The Effect of WSBI on the Use of Metasocial and Social Strategies in Iranian EFL Learners' Essay Writing

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Abstract

This study aims at investigating the effect of writing strategy-based instruction (WSBI) on the use of metasocial and social strategies in Iranian English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' essay writing. Using Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) diagnostic test, 60 homogeneous subjects were selected in two groups of 30 each. Prior to treatment, all subjects wrote an essay writing task for a bar chart description as a pre-test and filled out a writing strategies questionnaire, too. During an academic term-long intervention the groups were taught to apply metasocial and social writing strategies adapted from Oxford's (2011) strategic self-regulation (S^2R) model in their essays through writing strategies-based instruction (WSBI) for experimental group and process writing instruction (PWI) for control group. Following the treatment, the participants of both groups wrote a second essay on another bar chart description as a posttest followed by the administration of the same questionnaire. The essays were evaluated by two raters using the IELTS writing marking scheme. The results of independent samples t-test showed a significant difference in experimental learners' writing performance favoring more metasocial strategies than social strategies. The findings also emphasized the usefulness of WSBI for EFL learners' writing, requiring that syllabus writers, material developers, and teachers consider the prominent potentials of metasocial and also social strategies for the development of EFL learners' essay writing.

Keywords: Essay Writing, Metasocial Strategies, Social Strategies, Strategic Self-Regulation (S^2R), Writing Strategies-Based Instruction (WSBI)

1. Introduction

Writing skill has become one of the manifestations of learners' scholastic knowledge and a fundamental gauge of their success in many English as a Second Language (ESL) contexts. Since it includes intricate metacognitive, cognitive, meta-affective, affective, metasocial and social processes (Oxford, 2011), most EFL learners provide low quality essay writing in individually produced text of International English Language Test System (IELTS) as one of the international communicative skills (Ajideh, Leitner & Yazdi-Amirkhiz, 2016).

During the past four decades, EFL learners' proficiency in writing skill, though undergoing numerous changes, encouraged the education experts to concentrate more on the role of students than teachers since they believed that EFL learners must be adequately active and capable of solving their interactional problems in a strategic manner. This prescription made scholars employ the concept of self-regulation to help learners observe, monitor, and reflect on their learning process (Oxford, 1999). They adopted such a concept to deal with the detailed language learning strategies (LLSs) EFL learners employ in the process of learning different skills and sub-skills.

Self-regulation is, therefore, crucial for writing since it can help students strengthen their study skills and create better learning habits (Wolters, 2011). However, the ongoing concern about the deficiencies of EFL students' writing quality, especially on international writing tests such as IELTS, remains a focal topic of instruction and research.

In the context of Iran, while many studies have been conducted on writing strategies including brainstorming, metacognitive, cognitive, affective and social strategies, few have dealt with suggesting beneficial strategies in order to help learners develop their writing skill (Askarzadeh, Razmjoo, & Javanmardi, 2013). Furthermore, no study has taken into account Oxford's (2011) recently proposed metasocial strategies. Hashempour, et al. (2015), for instance, examined the effect of brainstorming as a pre-writing strategy on advanced EFL learners' writing ability. Nemat-Tabrizi and Rajaee (2016) and Rajaee, Modaberi and Ardestani (2017) explored the effect of cognitive and metacognitive strategies on elementary level and intermediate EFL learners' writing, respectively. Moreover, the micro-metasocial strategies developed in the present study, e.g., *planning for social interaction*, were generally and confusingly used in some studies (Riazi, 1997, Sasaki, 2000) as metacognitive strategies. Thus, while some studies dealt with some writing strategies, their limitation is that they all confusingly applied the term metacognitive strategies instead of metasocial strategies (Oxford, 2011).

To this end, this study first provided the intended metasocial and social writing strategies derived from the Strategic Self-Regulation Writing (S^2RW) questionnaire as an inventory, whose validation process is out of the realm of this study. Then, in order to investigate the effect of WSBI on the incorporation of metasocial and social writing strategies in EFL learners' essays, Chamot and O' Malley's (2004) modified framework including preparation, modeling, practice, evaluation, expansion, and evaluation was implemented. Although much research has been devoted to the effect of isolated writing strategies using Graham and Harris's (2005) Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD), no prior research to date has addressed self-regulated metasocial and social strategies revolving around the six steps of preparation, modeling, practice, evaluation, expansion, and evaluation in the WSBI program. To this end, this study sought to deal with the following questions:

1. Does WSBI affect EFL learners' essay writing?
2. Does WSBI affect the use of metasocial strategies in EFL learners' essay writing?
3. Does WSBI affect the use of social strategies in EFL learners' essay writing?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Oxford's Strategic Self-Regulation Model

Self-regulation is essential to the learning process (Jarvela & Jarvenoja, 2011) as it helps students strengthen their study skills, create better learning habits (Wolters, 2011), and apply learning strategies to enhance academic outcomes and monitor their performance (Harris, Friedlander, Sadler, Frizzelle & Graham, 2005). Thus, educators should take into account learners' self-regulation strategies to help them develop their learning.

