Research Article

THE ROLE OF USING MODEL ESSAYS AS A FEEDBACK TOOL ON DEVELOPING GRAMMATICAL ACCURACY OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' WRITING PERFORMANCE

*Sahar Aghazadeh Dizaj[1] and Alireza Karbalaei[2]
[1]*Department of English, Qeshm International Branch, Islamic Azad University, Qeshm, Iran*
[2]*Department of English, Farhangian University, Tehran, Iran*
*Author for Correspondence

ABSTRACT
Over the past few decades of research on teaching writing to ESL/EFL learners, a number of issues have appeared, some of which remained controversial in spite of the reams of data on language writing. One of these hotly debated topics is the positive role of using model essays as a feedback tool on developing grammatical accuracy of Iranian EFL learners' writing performance. Most of the researchers believe that learners should be encouraged to use model essays so that they can improve their writing performances through creating a relationship between reading and writing. The main purpose of the present study was to investigate the role of using model essays as a feedback tool on developing grammatical accuracy of Iranian EFL learners' writing performance. The participants of the present study included 3rd term English majors of Tabriz Azad University, taking part in two separate classes, one as the control group and the other as the experimental group. Each class consisted of 40 students (80 in general, 15 males and 65 females) from various age groups ranging from 20 to 23. A TOEFL proficiency test was used to ensure homogeneity of the participants. Based on the results of TOEFL test, those participants placed between one standard deviation above and below the mean were selected as the main participants. Then, the scores of grammar section of TOEFL test was taken into account to see whether there was any significant difference between the two groups at the beginning of the study. The two groups were given a writing task in which a topic was given to the learners and they had to write a composition. The students' writings were comparedin terms of grammatical accuracy to see if the two groups were equal or different at the pre-test. The results of the Independent samples t-test revealed that the two groups were almost equal in terms of grammatical accuracy. After the pre-test stage, the treatment in the form of model essays was given to the experimental group for a period of time. The treatment included asking the participants to study the model essays chosen and take notes or underline those parts which attracted their attention such as lexicon. A post-test of writing was given to the groups in order to explore if the grammatical accuracy had any significant rise in the experimental group. The independent samples t-test was run to compare the two means obtained from the two groups. Results showed that the mean score of accuracy in the experimental group was significantly higher than that in the control group after the treatment. In fact, using model essays was an effective way for improving the grammatical accuracy in the experimental group. The study had several pedagogical implications for English courses in general and writing courses in particular.

Keywords: Model Essays, Feedback Tool, Grammatical Accuracy, Writing Performance

INTRODUCTION
According to Rashtchi and Keyvanfar (1999) "It is generally believed that writing is the most demanding skill among the four. Native speakers of different languages are usually incapable of writing fluently and accurately in their own languages without receiving proper instruction." According to Nunan (1999), producing a coherent, fluent, extended piece of writing is probably the most difficult thing there is to do in language. It involves the development of an idea, the capture of mental representations of knowledge, and of experience with subjects. Writing is an interactive process by nature since it evolves out of the symbolic interplay between writer, text and reader (Palmira, 2001). As Pilus (1993) mentions, writing is a one-sided communication with all the burden of interaction relying mostly on linguistic elements which

Research Article

indicates that writing is indeed a deliberate and demanding activity. It requires conscious work on the part of the writer who, besides having to accommodate his own thought, has to be competent in all the written aspects of a language, from mechanics to discourse. That is to say, he also needs the ability to use more complex and varied vocabulary and conform to the less flexible conventions. In other words, a writer needs not only language competence but also other communicative skills which include sociolinguistic and strategic factors (Pilus, 1993).

Writing plays an important role in our personal and professional lives, thus, it has become one of the essential components of university English for General Purposes (EGP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) curricula (Palmira, 2001). The ability to write well is not a naturally acquired skill; while it is usually learned or culturally transmitted as a set of practices in formal instructional settings or other environments. Writing skills must be practiced and learned through experience.

Research on English composition can be seen in the light of two general trends. Traditionally, studies on composition were commonly product-oriented; that is, most of the studies looked at writing instructions and their effects on writing ability in terms of the end product. On the contrary, the more current studies seek to discover the process of writing itself. In other words, researchers are interested in finding out what a writer actually does in the process of writing (Pilus, 1993).

