficacy show a pre-test to post-test change after participation in a writing course with a task-based instruction approach compared with the control group?
4. Do Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' epistemic beliefs show a pre-test to post-test change after participation in a writing course with a task-based instruction approach compared with the control group?

Methods

Participants. The sample of this study was comprised of 36 Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners at Fahim Language Institute in Esfahan, Iran. Both male and female learners whose ages ranged from 21 to 35 years participated in the study. They formed experimental and control groups, with each group made up of 18 learners. All the participants had already completed levels 1-4 of the Interchange book series by Jack C. Richards, Susan Proctor, and Jonathan Hull, the fourth edition, during a 9-month educational period prior to this study.

Instruments. Five instruments were utilized to gather data for this study which included a six-point scale, survey, interviews, and biographical essays.

Writing Self-Efficacy Scale (WSES). The WSES developed by Jones (2008) elicits students' ideas of how they behave regarding their writing, the extent to which they are prepared to perform academic writing tasks, and the extent to which they are ready to display writing skills, ranging from grammar to logic and organization. It is composed of 26 items categorized into three groups as follows: a) writing behaviors, b) writing tasks, and c) writing skills. This instrument uses a six-point scale: "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree" for the writing behavior category and from "No Chance" to "Completely Certain" for the writing tasks and writing skills categories**.**

Epistemological Beliefs Survey (EBS). The EBS developed by Wood and Kardash (2002) is comprised of 38 items using a five-point Likert scale. It is comprised of five subscales: a) features of successful learners, b) knowledge build-up and changes, c) pace of knowledge gain, d) structure of knowledge, and e) achievability of objective truth.

Semi-structured Interviews. Two interviews with different sets of questions were conducted for four participants, as representatives of all students, in the second and sixth weeks of the study. The interview questions were selected from the literature and had a semi-structured interview format. The first interview addressed students' background information and expectations from the course, while the second interview examined students' experience and improvement during the course.

Biographical Essays. Two biographical essays were scored based on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). The writings are assessed according to the standard scoring criteria for IELTS writing based on five points each: task achievement (TA), coherence and cohesion (CC), lexical resource (LR), and grammatical range and accuracy (GRA).

Data Analysis

A statistical analysis (paired-sample T-test) was conducted to examine and compare the results. The collected data were analyzed through content analysis and SPSS Statistics, a software package used for interactive statistical analysis. To ensure data reliability, the transcripts were coded and analyzed twice. Once it was concluded that the data was accurate and valid, the data analysis was conducted. To answer quantitative research questions, paired-samples T-test and mixed between-within-subjects analysis of variance were used.

Procedures

Initially, 35 EFL learners were divided into an experimental and a control group. The participants in the experimental group took part in 18 intensive writing sessions which were held three times a week. In each session, the teacher and students collaborated to write a text. The teacher provided the group with 2–3 sentences as a model to help the students learn how to develop an idea. Then, the students were encouraged to move forward and propose the subsequent sentences. Each student suggested one sentence, and the teacher chose the most creative and accurate sentence, corrected it if needed, and asked the students to write it down. The same process was repeated for all sentences until the text ended. The experimental group was asked to write a biographical essay in the second and sixth weeks of the study as a pre-test and post-test to check their writing improvement. Their papers were corrected by the teacher, and a grade out of 20 points was assigned. The teacher evaluated their writings according to the standard scoring criteria for IELTS writing: task achievement (TA), coherence and cohesion (CC), lexical resource (LR), and grammatical range and accuracy (GRA) with a score of 5 points each. This was followed by two interviews with different sets of questions conducted with four participants, as representatives of all students, in the second and sixth weeks of the study.

The interview questions were selected from the literature, and a semi-structured interview format was used. The first interview addressed students' background information and expectations from the course, while the second interview examined students' experience and improvement during the course. The WSES questionnaire was completed in the first and sixth weeks. It focused on participants' ideas of their behaviors about writing, the extent to which they are prepared to perform academic writing tasks, and the extent to which they are ready to display writing skills, ranging from grammar to logic and organization. It is composed of 26 items categorized into three groups as follows: a) writing behaviors, b) writing tasks, and c) writing skills. This instrument uses a six-point scale: "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree" for the writing behavior category and from "No Chance" to "Completely Certain" for the writing tasks and writing skills categories. The writing behaviors category is comprised of items associated with learners' confidence in time management and perseverance in the face of difficulties. The writing tasks category is comprised of items associated with learners' confidence in writing essays that examine and combine different sources and viewpoints. The writing skills category is comprised

of items associated with learners' confidence in managing the mechanical aspects and syntax expected in academic writing. The pre-test in week one had demographic questions, while the post-test in the sixth week contained questions about students' overall opinions about the course and their experiences in the writing process. The EBS was administered in weeks one and six of the study. It contained 38 items using a five-point Likert scale.