Owing to the difference between learner strategies that are developed by learners to solve language learning problems and learning strategies that are explicitly taught as part of instruction (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994), Oxford (2011) used the term learning strategies instead of learner strategies since "the focus here is on strategies for learning, although communication often occurs at the same time" (p. 13), whereas "learner strategy is an open code to refer to strategies for learning and using a language" (Oxford, 2017, p. 34). Furthermore, Oxford (2011) added the construct of *strategic* to her model to describe the way in which self-regulated learners approach challenging problems and tasks by choosing from a repertoire of tactics they believe are best suited to the situation. Therefore, strategically self-regulated learners actively participate in their own learning (Dörnyei, 2009), set their

own learning goals by controlling various aspects of their learning and regulate their affective, cognitive, and observable performance as well as their environmental conditions for second language (L2) learning (Zimmerman, 2000); implement strategies to manage and control their own beliefs about learning and themselves (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1998); choose more appropriate strategies and what works in relation to different conditions, contexts, and purposes; and incarnate the association between the use of strategy and learning performance (Malpass, O'Neil & Hocevar, 1999). In the S^2R model, self-regulated learning strategies are "deliberate, goal-directed attempts to manage and control efforts to learn the L2" (Oxford, 2011, p. 12).

Along with cognitive, affective, social, and metacognitive strategies represented in former LLSs taxonomies (O'Malley, Chamot & Stewner-Manzanares 1985; Oxford, 1990), Oxford (2011) included *meta-affective* and *metasocial* strategies in her S^2R model to maintain that self-regulation pertains to not only the learners' management of cognition, but also the regulation of the affective status and social environment in which communication occurs. Oxford (2011) claims that the "term *metacognitive* was confusingly applied to the control of strategies in the affective and social realms" (p. 17) to reflect the multidimensional reality of the L2 learner.

As Oxford states, S^2R is based on two assumptions: (a) using appropriate strategies enables learners to learn an additional language effectively, and (b) strategies can be learned through mediation or assistance. Since "not every student has strategic expertise at the outset" (Gu, 2010, p. 1), these strategies need to be developed with the help of experts. Adapting S^2R model, therefore, the innovative S^2RW model includes themes and items of social and metasocial strategies.

2.2. Social and Metasocial Strategies

Social strategies include the means employed by learners for interacting with native speakers and other learners, such as through raising questions to clarify social roles and relationships, asking for a verification or explanation, and cooperating with others in order to complete tasks (Cohen, 2012).

In the present study, social or sociocultural strategies involve (1) interacting to learn and communicate, (2) overcoming knowledge gaps in communicating, and (3) dealing with sociocultural context and identities. Metasocial strategies include (1) paying attention to social contexts, (2) planning for the social context, (3) organizing and obtaining resources for social interactions, (4) implementing plans for contexts, communication, and culture, (5) monitoring social interactions, and (6) evaluating social interactions.

The use of social strategies in writing was examined in some studies. For example, in their qualitative research using interviews to investigate the types of writing strategies, Dehghan and Razmjo (2012) reported that Iranian TEFL postgraduate students tend to employ sociocultural writing strategies such as modeling, comparison, seeking feedback, controlling anxiety, avoiding difficulties, and considering the audience. They, however, state that Iranian EFL learners do not refer to social apprenticeship practices in any meaningful way since, as stated by Ding (2008), social apprenticeship emphasizes learning in informal settings and is affected by factors such as coaching, mentoring, observation of expert performance, peer relations, workplace environments, and support networks.

Moreover, Mohammad-Hussein (2015) classified writing strategies in three major steps of writing: pre-writing, writing, and post-writing. Using a questionnaire to identify the writing strategies used by Saudi EFL learners, he proposed a writing model that included six types of strategies: cognitive, metacognitive, compensational, social, affective, and multiple strategies. Based on this model, he taught the selected strategies at three stages and found that the strategies-based writing model was more effective compared to the traditional method focusing on syntax, grammar, mechanics, and organization rather than on content in improving the participants' writing skills. Nevertheless, he did not distinguish metacognitive strategies from meta-affective and met-social ones.

Furthermore, Sarafianou and Gavriilidou (2015) investigated the effect of strategies-based instruction on the use of strategies on a sample of 192 Greek EFL learners. They divided the sample into experimental and control groups. Strategy use was evaluated with the adapted Greek version of Oxford's Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (SILL) implemented before and immediately after the intervention. The results revealed that, after the intervention completion, the experimental group demonstrated a significant improvement in self-reported strategy use and social strategy use, including asking questions and cooperating with others.

