

## Research Article

# Feedback Literacy and Writing Motivation in Iranian EFL Learners: A Mixed-Methods Study of the Role of Language Learning Enjoyment

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## Abstract


Writing in English as a foreign language (EFL) is shaped by an interplay of cognitive, motivational, and affective factors. Adopting a mixed-methods design, this study investigated the underexplored tripartite relationship between feedback literacy, writing motivation, and the enjoyment experienced in learning a foreign language among Iranian learners of English as a foreign language. The participants were two hundred English students as a foreign language. The instruments included a writing feedback literacy questionnaire, a writing motivation questionnaire, and a foreign language learning enjoyment (FLLE) scale. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 learners, including 15 with high FLLE and 15 with low FLLE, to gain deeper insights into their feedback and writing experiences. Out of the initial 200 learners, 168 learners completed and returned the questionnaires. Quantitative data analysis revealed significant positive relationships between feedback literacy and writing motivation among Iranian EFL learners, regardless of FLLE levels. However, the correlation was stronger for high-FLLE learners. This study holds novelty by positioning FLLE not as a mere byproduct, but as an active emotional scaffold that determines the motivational potency of feedback literacy. Qualitative findings further indicated that enjoyment influenced how learners interpreted and acted on feedback by shaping affective filtering, self-efficacy, relational dynamics, metacognitive framing, and iterative engagement with writing tasks. Collectively, the findings suggest FLLE can act as a catalyst for sustainable writing growth. They provide EFL teachers and learners with awareness concerning the existing interconnections between feedback literacy and writing motivation in the light of FLLE levels.

**Keywords:** feedback, feedback literacy, writing, writing motivation, foreign language learning enjoyment

## 1. Introduction

Writing is considered a cognitively demanding skill which has associations with affective factors such as motivation for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners (Lei et al., 2023; Shen et al., 2023). To assist EFL learners during the process of writing, teachers should provide learners with feedback on their written products (Hyland & Hyland, 2019). Indeed, feedback used to be deemed as an instrument whereby only teachers had the authority to tap into feedback as an educational means (Nieminen & Carless, 2022).

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Nevertheless, recent years have seen a shift in how feedback functions; educational programs seek to adopt a learning-oriented paradigm which involves a focus on the active role that learners play in the process of feedback (Winstone et al., 2021).

According to Yu et al. (2022), learners' feedback literacy is deeply rooted in higher education studies. From the viewpoint of academic literacy, Sutton (2012) maintained that feedback literacy involves more than the teachable capabilities involved in providing or receiving feedback; it also requires forming an atmosphere that enables students to effectively involve themselves within feedback practices. There are three dimensions for feedback literacy: knowing, being, and acting (Sutton, 2012). The knowing dimension has to do with learners' grasping the merit of feedback—specifically, their awareness of what they would be able to learn from and how to use that to improve their learning. Furthermore, learners that are feedback literate are expected to maintain confidence and demonstrate highly motivated educational identities. This process allows learners to gradually shape their own typical approaches to learning as time goes by. In the same way, learners are required to function with respect to their interpretation and the application of the feedback to improve their writing performance.

Apart from being feedback literate, learners also need to be adequately motivated in the writing process (Zerey & Mijdeci, 2023). The results of earlier inquiries (e.g., Fathi et al., 2023; Graham et al., 2021) have supported the fundamental contribution that motivation carries in the process of writing development. A number of research, conducted on the writing skills, have pursued to investigate the social and cognitive aspects which affect learners' writing improvement (MacArthur et al., 2016). Recently, a few studies (e.g., Camacho et al., 2021; Graham et al., 2018) have tried to gain hypothetical as well as highly efficient approaches to the links between writing and learners' motivation. Therefore, it seems necessary to pay further attention to identifying the elements linked to writing motivation, as they may subsequently have possible effects on improving learners' writing (Graham et al., 2022).

Apart from feedback literacy and motivation as pivotal factors in the domain of EFL writing, another paramount factor which can potentially contribute to writing development is foreign language learning enjoyment. Along with the advent of positive psychology in the process of language teaching and learning, second language acquisition (SLA) researchers have concentrated on positive and desirable feelings such as enjoyment (Mercer & MacIntyre, 2014). Therefore, the notion of foreign language learning enjoyment (FLLE) as a positive emotion encountered by EFL learners has

become the subject of research (e.g., Ergün & Dewaele, 2021; Noughabi et al., 2022). EFL learners that derive enjoyment from their learning experiences can learn more effectively (Dewaele et al., 2023), which may lead to higher levels of educational achievements (Ergün & Dewaele, 2021). The positive emotions that learners experience in the educational context are crucial and unique not only for promoting well-being but also for contributing the process of language acquisition (Li et al., 2018).