Writing accuracy, as well as its complexity and fluency, is an important concern in EFL writing classrooms. Students' writing performances are usually evaluated based on how accurate they are in lexico-grammatical areas, spelling and punctuation (Gholami and Bazarmaj, 2013). These writing performances may also be assessed in terms of the length of the passages written by the students which indicates the fluency of the written texts and also the complexity of the sentences being produced by learners. The literature has witnessed many benefits of different kinds of feedbacks on the accuracy, fluency and complexity of learners' writing performances. There are several types of feedback in L2 writing instruction, such as teacher's essay correction, reformulation and peer feedback (Saeidi and Sahebkheir, 2011). A model essay written by a native speaker may also be a beneficial resource if it can function as a feedback tool (Qi and Lapkin, 2001). According to Eschholz (1980), models are important to every writer and when appropriately integrated into the context of the writing process, they become a powerful and effective teaching tool. Vickers and Ene (2004) believe that modeling of native speaker writing may improve writing performance better than teacher error correction. One of the teaching strategies in some classes is to assign the students to work in a writing task by using a model essay. They prepare their writings after analyzing the main components of the sample text. They make use of the sample text's organizational characteristics in their writings. According to Eschholz (1980), the prose model approach of teaching how to write maintains that people can develop and improve their writing performance through directed reading, since what they write is directly dependent on what they read and this can have a positive effect on improving their writing performance.

Research Questions

Based on the main purpose of the research and the scope of the study, the present research aims to find logical answers for the following research question.

1. Do model essays as a feedback tool have a positive role in developing grammatical accuracy of Iranian EFL learners' writing performance?

Based on the above question, the following hypothesis was formed:

2. Using model essays as a feedback tool doesn`t haveany role in developing grammatical accuracy of Iranian EFL learners' writing performance.

Review of Literature

Product versus Process Approach to Writing

According to Nunan (1999), product-oriented approaches to writing focus on tasks in which the learner imitates copies and transforms models provided by the teacher or the textbook. In Nunan's term, this "reproductive language work" focuses very much on the sentence level grammar, the belief being that sentences were the building blocks of discourse and that discourse was created by fitting one building block on to the next. Such an approach was consistent with sentence-level structuralism linguistics and

Research Article

bottom-up processing. In other words, decisions about how to package information within a sentence and what grammatical forms to use can often only be made with reference to the discourse context within which the sentence is to be placed.

As stated by Tangpermpoon (2008, as cited in Saeidi and Sahebkheir, 2011), in product-based approach to writing, students will start from pre-writing to composing and to correcting. In this approach what is emphasized is raising students' awareness, especially in grammatical structures. According to Saeidi and Sahebkheir (2011), Modeling is at the center of this approach and it has always been regarded as a beneficial source for providing feedback to students as well as being an effective teaching tool, if appropriately integrated into the context of writing process. Model texts prevent L2 learners' creativity. Particularly the way that model texts have been used in the product-based approach has been criticized that is reading the text, analyzing it and then starting to write.

Model Essays

A large number of researchers argue that feedback plays an essential role in L2 writing instruction (e.g. Ferris, 1995; Ferris and Hedgcock, 1998; Hedgcock and Lefkowitz, 1994; Hyland, 2003; Leki, 1990; Tickoo, 2001). One type of feedback in L2 writing instruction among others is model essays written by native or native-like proficient writers. According to Bagheri and Zare (2009) model essays in general are good examples of writing provided by instructors or by textbooks for students to read and imitate. Charney and Carlson (1995) define a model as a text produced by a specific writer in a given situation, which exemplifies a genre that can be generalized across writers in the same situation.

Model essays are commonly used by L1 writing instructors to enhance students' writing skills. A survey conducted among 70 university composition teachers indicated that about 76% of them used modeling regularly in their writing classes (Stolarek, 1994). Similarly, Watson (1982) indicates that many ESL teachers believe that an effective way to teach writing is to make the students read and imitate models. Wu (2002) also maintains that although using models in writing classrooms is still a controversial issue, it is not uncommon.

Miller (1984) believes that through reading model essays, L2 students can become familiar with a particular genre, namely, description, narration, contrast and comparison, exposition, and argumentation and obtain specific information from specified writing works to be able to take actions within the genre. According to Miller (1984), model essays supply students not only with genre-specific examples and input but also topic-specific ones which learners can make use of in their own writings. As Hillocks (1986) states, "In order to write an essay of a given type, the writer must be familiar with examples of the type and know the parts of the type and their relationships" (p. 154).

Therefore, as mentioned by Bagheri and Zare (2009), Model essays focus the attention of the students on the features of texts and are mainly concerned with developing the students' abilities in producing those features accurately. Hence, it might be claimed that using model essays features a product approach towards writing and "has its origin in the traditions of rhetorics'' (Hedge, 2000).