Riazi (1997) also studied four Iranian doctoral students of education in order to account for the learners' conceptualizations of their writing tasks, students' personal perceptions of their own learning, strategies for composition, and key aspects of the academic courses they were taking part in as the immediate context of their writing. Results revealed that 'social strategies were observed to be employed by the participants in different phases and levels of their writing' (Riazi, 1997, p. 127), i.e., they were employed before starting to perform and clarify different dimensions of the tasks, during the task performance to help them advance, and finally to

discuss elaborations on the feedback they received for future implementations.

As originally proposed by Oxford (2011), metasocial strategies are adopted to enable the learners to control their use of social strategies. Metasocial strategies, therefore, seem to be influential on EFL learners' writing performance since they can draw learners' attention to social interactions to enable them to appropriately plan, organize, and incorporate human and nonhuman resources to improve their writing, while also making them competent enough to control and evaluate their writing performance.

2.3. Writing Strategies-based Instruction

Strategy instruction is believed to enhance learning and using a second language in different learning settings (Rubin, Chamot, Harris & Anderson, 2007). The most effective strategies-based instruction (SBI) occurs when it is incorporated in the regular classroom instruction (Cohen, 1998). Consequently, the explicit instruction of strategies is more effective than an implicit one (Manchon, De-Larios & Murphy, 2007).

There are several studies examining the effect of SBI on the use of writing strategies in various formats. Samanian and Roohani (2018), for example, explored the effectiveness of using SRSD instruction in improving Iranian EFL learners' reflective thinking skills and descriptive writing. To this end, using two descriptive essays as the pretest and a reflective thinking questionnaire as the posttest for data collection, 30 Iranian advanced EFL learners were selected and assigned to experimental and control groups. The analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) on the reflective thinking and descriptive essay scores showed that both SRSD and non-SRSD instructions were effective on descriptive writing skill, but the participants in the SRSD group achieved superior outcomes in their descriptive writing and reflective thinking.

Moreover, Baradarn and Sarfarazi (2015) explored the effect of scaffolding on the essay writing of 60 university students randomly assigned to control and experimental groups. At the end of the treatment, results showed that the application of scaffolding greatly improves the writing performance of university students. Social strategies provided them with the ability to manage their social communication using some interactional strategies to overcome the knowledge gap for a better writing.

Modifying Chamot et al.'s (1999) and Chamot's (2005) Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA), the cycle of WSBI was presented in a sequence of seven stages:

1. Preparation and problem diagnosis. As a *diagnostician,* the teacher helps students identify current strategies for familiar tasks (Cohen,

1998). It is also similar to the first step of Grenfell and Harris's (1999) model, i.e., *awareness raising,* through which students complete a task and then identify the strategies they have used.

2. Goal setting and strategic planning. It begins with learners' determination of short-term, mid-term, and long-term goals (Chen, 2011). That is, to keep track of their strategy use, students should determine specific documentation methods.

3. Presentation of selected strategies. The teachers share their own learning experiences and thinking processes via modeling, naming, explaining new strategy, discussing the value of the new strategy, and making a checklist of strategies for later use (Cohen, 1998). In other words, teachers provide EFL learners with the process of contextualizing, modeling, negotiating, and constructing (Hyland, 2003) to assist them in employing self-regulated writing strategies when appropriate (Oxford, 2011).

4. Practicing the strategies. While students practice the new writing strategies with a different writing task, teachers decrease reminders to encourage independent strategy use (Chamot, 2005). In other words, teachers gradually help the learners learn how to independently use the writing strategies in a new writing task (Cohen, 1998).

5. Learners' self-evaluation. According to Chamot (2005), EFL learners evaluate their own strategy use immediately after practice.

6. Expanding the writing strategies. Students independently convey strategies to new tasks, combine them into clusters, and develop a repertoire of preferred strategies (Chamot, 2005; Chamot et al., 1999).

7. Assessment conducted by raters at the end of treatment.

3. Method

Regarding the pre-test-treatment-post-test design of the present study, subjects of the two groups were first asked to write a pre-test based on the IELTS book (Brook-Hart & Jakeman, 2013) on a bar chart description. Then, the required metasocial and social writing strategies were selected using a questionnaire which was administered in the first session of intervention. In order to evaluate the impact of WSBI on the use of selected strategies, the subjects of both groups were required to write second essay on another bar chart description as a posttest followed by the administration of the same questionnaire. Independent samples t-test was employed to realize the differences between subjects' first essays and second essays. Moreover, a semi-structured interview and observation checklist were employed to gain

more detailed and precise information on the influence of WSBI on the use strategies in essay writing.