While the individual significance of feedback literacy, writing motivation, and foreign language learning enjoyment (FLLE) is increasingly recognized, the interconnections between these constructs remain a nascent and critical area for exploration. The novelty of the present study lies in its integrative approach, moving beyond a siloed examination to investigate how these pivotal elements interact within the EFL writing context. Previous research has largely traversed parallel paths: establishing feedback literacy as a capacity for engagement (Winstone et al., 2021), affirming motivation's role in writing development (Graham et al., 2022), and championing enjoyment as a facilitator of learning (Dewaele et al., 2023). Nevertheless, a considerable gap exists in understanding whether the crucial relationship between a learners' skills to process and use feedback and their motivation to write is itself moderated by the positive emotional state of enjoyment.

This study breaks new ground by positing FLLE not merely as a concurrent variable, but as a potential catalyst or buffer in the feedback-motivation dynamic. By adopting a mixed-methods design, the inquiry seeks to not only quantify these proposed conditional relationships but also to qualitatively illuminate the lived experiences of learners, thereby providing a more holistic and detailed conception of how affective and cognitive factors coalesce to shape the EFL writing process. To meet the study's objectives, the following research questions were formulated:

**RQ1:** Is there a significant relationship between feedback literacy and writing motivation of students with a high level of FLLE?

**RQ2:** Is there a significant relationship between feedback literacy and writing motivation among students with a low level of FLLE?

**RQ3:** Is there a significant difference between the correlation indices for the feedback literacy and writing motivation among students with high and low levels of FLLE?

**RQ4:** How do EFL learners perceive the associations between feedback literacy and writing motivation in the light of their FLLE?

## 2. Literature Review

A review of previous empirical investigations reveals that feedback literacy have thus far been investigated in relation to online assessment (Ma et al., 2021), engagement with feedback (Han & Xu, 2021), academic writing (Zhang et al., 2023; Yu & Liu, 2021), knowledge and insights about improvement in L2 writing (Rastgou, 2022), self-assessment (Yan & Carless, 2022), mechanisms for including feedback literacy in the curriculum (Malecka et al., 2022), scale development and validation (Yu et al., 2022), and conceptualization of feedback literacy from an ecological perspective (Chong, 2021) and a learning-centered framework (Molloy et al., 2020).

Some related investigations have also analyzed the interconnection between engagement and feedback (e.g., Zheng & Yu, 2018), and feedback literacy and involvement with feedback (Han & Xu, 2021). Nonetheless, the area investigating the associations between feedback literacy and writing motivation is quite under-studied. As one of the main affective factors, motivation leads to constructive contributions to the overall quality of learners' writing performance. Zhang (2022) stated that writing in L2 is cognitively demanding requiring highly motivated learners. This well-known association between motivation and writing quality underscores the need to investigate what fuels such motivation, with feedback literacy emerging as a potential, yet underexplored, key driver.

Many studies (e.g., Alrajhi, 2023; Karaca & Inan, 2020; Saputri et al., 2023; Zeybek et al., 2023) have affirmed the significant role that motivation plays in L2 writing. An analysis of existing empirical investigations clearly indicates that motivation for writing has so far been explored with respect to digital multimodal composition (Alrajhi, 2023), quality-oriented writing for publication and writing self-efficacy (Saputri et al., 2023), online writing community (Zeybek et al., 2023), and scale development and validation (Graham et al., 2022). While foundational models of L2 motivation, such as Dörnyei's (2005) Second language Motivational Self-System, highlight future-oriented drives, they often overlook the micro-level role of instructional factors such as feedback in sustaining daily writing motivation. However, not adequate consideration has been devoted to learning enjoyment in foreign languages (FLLE) in previous investigations.