Swales (1990) and Raimes (1991, 1998) indicated that through exposure to models of standard paragraphs and essays as well as genres of writing, including flyers, magazine articles, letters, and so forth, learners may be able to communicate more effectively with their audience. Text analysis is another application of model essays. By means of analyzing the text of model essays, L2 writers become aware of how particular grammatical features are used in authentic discourse contexts. This might depend very much on the proficiency level of the learners; however, what is of paramount importance as Atkinson and Ramanathan (1995) maintain is that as students progress, they need to become aware of a variety of forms that "serve the writer's purpose instead of the other way around" (p. 548). This is in line with the genre analysis approach within text analysis (Hedge, 2000) in which writing is viewed as "being linked to the values and expectations of a particular discourse community" (p. 320). This entails writing which is effectively organized if we interpret serving the writer's purpose quoted above as demonstrating the writer's voice in addressing the audience in the intended discourse community. Then, one comes to the conclusion that both teachers and learners need "criteria for effectiveness" (Hedge, 2000, p. 321) and essay models can provide such criteria for teachers and learners.

Research Article

Model Essays as a Feedback Tool

Some L2 writing researchers argue that L2 learners should be encouraged to use a model essay for improving their writing skills in terms of the relationship between reading and writing. Ferris and Hedgcock (1998) argue that L2 writers have to be exposed to various types of reading material since it is difficult to acquire L2 writing skills by only writing. Eschholz (1980) points out that what L2 learners write depends on what they read and they can improve their L2 writing skills by reading. He also argues that given the opportunities to learn rhetorical modes, L2 learners can eventually apply their knowledge about those modes to their writing. Based on Cumming's (1995) empirical study, which demonstrates the significance of rhetorical aspects of texts in model essays, Smagorinsky (1992) discusses that model essays are the most helpful tool if L2 writers have a sufficient amount of content knowledge. Thus, some researchers emphasize the necessity of a model text illustrated in an academic writing textbook, which enables L2 writers to pay attention to the various aspects of TL (e.g., Hyland, 2003).

However, there are also several objections to using model essays in an L2 writing context. Murray (1980) points out that the process of making meaning in L2 cannot be achieved by referring to written texts. In addition, Goby (1997) asserted that model essays prevent L2 learners from having creativity, which she believes is one of the important aspects of L2 writing skills. Writing instruction with model essays has also been criticized by other researchers (Collins and Gentner, 1980; Judy, 1980) for laying emphasis not on content but on form. They insist that language form and the content of composition are inseparable. Even among researchers who claim that model essays can be beneficial pedagogical tools, there has been agreement that reading model essays is important but not totally sufficient (Ferris and Hedgcock, 1998; Hyland, 2003). However, there has been little empirical research to explore the role of model essays in L2 writing pedagogy.

Writing Accuracy

According to Larsen-Freeman (2006), because language is complex, progress cannot be totally accounted for by performance in any one subsystem. What is evident at any one time is 'the interaction of multiple complex dynamic systems, working on multiple timescales and levels (Larsen-Freeman 1997; Lemke 2000). Furthermore, there are also many dimensions to language proficiency—accuracy, fluency, and complexity being there that are theorized to have independent status in L2 performance in that learners can have different goals at different times when performing in an L2 (Skehan 1998; Robinson 2001). Linguistic subsystems, dimensions of language proficiency, and even individual elements of language interact in ways that are supportive, competitive, and conditional (van Geert and Steenbeek 2005a). They are supportive in that development in one of these subsystems, dimensions, or elements might depend upon the development in another.

On the other hand, Polio (1997), pointed that the focus of current writing pedagogy on writing process and idea generation resulted in putting less emphasis on getting students to write error-free sentences. Indeed, he mentions that process-oriented approaches in teaching L2 writing insist that editing wait until the final drafts.

Most of the studies done recently have been concerned with the effect of teacher's feedback on the accuracy of students' writing (Chandler, 2003; Myles, 2002; Bitcher, Young and Cameron, 2005; Diab, 2005). Previous research has made it clear that, in order to be able to write successfully in a second language and, in particular, to be able to learn the formal L2 academic prose crucial in nonnative speakers' academic and professional careers, students need to develop a basic linguistic threshold, without which they simply do not have the range of lexical and grammar skills required in academic writing (Berkenkotter and Huckin, 1995; Chang and Swales, 1999; Hinkel, 2002; Horowitz, 1991;Johns,1997; Kroll, 1980; Paltridge, 2001; Read, 2000). Of course, only a few studies have considered the role of model texts on EFL learners' writing accuracy (Saeidi and Sahebkheir, 2011).