3.1. Participants

In the present study, from among 105 EFL learners enrolled in Paradise Language Institute, Hamadan, Iran, 60 intermediate students, who declared their agreement beforehand were selected and assigned to experimental or control groups based on their scores on Phillips' (2001, p. 90) TOEFL) diagnostic test including 40 items of structure. Using Cronbach's alpha, the test was reliable (0.85). To ensure the test was normal, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used with a significance coefficient of 1.1 which was greater than alpha (.05). The participants were selected based on their mean score (20.97) and standard deviation (SD) (6.80) (see table 1). In order to make the sampling fairly homogenous in terms of their level of proficiency and adequacy in number, i.e., 60, the participants whose scores on language proficiency test fell one standard deviation below or above the mean score were selected, since "a sample size of 30 is. . . the minimum number" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011, p. 144).

Table 1

The Mean and Standard Deviation of Students' Scores on the Proficiency Test

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Scores on proficiency test	105	14.00	40.00	20.97	6.80138
Valid N (listwise)	105				

3.2. Materials and Instruments

To answer the research questions, both quantitative and qualitative instruments were employed. Participants wrote two series of essay writing tasks (Task 1), as pretest and posttest. The S^2RW questionnaire was developed to explore how much learners' attitudes towards the effect of WSBI on the use of writing strategies have been changed before and after treatment. They also were asked to answer three open-ended questions to reveal what they think about items. Focus group interviews were used to probe deeper into the effect of WSBI on the use of metasocial and social strategies in learners' essay writing. A checklist involving 20 items was developed to check whether learners employed the instructed writing strategies.

3.2.1. S^2RW Questionnaire

Adapting the themes of metasocial and social strategies from Oxfords' (2011, 2017) S^2R model, the S^2RW questionnaire was developed. The questionnaire included two sections: closed-ended questions and three open-ended questions. As stated by Ary, Jacobs and Sorensen (2010), "Closed-ended questions take more time to construct, but the responses are easier to tabulate. Closed-ended questions can be answered more easily and quickly by respondents" (p. 392). Furthermore, not only do "closed questions prescribe the range of responses from which the respondent may choose, they can generate frequencies of responses amenable to statistical treatment and analysis" (Cohen, et al., 2011, p. 382).

To validate it, 25 items were first coded, classified, and examined by three writing experts. Piloting the questionnaire in two phases, the reliability of the questionnaire was 0.86 using Cronbach's Alpha. Then, to assess its construct validity, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and sequential equation modeling (SEM) were conducted and resulted in 20 reliable items. That is, the EFL participants were requested not only to fill out the questionnaire but also to comment on the items they found misleading or difficult to understand for later amendments if necessary. Consequently, misleading items as well as items where the answers of EFL learners represented a lack of absorption or they might find them strange were reformulated. Employing a five-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, Strongly Disagree), the questionnaire was found very useful since it was not only quick to complete and straightforward to code, but also "they build in a degree of sensitivity and differentiation of response whilst still generating numbers" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 386). Also, to follow Cohen et al. (2011), the closed questions were followed by three open-ended questions to let the participants generate their desired answers.

3.2.2. Essay Writing (Task 1)

The treatment was implemented on IELTS essay writing task (Task 1), a bar chart description adopted from Cambridge English IELTS (2013). The learners were requested to write an essay of about 150 words in 20 minutes on a bar chart every other session. The reason for selecting this topic lay in the participants' proficiency level, intermediate, the task's objective scoring scale, and the existence of an identical prompt providing the raters with adequate parameters to have a more objective interpretation. The essays were scored by two external raters who considered task achievement, coherence and cohesion, lexical resource, and grammatical range and accuracy as the IELTS writing assessment rubric.

3.2.3. Focus Group Interviews

To have an in-depth description of the EFL learners' attitude and knowledge of writing strategies and to confirm the effect of metasocial and social strategies use in essay writing, semi-structured focus group interview was implemented with 10 participants divided in two groups of five out of experimental group. Dividing interviewees into four to six (Creswell, 2008), "focus group interview is based on the collective experience of group brainstorming, that is, participants thinking together, inspiring, and challenging each other, and reacting to the emerging issues and points" (Cohen, 2007, p. 144). Through this qualitative research method "the researcher asks a small number of general questions and elicits responses from all individuals in the group" (Creswell, 2008, p. 218). Owing to the proficiency level of participant, i.e., intermediate, as IELTS candidates, interviews were conducted and transcribed in English for further investigations. The interviews with each group continued for about 1 hour and a half.

3.2.4. Observation Checklist

Not only does checklist help learners to reflect on their writing performance, but teachers to evaluate their presentation (Chamot et al., 1999; Cohen, 1998; Graham & Harris, 2005). Each statement is followed by three numbers, 1 (never), 2 (sometimes), 3 (always), and OS (other strategies) to explore the use of metal-social strategies (12 items) and social strategies (8 items) in learners' essay writing.