Along with the surge of positive psychology movement in the realm of language teaching and learning, FLLE has caught the attention of researchers (Ergün & Dewaele, 2021). The review of prior research shows that, thus far, FLLE has been explored with respect to anxiety and teacher and student variables (Dewaele et al., 2018), well-being and resilience (Ergün & Dewaele,

2021), teachers' perspectives (Al-Dosari et al., 2022; Mierzwa, 2019), scale development and validation (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014), psychological wellbeing and emotion-regulation (Noughabi et al., 2022), teachers' subjectivities (Thumvichit, 2022). However, research into FLLE is still in its initial phases of progress and many learner-related factors have not yet been investigated, which call for researchers' attention (Ergün & Dewaele, 2021). According to Fredrickson, (2001), the Broaden-and-Build theory provides a foundation here, suggesting positive emotions like enjoyment broaden cognitive capacity and build lasting personal resources, which could directly influence how learners engage with feedback.

A synthesis of the literature review offers a clearer picture of research which has mostly been conducted in separate lanes. The work on feedback literacy, for instance, has moved from seeing feedback as a teacher's tool to understanding it as a student skill, shaped by the whole learning environment (Chong, 2021; Molloy et al., 2020). Learners are now supposed to be actively involved in the feedback process (Winstone et al., 2021), yet it is not known much about how this skill connects to a student's inner drive to write. At the same time, studies show that motivation is vital for writing (Graham et al., 2022), but they rarely look at whether being able to perceive and apply feedback effectively is what keeps that motivation alive. On a third front, the positive psychology movement has shown that the joy of learning a language is a powerful booster for success (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Ergün & Dewaele, 2021). But this feeling of enjoyment has not been brought into the discussion about how students handle feedback and find the will to write, creating a lacuna in the literature. Thus, there are three well-researched corners in separation—feedback literacy, writing motivation, and FLLE—but the lines connecting them are not well-studied. In fact, establishing whether the positive emotion of enjoyment actually changes the strength of the connection between a learner's feedback literacy and their motivation to write has not received adequate attention. This is the precise and significant niche in the literature under scrutiny in this study.

Despite the significance of writing and feedback in EFL contexts, and the pivotal role of motivation and the possible contributions of FLLE to language learning, there is a dearth of studies in relation to the associations among feedback literacy, writing motivation, and FLLE. Thus, the present study aimed at investigating any significant relationship between feedback literacy and writing motivation of learners with a high level of FLLE. Moreover, the study sought to probe any significant relationship between feedback literacy and writing motivation of learners with a low level of FLLE. Furthermore, this research aimed at exploring if there is any meaningful difference between the correlation indices for the feedback literacy and writing

motivation of students with high and low levels of FLLE. Ultimately, the study aimed to explore how EFL learners perceive the associations between feedback literacy and writing motivation in the light of their FLLE.

Overall, when the extant previous studies into feedback literacy, writing motivation, and FLLE are brought into dialogue, a disconnect emerges. Research on feedback literacy, building on foundational work about the efficiency of the given feedback for learning (Hattie & Timperley, 2007), has successfully shifted focus to the student's role. Simultaneously, motivation research has long affirmed its centrality in complex tasks like writing. Finally, FLLE research, grounded in positive psychology, confirms the functional value of positive emotions. However, these streams run in parallel. Crucially, no study has yet integrated these three constructs to test whether FLLE acts as the critical affective bridge that determines how strongly a learner's feedback literacy translates into sustained writing motivation. This omission represents a significant conceptual and empirical gap, which the present study aims to address by examining their tripartite relationship.

This study bears empirical, theoretical, and pedagogical significance. As for empirical relevance, this study fills the lacuna in the extant research via exploring the association between feedback literacy and writing motivation in the context of FLLE. As such, this study expands the avenue of research in relation to positive feelings experienced by EFL learners while considering the role of feedback literacy and writing motivation. From a theoretical viewpoint, the findings of existing studies delineate the interrelationships among positive emotions, feedback literacy, and writing motivation. Thus, the findings can enrich the theoretical literature concerning how the core element of emotions existing in FLLE and feedback literacy and writing motivation are associated. The results of the current study are significant from a pedagogical perspective as well. The findings can help syllabus designers to develop courses for EFL learners to promote their FLLE, writing motivation, and feedback literacy with the aim of improving their writing skills. Moreover, the results can develop EFL teachers' awareness in terms of the way EFL learners' writing motivation and feedback literacy are associated with FLLE. Furthermore, these findings can also be useful for writing researchers, as they enrich the literature regarding the existing associations among feedback literacy, writing motivation, and FLLE.