Feedback as viewed by Furnborough and Truman (2009) entails the existence of a gap between what has been learned and the target competence of the learners, and the efforts undertaken to bridge these gaps. In a study, Treglia (2009) posits that students understand and are able to address corrections irrespective of the type of feedback provided, assuring writing teachers that student writer are able to benefit strongly

Research Article

from teacher feedback. Many researchers investigated the efficacy of different feedback types on students' writing accuracy. For example, Bitchener *et al.,* (2005) found that direct oral feedback in combination with direct written feedback did not only have a greater effect than direct written feedback alone on improved accuracy over time, but it also found that the combined feedback option facilitated improvement in some error categories but not others. Moreover, they believe that upper intermediate L2 writers can improve the accuracy of their use of rule-governed linguistic features if they are regularly exposed to oral and written corrective feedback. In addition, Bitchener and Knoch (2008) analyzed the extent to which different written corrective feedback options (direct corrective feedback, written and oral metalinguistic explanation; direct corrective feedback and written meta-linguistic explanation; direct corrective feedback only; no corrective feedback improves students' accuracy in the use of two functional uses of the English article system. Their findings revealed that students who received all three written corrective feedback options outperformed those who did not receive written feedback and that students' level of accuracy was retained over seven weeks, while there was no difference in the extent to which students improved the accuracy of their writing as a result of written corrective feedback.

MATERIALS AND METHODS
Methodology
Participants
The initial participants of the present study were 80 (15 male and 65 female) third term English students majoring in TEFL at two intact classes in Azad University of Tabriz. They were from various age groups ranging from 20 to 23. All participants were enrolled in classes during the second semester which lasted around 16 weeks. An adapted TOEFL test of English proficiency was administered to the two groups to design a homogeneous sample.

After the test, the participants in two classes were ranked and those whose test scores were beyond one standard deviation below and above the mean were considered as outliers and excluded from the study. The selected sample included 60 students which were in two classes with 26 and 28 students. The classes were randomly labeled as experimental and control groups.

Instrumentation
The following instruments and materials were used in the present study to collect the data and to find answer for the research question.

General English Proficiency Test: A 40-item multiple choice test of vocabulary, grammar and reading comprehension was adapted from the TOEFL proficiency test for evaluating the participants' level of English proficiency at the beginning of the study. The main purpose of this test was to select a homogeneous sample and to exclude those whose scores were too far from the central tendency. The selected samples in two classes were further compared in terms of their scores in the grammar section of the test to find out if they were almost equal in grammatical awareness.

Writing Tasks: Two writing tasks were given to the participants in order to examine their grammatical accuracy as the pretest and posttest. The writing tasks were in the form of writing composition. The topics for the compositions were selected from the book *How to Prepare for TOEFL Essays*. The participants in both classes were given seven topics from which they could randomly selected intothe pretest and the posttest group.

Rating Rubrics: The quality of the learners' written products was evaluated by means of an analytic rating scale in this study. A modified version of Cohen's (1994) and Jacobs *et al.,* (1981) scale was the basis of scoring the writings. The scale focused on five aspects of writing including content, organization, language in use, grammar, and mechanics

Model Essays: Ten model essays selected from the book, *How to Prepare for TOEFL Essays,* were given to the participants in the experimental group as the treatment each session. The treatment included asking the participants to study the model essays chosen and take notes or underline those parts which attracted their attention such as lexicon (words, phrases…), content (knowledge and evidence…) and grammar (structures, punctuation.

Research Article

Top Notch series book: The chosen book to be taught for the participants of both experimental and control group was from the Top Notch series which consisted of different sections such as conversation models, reading, listening parts and grammar as well as writing tasks.

Scoring Procedure

The scoring procedure to obtain the accuracy scores for the participants' written products both at the pretest and posttest was to count the number of grammatically incorrect sentences in each composition and then to divide the number of grammatically correct sentences by the total number of sentences in each composition.

Data Collection Procedures

All the data were collected over a 16-week period from two classes at Islamic Azad University, Tabriz Branch. One week before the experiment, participants were informed that all details of the procedures would be confidential and their essays were not graded as part of their academic achievement. Then, an adapted TOEFL proficiency test was used to select a homogeneous sample by excluding the participants whose scores were beyond one SD below and above the mean. Then, the scores of grammar section of TOEFL test were taken into account to see whether there was any significant difference in terms of grammatical knowledge between the two groups of selected participants at the beginning of the study.

The study began with a writing task which was given to the participants in two groups to examine their writing accuracy.

The scoring procedure was explained in the previous section. Since the method chosen for this study was experimental, there was the need for a treatment to be given to the experimental group. The treatment included asking the participants to study the model essays chosen and take notes or underline those parts which attracted their attention such as lexicon (words, phrases…), content (knowledge and evidence…) and grammar (structures, punctuation …).