Establishing an atmosphere of trust, all 30 experimental learners, while 2 of them were absent one session, were observed 8 times every other session, i.e., whenever they wrote an essay, they were given the checklist to assess how many strategies they used in their essay writing. The observation was conducted by the same teacher teaching the learners.

3.3. Procedure

A pretest- treatment- posttest design with randomization of groups to reduce the amount of systematic errors was applied. In doing so, to have a homogeneous sample, among 105 volunteered IELTS writing course candidates in Paradise Language Institute (Hamadan, Iran) 60 subjects were chosen and randomly divided into experimental and control groups. In the IELTS writing course that lasted sixteen sessions, the researcher who was the teacher himself asked both groups to write an essay on a bar chart description as a pretest. The title was *"Switzerland birth and death rates 1970-2020"*. In 20 minutes, the subjects were supposed to summarize the information by choosing and reporting the main features given by a bar chart, and make

comparison where relevant. They also were administered S^2RW questionnaire including 20 items.

The writing strategy instruction in the form of supplementary materials was integrated into regular classroom instruction. The metasocial and social strategies were administered to the experimental group through WSBI in six stages: (1) preparation by background knowledge activation, interviews, and the think-aloud technique; (2) goal setting and strategic planning, using meta-strategy tactics; (3) presentation of selected strategies by the teacher's modeling, naming, and asking for examples; (4) practicing the strategies with more tasks; (5) learners' self-evaluation performed via a checklist (Appendix) including all metasocial and social strategies; and (6) expanding, i.e., independently transferring the strategies to other writing tasks. Meanwhile, PWI (Tangpermpoon, 2008) involving five stages of prewriting, first drafting, feedback, second drafting, and proof-reading was used to teach the same writing strategies to the control group.

In the sixteenth session, along with the final IELTS essay writing task as a posttest, the S^2RW questionnaire was re-administered to both groups. Furthermore, ten subjects were interviewed and the discussions were audiotaped for further transcription and analysis. To provide the participants with enough time to reflect on the questions, no time limit was set for the interviewers. The interviews were initiated with a brief introduction to the writing strategies. Then interviewees were asked to concentrate on the process of the use of metasocial and social strategies they employed in terms of pre-writing, while-writing, and post-writing strategies in their essay writing. The interviews were read many times by the researchers and overarching themes and sub-themes were extracted.

3.4. Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed to analyze the collected data. In order to investigate the effect of WSBI in essay writing scores, in general, and on the use of metasocial and social strategies, in particular, *Independent Samples Test* were used. In order to analyze the interviewees' answers and comments in the open-ended items, content analysis was conducted to derive codes which were organized into themes (Dörnyei, 2010). Therefore, the audiotaped interviews were first transcribed, and then they were analyzed (re-read) by two EFL experts for further verification and coding.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

4.1.1. WSBI and Essay Writing

As for the first research question, the amount of learners' essay writing impressionability by WSBI, the essay writing scores were evaluated based on the IELTS evaluation rubric from 1 to 9. Prior to the treatment, a t-test was performed with the descriptive statistics including mean and SD for the control (M=6.29, SD=.44, N= 30) and the experimental group (M=6.06, SD=.57, N=30). The Sig. (2-tailed) value (.09) was above .05 and, therefore, there was no significant difference in the two groups' scores before the treatment.

Table 2

Independent Samples Test for Posttest Scores

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
		F	Sig.	t	f	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Dif.	Std. Error Dif.	Lower	Upper
Essay scores on post-test	Equal variances assumed	.077	.782	5.1	8	.000	-.491	.096	-.684	-.299

Following the treatment, in order to check whether the two groups were statistically different on their posttest, a t-test was run with the required descriptive statistics including mean and SD for the control (M=6.76, SD=.39) and the experimental group (M=7.25, SD=.34). as shown by Table 2, in comparison to the mean scores on pretests, the experimental group's scores were increased on posttest. The Sig. (2-tailed) value was less than .05 (.00). Therefore, there was a significant difference in the mean scores of essay writing.

To determine the effect size, the researchers used eta-squared that ranges from 0 to 1, representing the proportion of variance in essay scores (dependent variable) explained by groups (independent variable). The effect size was considerably large (.30), as Cohen (1988) considered .14 to be a large effect size, meaning that the experimental group performed better than the control group.

4.1.2. WSBI and Metasocial Strategies

Considering the second question, the impressionability of metasocial strategies by WSBI, an independent samples t-test was performed to compare the effect of metasocial writing strategies on learners' essay writing.

Prior to the treatment, a t-test was performed with the descriptive statistics including mean and SD for the control (M=47.86, SD=4.24) and the experimental group (M=47.10, SD=4.26). Since the Sig. (2-tailed) value (.48) was above .05, there was no significant difference in the two groups' scores.