The present study employs an integrated theoretical framework combining feedback literacy research (Sutton, 2012; Winstone et al., 2021) with positive psychology principles in the process of language learning (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Mercer & MacIntyre, 2014). At its heart, this

framework suggests that a student's ability to use feedback does not automatically translate into writing motivation. Instead, the learner's emotional experience, particularly their FLLE, as a key intermediary, has been considered. Sutton's (2012) view of feedback literacy—which involves understanding feedback's purpose (knowing), having a confident learner mindset (being), and taking steps to use it (acting)—lays the crucial groundwork. Arguably, these capacities do not operate in an emotional vacuum; they are powerfully enabled or hindered by how a student feels. This is where Fredrickson's (2001) Broaden-and-Build theory becomes essential. At the heart of this approach lies the Broaden-and-Build Theory. Positive emotions serve a purpose beyond mere enjoyment; they actually widen a person's thinking and assist in the development of enduring psychological strengths.

In this framework, FLLE acts as this kind of supportive foundation. The enjoyment of learning opens up a students' mind, making them more capable of handling and learning from critical comments (which strengthens their knowing and acting). Simultaneously, this positive feeling builds up their resilience, which directly fuels the confidence, motivated identity (being) needed to persevere in writing. To further consolidate this framework, recent advancements further suggest that in language learning contexts, positive emotions like enjoyment are not merely outcomes but are active precursors that enable the cognitive engagement necessary for complex skills like writing (Carless & Winstone, 2024). Therefore, this integrated model guides the investigation by hypothesizing that FLLE moderates the strength of the link between feedback literacy and writing motivation, with high levels of enjoyment creating a virtuous cycle where positive affect, cognitive engagement, and motivational drive mutually reinforce each other.

### **3. Method**

#### **3.1. Design**

This study adopted an explanatory mixed-methods design. It included both quantitative and qualitative data that later were collected and analyzed. The first phase was a correlational, descriptive, ex-post facto design as the objective of the research was to explore whether there exist relationships among these variables and examine a phenomenon which had happened prior to the inception of data collection (Ary et al., 2019). Moreover, no intervention was carried out during the course of the research. The second phase of the study was qualitative to provide deep understandings of the relations among the variables of the study from the learners' subjective experience perspectives.

### 3.2. Participants

The participants of this study were selected based on convenience sampling method. They comprised 200 Iranian EFL learners studying English at different proficiency levels. It is acknowledged that this non-random sampling method affects the generalizability of the findings, though it provided practical access to the target population. The participants' age was ranging from 14 to 25. Out of these, 115 participants were female learners and 85 were male learners. The learners were studying in high schools in Birjand, South Khorasan.

### 3.3. Instruments

#### 3.3.1. Writing Feedback Literacy Questionnaire

Writing feedback literacy was calculated via a 28-item, five-point Likert scale questionnaire (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). It was constructed and validated by Yu et al. (2022). The instrument involves five dimensions: appreciating feedback (10 items), acknowledging different feedback sources (5 items), making judgments (5 items), managing affect (3 items), and finally, taking action (5 items). The authors reported strong psychometric properties after employing exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses and Cronbach's alpha method.

#### 3.3.2. Writing Motivation Questionnaire

A questionnaire constructed and validated by Graham et al. (2022) was employed to assess writing motivation. This instrument includes 28 items which were rated on a five-point Likert scale, which ranges from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The questionnaire assesses seven different reasons for writing. Two of these are related to intrinsic motivation for writing, such as curiosity (4 items) and involvement (4 items). Three relate to extrinsic motives, including grades (4 items), competition (4 items), and social recognition (4 items). The final two motives relate to self-regulatory reasons, such as emotional regulation (4 items) and the relief from boredom (4 items).

#### 3.3.3. Foreign Language Learning Enjoyment Scale

This study utilized an instrument consisting of 21-item developed by Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) to measure FLLE, employing a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). The validity and reliability of the instrument have been established by Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014).



### **3.3.4. Semi-structured Interviews**

Several semi-structured interview questions were prepared to examine how EFL learners perceive the associations between feedback literacy and writing motivation in the light of their FLLE. To develop the interview questions, initially the literature related to feedback literacy (e.g., Chong, 2021; Han & Xu, 2021; Ma et al., 2021; Malecka et al., 2022), writing motivation (e.g., Camacho et al., 2021; Fathi et al., 2023; Graham et al., 2021; Saputri et al., 2023), and FLLE (e.g., Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Dewaele et al., 2023; Li et al., 2018; Mierzwa, 2019) was extensively reviewed and a guide of 6 semi-structured interview questions was developed. A panel of TEFL experts reviewed the list to evaluate its content validity. Based on their comments, two questions were found to have overlapping content and were merged into one question. Moreover, one question was found not to be very pertinent to the purposes of the study and was discarded resulting in a final list of 4 semi-structured interview questions.