At the post-test stage, the participants in both groups were asked to write another composition about one of the topics which they had selected before. The same scoring procedure was used to obtain accuracy scores for the participants' writings at the posttest. Furthermore, to ensure the reliability of the writing scores, the researcher asked one of the colleagues who was an experienced EFL teacher to score 50 (out of total 120) compositions once again. Then the correlation between the two raters' scores was calculated in order to find the inter-rater reliability of the writing scores.

Design of the Study

Answering the research question in this study required an experimental method of research in which there was the need for a control group and an experimental one and the need for a pre-test, post-test and a treatment seemed unavoidable. As it is clear, the experimental design is usually used to find out the interrelationship between variables. According to Hatch and Farhady (1981) " a variable can be defined as an attribute of a person or of an abject which varies from person to person or from object to object". Variables are of some types, two of which are independent and dependent variable. The former refers to the one which is hoped to be investigated and is selected and measured by the researcher. The latter is the one which is observed and measured to determine the effect of the independent variable on it (Hatch and Farhady, 1981). So, in this study, the effect of the independent variable, model essays as a feedback tool was studied on the dependent variable, grammatical accuracy of Iranian EFL learners' writing performances.

Data Analysis

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed for data analysis in the present study. The descriptive statistics for the general English proficiency test was the basis for the selection of a homogeneous sample. One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was run in order to examine the normality of the distribution and to employ the parametric inferential statistics. The Independent samples t-test was run to compare the mean scores obtained by the two groups in the grammar section of the proficiency test and also the accuracy scores obtained in the pretest and posttest. Furthermore, Pearson`s Correlation Coefficient statistics was used to find inter-rater reliability of the writing scores.

Research Article

Participant Selection
As it was mentioned before, 80 EFL students volunteered to participate in the present study. In order to examine the English proficiency level of the participants an adapted sample of TOEFL test containing 40 multiple choice tests of grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension was administered. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the scores obtained in the TOEFL exam.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for TOEFL test of Proficiency

			Statistic	Std. Error
TOEFL	Mean		23.4375	.95927
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	21.5281	
		Upper Bound	25.3469	
	5% Trimmed Mean		23.5694	
	Median		23.5000	
	Variance		73.616	
	Std. Deviation		8.57999	
	Minimum		4.00	
	Maximum		39.00	
	Range		35.00	
	Interquartile Range		12.75	
	Skewness		-.207	.269
	Kurtosis		-.742	.532

According to Table 1, the mean score of the initial 80 participants in the TOEFL test of proficiency was 23.43 and the standard deviation was 8.57. In order to design a homogeneous sample, it was decided to select the participants whose test scores were between one standard deviation below and above the mean. Accordingly, 26 participants whose scores were under 15 and above 32 were excluded (23.4 +/- 8.5) and the final sample included 54 participants in two classes which were randomly labeled as experimental (N=26) and control (N=28) groups.

Test of Normality
One Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistics was run in order to examine the normality of the distribution of TOEFL scores as a requirement to use parametric inferential statistics. Table 2 shows the results of the analysis.

Table 2: Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of Normality of the TOEFL Scores Distribution

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
TOEFL	.074	80	.200[*]	.978	80	.185

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

As it is clear from table 2, the p-value observed for Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was .200 and above the level of significance (.05). Then, the normality assumption could be made and it was safe to use Independent samples t-test as a parametric inferential statistics to compare the two groups.

Reliability of the TOEFL Test
Since the 40-item TOEFL was an adopted test of proficiency for homogenization of the participants, and the test included only multiple-choice grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension items without the production parts of writing and speaking, the researcher decided to check internal consistency as the index of reliability. For this purpose, the Chronbach's Alpha was calculated. Table 4.3 shows the value of Chronbach's alpha for 40 items of TOEFL test.

Research Article

Table 3: Reliability of the 40-item TOEFL with 80 Participants

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.73	40

Table 3 indicates that the reliability of the 40-item multiple-choice TOEFL test was.73 which was a high index of internal reliability.

Comparing Two Groups in the Grammar Section of TOEFL

As the focus of the study was on writing accuracy, it was decided to compare the two groups to ensure their homogeneity in terms of grammar. For this purpose, the participants' scores at the grammar section of the TOEFL, which included 17 multiple choice items, were compared. Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics of the scores in grammar section for two groups.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for the Grammar Scores for two Groups

	groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Grammar TOEFL	1.00	26	10.1923	2.33271	.45748
	2.00	28	10.6071	1.81229	.34249

As it is seen in Table 4, the experimental group (G1) had a mean of 10.19 and the control group (G2) had a mean of 10.60. Although the difference between the two means was very slight, the Independent samples t-test was run to examine the significance of the difference. Table 5 shows the results of the t-test to compare the two means.