Following the treatment, to check possible differences in the posttest, a t-test was run with the descriptive statistics including mean and SD for the control (M=51.70, SD=4.62) and the experimental group (M=53.80, SD=2.55). Results indicated that, in comparison to their scores on pretest, the experimental group's scores were increased on posttest.

Based on Table 3, since the Sig. (2-tailed) value (.03) was less than .05, the difference in the mean scores of both groups' use of metasocial strategies was significant. To determine the effect size between the two groups, the researcher used eta-squared. Concerning t=2.1 in this study, following Cohen's (1992) guidelines, the moderate effect size of .07 was obtained.

Table 3

Independent Samples Test for Metasocial Posttest

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	f	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Dif.	Std. Error Dif.	Lower	Upper
Metasocial post-test	Equal variances assumed	11.85	.000	2.1	58	.03	-2.10	.96	-4.03	-.16

4.1.3. WSBI and Social Strategies

As for the third question, the impressionability of social strategies by WSBI, an independent samples t-test was performed. Prior to the treatment, in order to see possible differences in pretests, a t-test was run with the descriptive statistics of mean and SD for the control (M=29.90, SD=3.02) and experimental group (M=29.13, SD=3.24). As displayed by Table 4, since the Sig. (2-tailed) value (.34) was above .05, there wasn't any significant

difference in the score of two groups for the use of social strategies before treatment.

Following the treatment, possible difference in posttest scores were checked based on the mean and SD for the control (M=35.20, SD=1.76) and experimental group (M=33.63, SD=4.11). It was revealed that the experimental groups' scores were increased in comparison to their means on pretests. This difference, however, was not significant. Since the Sig. (2-tailed) value (.06) was more than .05 (Table 4), there was no significant difference in the mean scores of the dependent variable, i.e., use of social strategies, for either group.

Table 4

Independent Samples Test for Social Strategy Posttest

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
		F	Sig.	t	f	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Dif.	Std. Error Dif.	Lower	Upper
Social post-test	Equal variances assumed	6.37	.01	1.9	58	.06	1.56	.81	-.07	3.20

4.1.4. Qualitative Results

Concerning the dependability of the data, both pretest and posttest essays were scored by two raters, and inter-rater reliability was computed. The reliability indices for the pretest and posttest were found to be 0.85 and 0.86, respectively, considered acceptably high.

The percentage of the use of each item is summarized (see Appendix). As shown by *sum of items in sessions* in vertical column, there is a meaningful difference between the use of metasocial strategies in first session (53.6%) and that of last session (79%) while little difference is found between the use of social strategies use in first session (67.3%) and that of last session (65.6). Looking through the sum of the use of each item observed in 8 sessions, the horizontal row, a large number of learners (87.6%) revealed their agreement with the helpfulness of metasocial strategies in essay writing (item 11).

Regarding the "The strategies I used in my writing were very helpful. They helped me understand more and be more understood" (item 11) in essay writing, one of the IELTS candidates commented:

As a matter of fact, I found the metasocial strategies very useful, since using them in my essays helped me more easily understand what the data requires and this led to increase in my score.

Moreover, "*consulting the experts or old timers*" (item 6) won the next rank as articulated below:

Because it was my first experience….My score 6.5 out of 9 was really great. Before starting to write, I consult the experts or old timers in the community I am. This will help me to benefit from their writing skill. I looked for textbooks that allowed a lot of writing practices. … and to avoid cross-cultural difference in target language, I read the native resources before coming to class.

"*Planning to engage in pair work*" (item 3) was another mostly applied strategies as commented by the subjects. As one maintained:

Before this class I always relied on myself, I thought in IELTS test there is no cooperative learning and everyone is supposed to learn by himself. But as long as I entered the strategic learning class, I agreed to work on the use of writing strategies with my dear friend- Reza-. We compromised to use the strategies in writing and share our information.

Regarding the most applicable social strategy: "*I ask for help to learn how to use coherence and cohesion strategies effectively*" (item 15) in checklist, one underscores its merit:

You know up to now I ignored the role of instructors in teaching writing strategies. They can guide their subjects towards becoming professional writers…When I started to write my first essay on bar chart assignments, I imitated some paragraphs from some published articles, but tried to change the structure and some words…. But now I feel I'm able to use different cohesive and coherent devices in appropriate places.

On the other hand, one of the candidates articulated his expectation:

Of course my result was better than what I expected myself, I tried to use different kinds of strategies here, but I didn't use, as I said before I was distracted and couldn't employ cohesive   devices better. [for example], mind-map [strategy] helped me a lot. … . You know pay[ing] attention to topic is very important….and another thing [is] using mind map… and considering my readers' requirement is very important in my opinion.