Results

To answer the first research question ("Is there any improvement in the Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' writing skills after participation in a writing course with a task-based instruction approach?") the two biographies that students wrote at the beginning and end of the course were graded and compared. As it can be seen in Table 1, there was a significant increase in test scores from pre-test ($M = 16.22$, $SD = 1.47$) to post-test ($M = 18.09$, $SD = 1.41$). The sig value was smaller than the specific specified alpha value (.05), so it could be concluded that there was a significant improvement in the students' writing skills after participation in a writing course with a task-based instruction approach (Table 1).

Table 1
Paired Samples Statistics to Address the First Question

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test	16.22	18	1.47	.34
Post-test	18.09	18	1.41	.33

The second research question ("What are Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' experiences in task-based writing instruction?") addressed the qualitative data in biographies and two interviews with four volunteer students Sara, Firoozeh, Masoud, and Peyman, two female and two male, as representatives of all students. Individual students' statements were cross-referenced to develop an understanding of the experiences of everyone. The results were collected into six categories classified under three themes (Table 2).

Table 2
Students' Experiences in the Task-based Writing Instruction

Themes	Categories
1. Preparation for academic writing	1. High school writing experiences 2. Academic writing expectations
2. Dialogical activities	3. Dialogical interactions 4. Peer review and feedback
3. Confidence for academic writing	5. Improvement of academic writing 6. Development of academic identity

For example, students' responses around the third theme, confidence in academic writing, are highlighted below:
- Sara said, "I am much more knowledgeable now and can fluently use academic and advanced vocabulary in my writing."

- Firoozeh remarked, "My writing is much better now. I even feel more confident when I want to speak. I'm getting better and better every day, and I feel like I can confidently engage in the class activities."
- Masoud stated, "I'm not really good at writing, and I don't like it that much, but I think my essays are academic level now, not perfect but acceptable. I think I can do well in my college courses."
- Peyman declared, "Now that I have gone through this intense training, I feel that I would enter college next year confidently. I think I still need to learn a lot, but I want to confer that I had terrible writing habits before."

The students' increased confidence in academic writing indicates that learners focused eagerly on the activities and sought to contribute to their own and others' success even in the face of challenges. The structural conversations that participants experienced during the class sessions created a constructive platform for them to hear and express their ideas much more unreservedly than they might do on their own. To answer the third research question ("Do Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' self-efficacy show a pre-test to post-test change after participation in a writing course with a task-based instruction approach compared with the control group?") the pre-test and post-test quantitative data from the WSES questionnaires were examined. The mean pre-test and post-test scores for the experimental group's WSES questionnaires were 74 and 88.55, respectively. The mean difference between the pre-test and post-test scores for the experimental group's WSES questionnaire was 14.55, while the mean change in pre-test and post-test scores of the control group was 5.87. According to the mean, an improvement resulting from participation in task-based writing instruction was clear (Table 3).

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics of WSES Questionnaire to Address the Third Question

WSES Questionnaire		Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Pre-test	Experimental group	88.55	9.96	18
	Control group	79.43	7.66	16
	Total	84.26	9.96	34
Post-test	Experimental group	74	8.38	18
	Control group	73.56	7.62	16
	Total	73.79	7.91	34

The results indicated a significant difference in the students' self-efficacy in the experimental group, compared with the control group, after participation in a task-based writing course. This finding implied that participating in a task-based writing course greatly influenced students' self-efficacy. To address the fourth research question ("Do Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' epistemic beliefs show a pre-test to post-test change after participation in a writing course with a task-based instruction approach compared with the control group?") an epistemic beliefs survey, the EBS, was conducted. Using the SPSS, frequency analyses were examined to compare the students' epistemic beliefs scores in the pre-test and post-test. The mean and standard deviation of the pre-test to post-test of the experimental group were 117.44 and 8.79, and 132.50 and 13.06, respectively. This significant increase, compared to the slight increase in the control group, confirmed the success of task-based writing instruction and its remarkable influence on the experimental group's epistemic beliefs (Table 4).

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics of EBS to Address the Fourth Question

EBS		Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Pre-test	Experimental group	117.44	8.79	18
	Control group	116.12	6.55	16
	Total	116.82	7.73	34
Post-test	Experimental group	132.50	13.06	18
	Control group	124.37	6.80	16
	Total	128.67	11.21	34

The results were supported by participants' comments about their growing ability to examine and share ideas. They perceived themselves to be much more qualified to take part in real-life argument discourse and write sentences that address a variety of perspectives.