Table 5: Independent Samples t-test to compare the Two Means of Grammar Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Grammar TOEFL	Equal variances assumed	.697	.408	-.733	52	.467	-.41484
	Equal variances not assumed			-.726	47.160	.471	-.41484

According to Table 5, the p-value observed was.467 and above.05. It means that the difference between the two means was not statistically significant. It could be assumed that the two groups were almost equal in terms of grammar at the beginning of the study.

The Analysis of the Results of the Pre-Test

A pretest of writing was given to the participants in two groups in order to examine their writing accuracy. The writing task was in composition writing form in which a topic was given and the participants were asked to write a free composition in about half an hour. After collecting the papers, the researcher carefully analyzed the writings and scored them. For scoring the writings, the researcher used Jacob's (1981) Rating Rubrics (see Appendix B), but since the focus of the present study was on writing accuracy, the decision was to limit the scoring procedure to count the number of grammatically correct sentences and dividing the number by the total number of sentences in each composition. For example if there were three incorrect and nine correct sentences out of the total twelve sentences, the accuracy score would be.75.

Thus, the accuracy score for each composition was a decimal which showed the amount of grammatically correct forms in each piece of writing. Table 6 shows the descriptive statistics for the accuracy scores of the writings at the pretest stage.

Research Article

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics for the Accuracy Scores at Pretest

	groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
pretest	1.00	26	.6418	.10970	.02151
	2.00	28	.6593	.08857	.01674

According to Table 6, the mean score of the experimental group (Group 1) and control group (Group 2) were .64 and .65, respectively. The Independent samples t-test was run to examine the significance of the difference between the two means from two groups. Table 7 shows the results of the t-test.

Table 7: Independent samples t-test to compare the pre-test results

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
pretest	Equal variances assumed	1.911	.173	-.648	52	.520	-.01752
	Equal variances not assumed			-.643	48.103	.524	-.01752

Table 7 shows that the difference between the two groups in terms of writing accuracy was very slight and statistically insignificant. In other words, the two groups were almost equal at the beginning of the study.

The Analysis of the Results of the Post-test

After treatment which was given to the experimental group, a similar writing test was given to the two groups as the posttest. The procedures for scoring the writings and obtaining the accuracy scores were exactly the same as the pretest. Table 4.8 below shows the descriptive statistics for the two groups at the post test of writing.

Table 8: Descriptive statistics for the accuracy scores at post-test

	groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
posttest	1.00	26	.7985	.04671	.00916
	2.00	28	.6793	.08789	.01661

According to Table 8, the experimental group (Group 1) had a mean of .79 while the control group (Group 2) had a mean of .67 for the grammatical accuracy in the posttest of writing. The Independent samples t-test was run to compare the two means at the posttest. Table 4.9 shows the results of the t-test.

Table 9: Independent samples t-test to Compare the Posttest Results

T		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
posttest	Equal variances assumed	11.244	.001	6.151	52	.000	.11918
	Equal variances not assumed			6.283	41.749	.000	.11918

As Table 9 shows, the p-value observed was below .05 and the difference between the two groups in terms of the grammatical accuracy was statistically significant. It could be concluded that the treatment which had been given to the participants in the experimental group had improved their grammatical accuracy. Accordingly, the research null hypothesis stating that using model essays as a feedback tool had no role in

Research Article

developing grammatical accuracy of Iranian EFL learners' writing performance was rejected and the answer to the research question was affirmative.

Inter-Rater Reliability of the Writing Scores

Since the pretest and the posttest were in writing format, the researcher decided to examine the inter-rater reliability of the accuracy scores. From among the 120 writing compositions obtained in the pretest and posttest, 50 compositions were randomly selected for the reliability checking. The compositions were given to an experienced EFL teacher who was informed by the researcher of the scoring procedure and assigning accuracy scores to the compositions. The Pearson Correlation statistics was used to examine the correlation between the two sets of scores given by the two raters. Table 4.10 shows the results of the correlation analysis.

Table 10: Pearson Correlation as the Inter-rater Reliability

		rater1	rater2
rater1	Pearson Correlation	1	.973[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	50	50
rater2	Pearson Correlation	.973[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	50	50

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As it is evident, both raters enjoyed a significant correlation; thus, the researcher was ascertained that both raters could score the papers at this stage and also at the posttest level.