4.2. Discussion

This study explored the effect of WSBI on the use of metasocial and social strategies in Iranian EFL learners' essay writing. Considering the first question, the results indicated that, in comparison with PWI, WSBI more improved experimental group's essay writing scores. Since WSBI based essay writing strategy training on a wide variety of strategy types. That is, learners were free to choose the appropriate strategies in contagious time in recursive way without any constraints. The six stages of strategy instruction, therefore, proved to be more effective than PWI. In other words, the results of the present study shed light on the effects of the use of S^2RW strategies on EFL writers' essay writing, a finding in line with Chamot et al.'s (1999) and Chamot's (2005) CALLA. The designed stages of intervention helped the EFL learners (1) become aware and identify their current writing strategies for familiar tasks, a finding in line with Grenfell and Harris's (1999) model; (2) attain their short-term, mid-term, and long-term goals, in line with Chen (2011); (3) benefit from teachers' scaffolding, modeling, naming, and making a checklist of strategies for later use, consistent with Cohen (1998); (4) practice the new writing strategies with a different writing task, in line with Chamot et al. (1999); (5) effectively evaluate their own strategy use immediately after practice; and (6) independently transfer strategies to new tasks, consistent with Chamot (2005) and Chamot et al. (1999).

Moreover, in line with Riazi (1990) who realized the effectiveness of instruction of self-regulatory writing strategies on participants' writing performance, and Samanian and Roohani (2018) who underscored the effectiveness of using SRSD instruction in improving EFL learners' descriptive writing, WSBI improved the learners' score of essay writing, i.e., WSBI led to more application of writing strategies in essay writing than PWI did. there was no significant difference between the performances of the two groups in their pretest scores, while the comparison of their posttest scores revealed a significant difference, showing the progress of the experimental group in their essay scores.

Considering the effect of WSBI on the use of metasocial and social strategies in essay writing, WSBI assisted the experimental group in utilizing metasocial strategies through sub-strategies such as paying attention, planning, obtaining and using resources, monitoring and evaluating their strategy use, a finding in line with Oxford's (2011) S^2R model. Although the results support the positive effects of scaffolding on students' essay writing, in contrast to results reported by Riazi (1997), Baradaran and Sarfarazi (2011), Sarafianou and Gavriilidou (2015), and Mohammad-Hussein (2015), social strategies such as *having an interaction with teachers and peers to learn to use writing strategies*, and *asking questions and cooperating with peers to overcome knowledge gaps* in writing were not as effective as

metasocial strategies. In other words, in worldwide exams like IELTS, Iranian learners tend not to collaboratively write an essay, but to pursue individualized metasocial writing strategies for better achievements.

While both 'metasocial strategies and social strategies help learners participate in authentic, communicative interaction that involves context-appropriate meanings' (Oxford, 2017, p. 198), micro-metasocial strategies including *planning for social context, consulting with experts and old timers* and *organizing and obtaining for communication*, which were not tackled in previous studies (e.g., O'Malley & Chamot, 1996, Oxford, 1990), were more effective in EFL learners' essay writing, as stipulated by interviewees and shown by the observation checklist.

Overall, the experimental group employed metasocial strategies to overcome knowledge gaps in sociocultural contexts, i.e., they first paid attention to social interactions, planned for them, organized and obtained the relevant resources, monitored them, and finally evaluated the merits and demerits of social interactions. Furthermore, this achievement is precipitated by WSBI framework. More importantly, the results showed that Iranian IELTS candidates tend to employ more metasocial strategies than social ones in their writing task since they need to not only take into account the readers' expectations in terms of the IELTS scoring scheme, but also employ metasocial strategies such as mind map, spider diagram, and outline, in order to plan how to write; employ teacher, peer, or written resources; consult any relevant resources; and successively monitor and evaluate their writing performance. This is consistent with Oxford (2011) stating that metasocial strategies play a central role in helping language learners to take charge of their learning. Thus, metasocial strategies let Iranian EFL learners first make the writing strategies individualized and then use them in essay writing.

Emphasizing the writing process rather than writing product, WSBI helps EFL learners employ metasocial and social strategies in essay writing. Teacher and peer scaffolding should be integrated into EFL writing instruction to empower learners by creating learner-centered circumstances in which they are actively engaged in the writing process.

5. Conclusion and Implications

The current study examined the effect of WSBI on metasocial and social writing strategies in Iranian EFL learners' essay writing. The results revealed that the use of WSBI instruction plays an important role in improving intermediate EFL learners' essay writing performance. Thus, the EFL learners who received WSBI performed superior to control group who received PWI. The results also indicated that metasocial and social strategies,

though in varying amount, improved the EFL learners' essay writing performance. The cycle of WSBI was useful for EFL learners since it was considered as a guide for implementing a language-across-curriculum or whole-language approach to instruction.