Discussion

This investigation aimed to examine the effects of task-based writing teaching on enhancing EFL learners' self-efficacy and epistemic beliefs related to writing skills. To this end, 36 Iranian male and female pre-intermediate learners took part in this research. They formed an experimental group and a control groups. Then, they took part in a six-week writing course, and the learners in the experimental group were taught how to write using task-based wiring activities. The data were collected using two interviews, the Writing Self-Efficacy Scale, and the Epistemological Beliefs Survey. The results showed the positive effect of task-based writing instruction concerning writing skills, self-efficacy, and epistemic beliefs. The results of this study are in line with the study conducted by Rahimi (2022) who investigated the effects of TBLT on the development of Iranian university students' self-efficacy and willingness to communicate. The results of his study revealed the positive effects of TBLT on the participants' self-efficacy. This result can be explained in terms of the enjoyment and curiosity created by engagement in TBLT in the context of writing.

Indeed, learners enjoy cooperating to solve a problem, and this would allow them to unconsciously notice the newly learned grammar and vocabulary used in their interactions and conversations. Consistent with this explanation, Pajares (2003) asserts that self-adequacy and earlier performance have been found to predict writing achievement. This is because collaborative exchanges enable learners to cooperate to accomplish a conceptual goal like analyzing a story or authoring a research paper. As people share thoughts, group members draw on these thoughts to establish a shared conceptual understanding. Moreover, students challenge each other to move beyond facts to higher-level explanations. Such enjoyable experiences can contribute to positive changes in their self-efficacy.

Similarly, consistent with the findings of this study regarding the positive effect of TBLT, Bao and Du (2015) asserted that the students' positive perceptions can be explained given that they come to believe that TBLT plays an effective role in creating a learning environment that leads to learners' collective involvement and motivation. According to Hamann et al. (2022), group processes contribute to enhancing self-efficacy and it is maintained that dialogue serves as a

useful framework for the development of intellect. They say that as learners shared their thoughts as a response to the purposeful questions that revealed personal experience and solutions, they were found to be highly determined and flexible thinkers as they were able to negotiate their positions and perspectives. For example, Peyman said that he felt he had changed as an individual when he commented, "Now that I have taken part in the training, I feel better. I think as I go on, I need to make more grammatical sentences, and I am hoping and praying that I do.

As for the effect of TBLT on EFL learners' epistemic beliefs, the results of this study are consistent with those of Winberg's et al. (2019) investigation which revealed a strong relationship between uncertainty beliefs and successful learning and achievement. In the same vein, the results of the current study show that writing instruction embedded in the TBLT context influences the learners' epistemic beliefs positively. Having reached the same results following the performance of a meta-analysis, Greene et al. (2018) found that epistemic beliefs could be viewed as a predictor of academic achievement such as writing and speaking in L2 classes. Also, this study is implicitly corroborated by a study conducted by Barjesteh and Niknezhad (2020), who showed that EFL learners enjoying a high level of self-efficacy are likely to outperform other learners in terms of self-confidence in their writing tasks. It is a matter of direction; that is, one can assume that task-based writing and self-efficacy can mutually reinforce each other. To clarify this mutually beneficial effect, future studies can be conducted using larger samples of EFL learners. In contrast, the investigations conducted by Al-Mekhlafi (2011) and Hashemnejad et al. (2014) provided evidence showing otherwise. That is, their studies found no interplay between writing tasks and participants' self-efficacy. This may be due to other factors influencing the final results (e.g., cognitive, social, and economic factors).

Conclusion and Suggestions for Further Research

The main goal of this study was to examine the possible relationship between task-based writing instruction and the development of self-efficacy and epistemologcial beliefs among Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners. The results affirm the positive effects of such a type of writing instruction on self-efficacy and EBs, which has important implications for stakeholders in the language instruction context. In general, the findings of the present study might be helpful for language instructors, language learners, and curriculum designers as they are informative regarding the preferable task-based writing classes. In particular, English instructors are advised to pave the way for the performance of tasks in different situations and activities in their classes so that L2 learners are led to use these somewhat neglected cooperative writing strategies and gradually boost their confidence and self-efficacy. More specifically, teachers should come up with solutions to offer support, as well as chances for individual interaction. Reflective teachers can facilitate such a transition by acting as models who can be followed by the learners to improve their academic thinking and dialogic interactions through improving interaction and fostering trust in the classroom and by knowing each learner to the fullest extent. Accordingly, teachers are advised to use writing tasks and task-based writing instruction to improve students' productivity, helping them to enhance their sense of identity and confidence. They are also advised to make a connection between classroom activities with learners' experiences and support collaborative opportunities as much as possible.

There is a need to determine, from a theoretical perspective, what traits compose more (or less) demanding self-efficacy behaviors and add items accordingly to the current scale to provide more useful diagnostics for learners with extremely high or low levels of self-efficacy capacity. Also, participants with more varied backgrounds should be recruited, so that the results can be more valid and more generalizable. Future studies can replicate this study with populations from different majors or use different testing instruments to test the generalization of the findings. More studies should be carried out in this field to examine both learners' experiences and learning outcomes, as the results of these studies can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of various developmental approaches.

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