### **3.4. Procedure**

To establish the reliability of the instruments used in the study, first, the three instruments were piloted with 30 participants sharing characteristics similar to the main group. Then, the researcher negotiated with different high schools in Birjand to seek their agreement for their students to take part in this research. Following that, the researcher talked to 200 learners to win their consent to take part in the study. Next, the students were asked to complete the three questionnaires. The participants were assured of the confidentiality of the information and informed that the data collected in the study would be kept private. Moreover, the participants were given adequate instructions on how to fill out the questionnaires. Furthermore, participation of the learners in the current study was completely voluntary to observe the ethical concerns.

After completing the questionnaires, they were collected and scored and the data were used to answer the research questions. Out of the initial 200 learners, 168 learners returned the questionnaires. Then, to divide the participants into two groups of learners with high and low levels of FLLE, the mid-point score of the FLLE questionnaire was considered as a criterion. The maximum obtainable score for the FLLE questionnaire was 105. Accordingly, those learners that scored higher than 52.5 on the questionnaire were considered as those with a higher level of FLLE. Conversely, those whose scores fell below 52.5 were regarded as low level in FLLE. To this end, 92 learners were identified as those with a high level of FLLE and 76 were put into the group with a low level of FLLE. Finally, 15 learners from the high FLLE group and another 15 were asked to answer the semi-structured interviews questions.

### 3.5. Data Analysis

To analyze quantitative data in this study, a blend of both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques was employed. With regard to the descriptive statistics, the researcher calculated and presented the mean, standard deviation, and variance values to provide a summary of the data. As for inferential statistics, after checking the normality assumptions for the data sets, the parametric Pearson correlation coefficient formula was employed to investigate the first and second research questions. In order to find significant changes among the correlation indices, Z score procedure was applied. Moreover, Cronbach's Alpha was applied to establish the internal consistency of the three instruments used in this research.

The qualitative data were processed through a structured approach that tracked the six-stage framework for thematic analysis as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). This process comprised: Immersion in the dataset through repeated engagement with transcribed interviews to cultivate a holistic understanding; Code generation via inductive identification of salient features within responses; Theme development through aggregation of codes into conceptually coherent patterns; Iterative theme refinement involving recursive verification of thematic boundaries and internal consistency; Definitive thematic labelling to establish precise nomenclature for emergent constructs; and analytical synthesis to produce a structured narrative elucidating relationships between themes. This recursive, human-driven approach ensured manual analytical rigor, thereby preserving the organic intellectual labor fundamental to qualitative inquiry.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Reliability of the Instruments

To ensure that the three instruments used to gather data in this research had adequate internal reliability, the Cronbach's alpha method was conducted. Table 1 presents the alpha coefficients for the Writing Feedback Literacy Questionnaire, Writing Motivation Questionnaire, and Foreign Language Learning Enjoyment Scale.

**Table 1**  
*Results of Cronbach's Alpha for the Three Instruments*

	Minimum	Maximum	M	SD	Alpha
Feedback Literacy	42.00	128.00	83.50	28.60	.72
Writing Motivation	48.00	125.00	85.75	29.36	.79
Enjoyment	20.00	98.00	76.01	12.91	.75

As presented in Table 1, the values of Alpha for the three measures turned out to be .72, .79, and .75, all of which are deemed acceptable (Hulin et al.,2001).

#### 4.2. Results for the First Research Question

To address the first research question (i.e., Is there a significant relationship between feedback literacy and writing motivation of students with a high level of FLLE?), the normality of the data sets was checked initially. Table 2 illustrates the descriptive statistics results for the feedback literacy and writing motivation of learners with a high degree of FLLE.