DISCUSSION

The research question which was suggested for the purpose of this study was whether model essays as a feedback tool have a positive role in developing grammatical accuracy of Iranian EFL learners' writing performance. After the students' scores in pretest and post-test of both control and experimental groups were obtained, the Independent samples t-test was used to see whether there was any significant difference between the students' performances on grammatical accuracy. Results showed that using model essays was an effective way for improving the grammatical accuracy.

In general, a model essay can give students a tool to improve their writings (Robbins 1991). Therefore, it can be used as a new technique for improving grammatical accuracy during teaching writing to EFL students. In general, these results are in line with earlier investigations (Foster and Skehan, 1996; Wendel, 1997). Regarding the studies done in Iran, the results can be in congruence with the study done by Saeidi and Sahebkheir (2011). They attempted to determine the effect of model essays on developing the accuracy and complexity of EFL learners' writing performance. The participants in this study were 40 Iranian female EFL learners who were divided into two groups: a control group and an experimental group. The control group received teacher error correction as feedback and the experimental group received model essays as feedback. Once a pre-test had been completed, a post-test was administered and students received 8 treatment sessions. The results of the study revealed that students in the experimental group noticed the use of lexicon in the model essays more often. Independent sample t-tests were used to assess the effect of model essays on the accuracy and complexity of EFL Learners' writing performance. The results revealed that model essays significantly affected the accuracy and complexity of EFL learners' writing performance.

These results cannot conform the previous research result done by Franken and Haslett (2002, as cited in Ellis and Yuan, 2004), whose study concluded that interaction with a peer in the planning process was found to be more beneficial in an argumentative writing task compared to other writing task. In this study, however, collaboration with a peer was more effective in the expository writing task rather than in the argumentative writing task. One possible reason for this result might be that learners had a better

Research Article

opportunity to brainstorm their ideas and to build up more reasonable explanations to fulfill the expository writing task through the interaction with a partner.

REFERENCES
Atkinson D and Ramanathan V (1995). Cultures of writing: An ethnographic comparison of L1 and L2 university writing/language programs. *TESOL Quarterly* **29** 539-568.
Bagheri MS and Zare M (2009). The Role of Using IELTS Model Essays in Improving Learners' Writing and their Awareness of Writing Features. *Journal of English Language Studies* **1**(1) 115-130.
Berkenkotter C and Huckin TN (1995). Gatekeeping at an academic convention, Genre knowledge in disciplinary communication. *Cognition Culture Power* 97-*116.*
Bitchener J and Knoch U (2008). The value of written corrective feedback for migrant and international students. *Language Teaching Research* **12**(3) 409.
Bitchener J, Young S and Cameron D (2005). The effect of different types of corrective feedback on ESL student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing* **14** 191-205.
Chandler J (2003). The efficacy of various kinds of error feedback for improvement in the accuracy and fluency of L2 student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing* **12**(3) 267-296.
Chang YY and Swales J (1999). Informal elements in English academic writing: Threats or opportunities for advanced non-native speakers. *Writing: Texts, Processes and Practices* 145-167.
Charney DH and Carlson RA (1995). Learning to write in a genre: What student writers take from model texts? *Research in the Teaching of English* **29**(1) 88-125.
Collins A and Gentner D (1980). A framework for a cognitive theory of writing. In: *Cognitive Processes in Writing: An Interdisciplinary Approach,* edited by Gregg LW and Steinberg ER (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum) 51-72.
Diab RL (2005). EFL university students' preferences for error correction and teacher feedback on writing. *TESL Reporter* **38**(1) 27-51.
Ellis R (1993). Interpretation-based grammar teaching. *System* **21** 69-78.
Eschholz PA (1980). *The prose models approach:Using products in the process.* In: *Eight Approaches to Teaching Composition*, edited by Donovan TR and McClelland BW (Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English) 21-35.
Ferris D (1995). Student reactions to teacher response in multiple-draft composition classrooms. *TESOL Quarterly* **29**(1) 33-53.
Ferris D and Hedgcock JS (1998). *Teaching ESL Composition: Purpose, Process, and Practice* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates).
Furnborough C and Truman M (2009). Adult beginner distance language learner perception and use of assignment feedback. *Distance Education* **30**(3) 399-418.
Gaies SJ (1980). T-unit analysis in second language research: Application, Problems, Limitation. *TESOL Quarterly* **14**(1) 53-61.
GholamiPasand P and BazarmajHaghi E (2013). Process-Product Approach to Writing: the Effect of Model Essays on EFL Learners' Writing Accuracy. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature* **2**(1).
Goby VP (1997). Arguments against providing model answers in the writing skills classroom: The Singaporean case. *TESL Reporter* **30**(2) 28-33.
Hatch E and Farhady H (1981). *Research Design and Statistics* (IranRahnama Publication).
Hedge T (2000). *Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
Hedgecock JS and Lefkowitz N (1994). Feedback on feedback: Assessment of learner receptivity to teacher response in L2 composing. *Journal of Second Language Writing* **3**(2) 141-163.
Hillocks G (1986). *Research on Written Composition: New Directions for Teaching* (Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English).
Hinkel E (2002). *Second Language Writers' Text: Linguistic and Rhetorical Features* (Lawrence Erlbaum).