The study also revealed that despite the general effect of WSBI on the use of writing strategies in EFL learners' essay writing, rarely could they refer to social strategies in any meaningful way, as articulated by one of interviewees, most of EFL learners tend to utilize individual writing strategies thanks to the IELTS atmosphere. Also, they believe that social strategies emphasize writing under the circumstances influenced by mentoring, coaching, observation of expert performance, workplace environments, and peer relations that are all achievable through collaborative activities. Thus, they preferred to use metasocial strategies taught through WSBI in six stages of preparation, goal setting, presentation, practice, self-evaluation, and expansion.

Consequently, the findings of this study draw writing instructors and syllabus designers' attention to the importance of using WSBI as a possible way to move away from traditional instructions towards S^2RW instruction in order to assist EFL learners in developing different types of writing. This study was a step and, therefore, further research is required to explore the effects of WSBI on other genres of writing and writing strategies with a larger sample size and on EFL learners with different proficiency levels. Likewise, other measurement instruments can be employed to make stronger generalizations. All this can revive the hope that the educational system moves towards its ultimate goal: educating more strategically self-regulated writers.

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Appendix
Percentage of Strategies Use in Essay Writing

Metasocial Themes / Strategies	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Sum
Paying attention to social interactions 1. Before deciding to write, I generally take my readers' expectations into consideration.	31%	30%	34%	36%	45%	57%	58%	67%	44.7%
2. I Paid attention to the use of social expressions that was different in target language and my own language.	28%	31%	37%	55%	58%	60%	66%	63%	49.7%
Planning for social interactions 3. I planned to engage in pair work to put my writing plan into action.									84.6%
4. When I want to write an essay, I ask my little brother/sister to turn off the TV since it distracts my concentration.	40%	48%	34%	39%	45%	58%	54%	59%	74.6%
5. I put my goals (communication in the language) ahead of the teacher's goals ("perfect" grammar) in writing.	58%	70%	77%	72%	78%	80%	82%	80%	73.8%
	55%	58%	69%	67%	78%	88%	87%	89%	
Organizing and obtaining resources for social interactions 6. Before starting to write, I consult the experts or old timers in the community I am. This will help me to benefit from their writing skill.	70%	78%	77%	82%	84%	86%	87%	87%	81.3%
7. I looked for textbooks which allowed a lot of writing practices.	58%	73%	77%	72%	76%	77%	80%	82%	74.3%
8. In order to write a good essay in target language, I read the native resources to find cross-cultural difference.	55%	60%	69%	69%	78%	84%	87%	86%	73.5%
Monitoring the social interaction 9. I check whether both I understand what my foreigner friends write and mean in their email and they pick up my writing.	55%	60%	67%	77%	77%	82%	80%	86%	73%
10. I monitor whether I am using idiomatic expressions to make my essay writing more cohesive and coherent?	56%	68%	70%	70%	78%	86%	89%	90%	76%
Evaluating the social interactions 11. The strategies I used in my writing were very helpful. They helped me understand more and be more understood.	78%	88%	88%	85%	89%	89%	90%	94%	87.6%
12. I plan to share my final draft	60%	62%	60%	55%	58%	60%	52%	66%	59.1%

with peers at the end of every session.									
Sum of items in sessions	53.6%	60.5%	60.3%	64.9%	70.3%	75.5%	76%	79%	
Social Themes / Strategies									Sum
Interacting to learn and communicate 13. I read all the instructions given by others on essay writing I find online. 14. If I face a problem in my writing, I write down the question to ask my instructor. 15. I ask for help to learn how to use coherence and cohesion strategies effectively.	70% 80% 87%	72% 70% 80%	69% 72% 69%	58% 72% 67%	67% 78% 71%	55% 58% 68%	54% 52% 62%	59% 59% 63%	63% 67.6% 70.8%
Overcoming knowledge gaps 16. Consulting my instructor, if I'm not familiar with the topic to write an essay about, I change it. 17. If I don't know the intended word, I paraphrase it to make my writing understandable. 18. I share my writing with peers to get their feedback.	68% 58% 55%	82% 70% 58%	67% 77% 69%	70% 72% 67%	78% 78% 78%	58% 85% 69%	54% 82% 77%	59% 88% 62%	67% 76.2% 66.8%
Dealing with sociocultural context and identities 19. I used idioms and expressions to impress those who are of my same proficiency level and age. 20. I considered the cultural implications of the English idioms and expressions in writing	55% 56%	67% 68%	67% 70%	78% 68%	77% 62%	82% 79%	74% 80%	62% 73%	70.2% 69.5%
Sum of items in sessions	67.3%	70.8%	70%	69%	73.6	69.2%	66.8	65.6%	

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