**Table 2**

*Results of Descriptive Statistics for the Feedback Literacy Feedback Literacy and Writing Motivation of Learners with a High Level of FLLE*

	N	Mean	SD	Skewness		Kurtosis	
				Statistic	SE	Statistic	SE
FL High FLLE	92	86.00	29.31	3.12	.24	-.41	.41
WM High FLLE	92	99.50	12.22	2.10	.21	2.50	.41
Valid N (listwise)	92						

As shown Table 2, the skewness and kurtosis ratios belonging to the feedback literacy and writing motivation scores fell out of the normal range of  $\pm 1.96$ . This shows that the normality condition was violated according to (Pallant, 2013). Therefore, the researcher employed the Spearman correlation to examine the relationship between feedback literacy and writing motivation of the students, who had a high degree of FLLE. The results of Spearman correlation can be seen in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Results of Spearman Correlation Between Feedback Literacy and Writing Motivation of Learners with a High Level of FLLE*

		WM High FLLE	
Spearman's rho	FL High FLLE	Correlation Coefficient	.51**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
		N	92

As depicted in Table 3, there is a statistically positive and significant relation between feedback literacy and writing motivation among learners with a high level of FLLE ( $r = .51$ ,  $n = 92$ ,  $p = .001 < 0.01$ ). Based on Cohen (1988), the  $r$  index in the above table turned out to be .51 which is positively significant at the level of 0.01. Thus, it can be inferred that the correlation coefficient between EFL learners' feedback literacy and writing motivation among learners with a high level of FLLE is significantly strong and positive.

### 4.3. Results for the Second Research Question

To address the second question (i.e., Is there a significant relationship between feedback literacy and writing motivation among students with a low level of FLLE?), the normality of the data sets was first examined. Table 4 illustrates the descriptive statistics of feedback literacy and writing motivation among learners with a low level of FLLE.

**Table 4**

*Findings of Descriptive Statistics for the Feedback Literacy and Writing Motivation of Learners with a Low Level of FLLE*

	N	Mean	SD	Skewness		Kurtosis	
				Statistic	SE	Statistic	SE
FL Low FLLE	76	55.68	12.46	2.34	.40	2.91	.81
WM Low FLLE	76	88.00	5.43	2.44	.62	2.82	.88
Valid N (listwise)	76						

As indicated in Table 4, the skewness ratios were outside the acceptable range ( $\pm 1.96$ ), indicative of a violation of the normality assumption (Pallant, 2013). Therefore, the Spearman correlation was used to analyze the association between feedback literacy and writing motivation (Table 5).

**Table 5**

*Spearman Correlation Results Between the Feedback Literacy and Writing Motivation among Learners with a Low Level of FLLE*

		WM High FLLE	
Spearman's rho	FL High FLLE	Correlation Coefficient	.22*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.01
		N	76

Table 5 indicates a significant positive relationship between feedback literacy and writing motivation among learners with low FLLE levels. ( $r = .22$ ,  $n = 76$ ,  $p = .01 < 0.05$ ). Based on Cohen (1988), the ' $r$ ' index in the above table turned out to be .225 which is positively significant at the level of 0.05. Thus, it can be inferred that the correlation coefficient between feedback literacy and writing motivation among learners with a low level of FLLE is significantly positive and weak.

### 4.4. Results for the Third Research Question

To find out any significant differences among the relationships between EFL learners' feedback literacy and writing motivation of students having high and low levels of FLLE. The calculated  $r$  values were converted to  $z$  scores via the transformation table taken from Pallant (2007). After that, the subsequent analysis was conducted using Pallant's proposed formula to address the third

research question (i.e., Is there a significant difference between the correlation indices for the feedback literacy and writing motivation of students with high and low levels of FLLE?).

**Table 6**

*Comparison of Correlations Between Feedback Literacy and Writing Motivation Across FLLE Levels*

FLLE Group	N	r	Fisher's z
High FLLE	92	.51	.56
Low FLLE	76	.22	.22

As can be seen in Table 6, feedback literacy and writing motivation were positively correlated ( $r_{\text{high-FLLE}} = .51$  and  $r_{\text{low-FLLE}} = .22$ ), and the corresponding z values were .56 and .22. The observed z value for the difference between the two independent correlations is shown in Table 7.

**Table 7**

*Test of Difference Between Correlations*

	Statistic	SE	Z <sub>obs</sub>	p
z Difference	.33	.15	2.16	< .05

As displayed in Table 7, the Z<sub>obs</sub> for the difference between the feedback literacy and writing motivation among the high-FLLE and low FLLE groups turned out to be 2.16, which is higher than the critical value of 1.96. This indicates a significant difference between the two correlation indices.