Research Article

Horowitz D (1991). ESL writing assessments: Contradictions and resolutions. *Assessing Second Language Writing in Academic Contexts* 71-85.

Hyland K (2003). *Second Language Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Johms AM (1997). *Text, Role, and Context: Developing Academic Literacies* (Cambridge University Press).

Kroll BM (1980). A Cognitive-Developmental Approach to the Teaching of Composition. *Teaching English in the Two-Year College* **7**(1) 17-20.

Larsen-Freeman D (2006). The Emergence of Complexity, Fluency, and Accuracy in the Oral and Written Production of Five Chinese Learners of English. *Applied Linguistics* **27**(4) 590-619.

Leki I (1990). Coaching from the margins: Issues in written response. In: *Second Language Writing: Research Insights for the Classroom,* edited by Kroll B (Cambridge University Press) New York 57-67.

Lemke J (2000). Across the scales of time: Artifacts, activities, and meanings in eco-social systems. *Mind, Culture and Activity* **7** 273–90.

Miller C (1984). Genre as social action. *Quarterly Journal of Speech* **70** 151-167.

Murray DM (1980). Writing as process: How writing finds its own meaning. In: *Eight Approaches to Teaching Composition,* edited by Donovan TR and McClelland BW (Urbana, IL: National Councilof Teachers of English) 3-20.

Myles J (2002). Second language writing and research: The writing process and error analysis in student texts. *TESLEJ* **6**(2).

Nunan D (1999). *Writing Second Language Teaching and Learning*, *Teacher Development* (Newbury House).

Palmira MM (2001). Interactive writing in the EFL class: A repertoire of tasks. *The Internet TESL Journal* **7**(6).

Paltridge B (2001). *Genre and the Language Learning Classroom* (University of Michigan Press Ann Arbor).

Pilus Z (1993). Considerations in developing materials for the teaching of writing at the pro-university level. *The English Teacher* 22.

Polio CG (1997). Measures of linguistic accuracy in second language writing research. *Language Learning* **47**(1) 101-143.

Qi DS and Lapkin S (2001). Exploring the role ofnoticing in a three-stage second language writing task. *Journal of Second Language Writing* **10**(4) 277-303.

Raimes A (1991). Out of the woods: Traditions in the teaching of writing. *TESOL Quarterly* **25** 407-430.

Rashtchi M and Keyvanfar A (1999). *ELT Quick'n' Easy: An English Teaching Methodology Textbook for Iranian Undergraduate Students Majoring in English* (Rahnama) Tehran.

Read J (2000). *Assessing Vocabulary* (Cambridge University Press).

Robinson P (1995). Attention, memory, and the "noticing" hypothesis. *Language Learning* **45**(2) 283-331.

Saeidi M and Sahebkheir F (2011). The Effect of Model Essays on Accuracy and Complexity of EFL Learners' Writing Performance**.** *Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research* **10**(1) 130-137.

Skehan P (1998). *A Cognitive Approach to Language Learning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Smagorinsky P (1992). How reading model essays affects writers. In: *Reading/Writing Connections,* edited by Irwin J and Doyle M (Newark, DE: International Reading Association) 160-176.

Stolarek E (1994). Prose modeling and metacognition: The effect of modeling on developing a metacognitive stance toward writing. *Research in the Teaching of English* **28** 154-174.

Swales J (1990). *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Tickoo A (2001). Re-examining the developmental sequence hypothesis for past tense marking in ESL: Transfer effects and implications. *Prospect: A Journal of Australian TESOL* **16**(1) 17-35.

Treglia MO (2009). Teacher-Written Commentary in College Writing Composition: How Does It Impact Student Revisions? *Composition Studies* **37**(1) 20.

Research Article

Vickers HC and Ene E (2004). Grammatical accuracyand learner autonomy in advanced Writing. *ELT Journal* **60**(2) 109-115.

Wu CC (2002). A case study of the rhetorical analysis via expository models on Taiwanese freshmen's English compositions. Unpublished master's thesis, National TsingHua University, Hinchu, Taiwan.