#### 4.5. Results for the Fourth Research Question

The results of thematic analysis for learners' perceptions concerning the associations between feedback literacy and writing motivation in the light of FLLE revealed five themes, including (1) affective filtering of feedback valence, (2) self-efficacy as a mediator of feedback utility, (3) relational dynamics in feedback acceptance, (4) metacognitive framing of critique, and (5) FLLE-fueled iterative engagement.

As for the first theme, *affective filtering of feedback valence*, learners highlighted how their enjoyment levels reshaped feedback's emotional impact. One participant stated, "When I'm excited about English, even a low grade feels like a roadmap—I think, 'Okay, let's fix this!' But if I'm bored? The same feedback just shouts, 'You're terrible at this.' My enjoyment decides whether I hear a coach or a critic."

Concerning the second theme, self-efficacy as a mediator of feedback utility, high-FLLE learners tied feedback to growth mindsets. A student explained: "After my teacher wrote, 'Your arguments lack examples,' I spent

hours researching. Loving English made me think, 'I can master this,' not 'I'll never get it.' Enjoyment turns feedback into a puzzle, not a punishment." Low-FLLE peers, however, described feedback as "proof I shouldn't waste time writing."

With regard to the third theme, relational dynamics in feedback acceptance, participants stressed trust in instructors as foundational. One interviewee stated, "If my teacher writes a smiley face beside corrections, I feel safe to try again. But if it's just red ink? I shut down. Enjoyment isn't just about English—it's about feeling your teachers on your side."

As for the fourth theme, metacognitive framing of critique, high-FLLE learners dissected feedback analytically: "I ask, 'Why did I make this error?' instead of 'Why am I bad at this?' Enjoyment lets me separate my writing from my worth." A low-FLLE peer countered: "One grammar mistake and I'm done—why care if I hate English anyway? Feedback just rubs salt in wounds."

Concerning the fifth theme, FLLE-fueled iterative engagement, participants described cyclical motivation, saying "The more I enjoy the class, the more motivated I am to write. As I write more, I receive better feedback, creating a growing cycle of progress. It's like a snowball gaining energy — without enjoyment, it simply fades away." Learners positioned FLLE as both a filter and amplifier of feedback's motivational power. High-FLLE individuals reframed critique as actionable data, sustained by self-efficacy and relational trust, while low-FLLE peers interpreted feedback as indictments of fixed ability. Metacognitive strategies and iterative practice emerged as byproducts of enjoyment, explaining the stronger feedback-literacy correlation in high-FLLE groups. These themes underscore that FLLE does not merely influence motivation—it reconfigures learners' meaning-making processes, transforming feedback from a static judgment into a dynamic tool for growth.

## **5. Discussion**

This mixed-methods study investigated any associations between feedback literacy and writing motivation of learners with high and low levels of FLLE. The findings of statistical analysis indicated a significant and positive relationship between feedback literacy and writing motivation among the students, who had a high level of FLLE. Likewise, it was found that there was a statistically positive and significant relationship between feedback literacy and writing motivation scores among students with a low level of FLLE. Moreover, the findings of the study indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between the correlation indices for the feedback literacy and writing motivation of students with high and low levels of FLLE. The

findings of qualitative data analysis procedures revealed five different themes encompassing affective filtering of feedback valence, self-efficacy as a mediator of feedback utility, relational dynamics in feedback acceptance, metacognitive framing of critique, and FLLE-fueled iterative engagement. Such results corroborate that while feedback literacy and motivation are universally linked, the emotional context of learning critically influences the strength and nature of this relationship.

The results of the present research confirm the interconnection between feedback literacy and writing motivation (e.g., Han & Xu, 2020; Han & Xu, 2021). One possible explanation for this relationship is that feedback literacy helps individuals better understand and incorporate feedback into their writing (Yan & Carless, 2022). When individuals receive feedback on their writing, they may feel discouraged or overwhelmed if they do not have the skills to process and use the feedback effectively (Yu et al., 2022). However, if they are feedback literate, they may be better equipped to grasp the concept of feedback and later on apply it to enrich their writing skills (Zhang, 2022). This, in turn, may lead to greater writing confidence and motivation (Yu & Liu, 2021). Another possible explanation is that feedback literacy may enhance students' sense of autonomy and better control over their writing (Lee, 2014). When individuals possess the required ability to effectively use feedback to enrich their writing skills, they may feel more empowered in their writing procedure and more self-assured in their potentialities (Yao & Zhu, 2022). This sense of agency and control may lead to greater motivation to engage in writing activities. This creates a virtuous cycle: effective feedback use builds confidence, which fuels the motivation to seek out further feedback, thereby continuously reinforcing and advancing writing skills over time.

The finding that the correlation indices for feedback literacy and writing motivation differ significantly between students having higher and lower levels of foreign language learning enjoyment suggests that enjoyment may play an effective role in the relationship between these two variables. It is possible that learners that enjoy learning a foreign language might be more driven to be involved in writing tasks (Dewaele et al., 2023), which in turn may lead to greater feedback literacy. Conversely, learners that do not get pleasure out of learning a foreign language may be less motivated to engage in writing activities, which may hinder their development of feedback literacy skills. One of the feasible explanations for the present result is that students that enjoy learning a foreign language may be more likely to view writing as a fun and engaging activity (Zhang et al., 2021). Consequently, they may be more motivated to engage in writing activities and solicit feedback to develop their writing skills. This motivation may result in enhanced feedback literacy, as learners that are driven to promote their writing skills typically process and use

feedback effectively. Conversely, learners that do not enjoy learning a foreign language may be less likely to view writing as a fun and engaging activity (Tahmouresi & Papi, 2021). As a result, they may be less motivated to engage in writing activities and seek out feedback. This lack of motivation may hinder their development of feedback literacy skills, as they may not be as devoted to improving their writing or processing feedback effectively. Therefore, FLLE appears to act as a catalytic background variable that amplifies the positive cycle between understanding feedback and the drive to write, making it a crucial lever for intervention.

The qualitative findings illuminate why the quantitative correlations between feedback literacy and writing motivation differed across FLLE levels. Learners with high FLLE framed feedback as a diagnostic tool (Yan & Carless, 2022), describing how “enjoyment turns feedback into a puzzle, not a punishment,” a theme aligning with their stronger statistical association. This metacognitive reframing (Yu & Liu, 2021) was maintained by relational trust in instructors (Han & Xu, 2021), as learners emphasized feeling seen by teachers motivated them to act on critiques. Conversely, low-FLLE learners’ affective filtering (Dewaele et al., 2023) led them to perceive feedback as “proof I shouldn’t waste time writing,” mirroring their weaker correlation. These divergent interpretive frameworks (Camacho et al., 2021) explain the significant difference in correlation indices; high-FLLE learners’ iterative engagement (Malecka et al., 2022) transformed feedback literacy into a cyclical motivator as they said “each step builds momentum,” whereas low-FLLE peers’ defensive processing stifled this reciprocity. The interplay of enjoyment and self-efficacy (Shen et al., 2023) thus reconfigures feedback’s utility, as a narrative such as “loving English made me believe I could improve” reflects FLLE’s role in sustaining motivation through agentic feedback practices (Al-Dosari et al., 2022). Ultimately, the data suggest that enjoyment does not just coexist with feedback literacy and motivation; it actively rewires the learner’s emotional and cognitive apparatus for receiving and utilizing critique.

## 6. Conclusion

This study revealed significant positive relationships between feedback literacy and writing motivation among Iranian EFL learners, regardless of FLLE levels. However, the correlation was stronger for high-FLLE learners. Qualitative themes (i.e., affective filtering, self-efficacy, relational dynamics, metacognitive framing, and iterative engagement) revealed this divergence: enjoyment reshaped how learners processed feedback, turning critique into motivational fuel rather than demoralizing setbacks.



The results of this research indicate feedback literacy is an important skill for individuals aiming to strengthen their writing. By developing their feedback literacy skills, individuals might be better equipped to apply feedback effectively in their writing and gain a greater sense of control over their writing process. These results carry important implications for teachers and practitioners that work with individuals aiming to enhance their writing competence and motivation. Moreover, the results underscore the need of taking into account learner enjoyment when examining the link between feedback literacy and writing motivation. Educators and professionals that support learners should take into account learners' level of enjoyment when planning writing exercises as giving feedback, as enjoyment can significantly affect the learners' motivation and development of feedback literacy skills. Consequently, pedagogical approaches should strategically integrate enjoyment-boosting activities to create the optimal emotional conditions where feedback can be fully leveraged for motivational and developmental gains.

To put these findings into practice, teachers can adopt concrete strategies. For low-FLLE learners, frame feedback as a puzzle by using a three-step protocol: Identify the issue, diagnose the cause, and propose one solution. This structure mimics problem-solving games, making critique feel less personal. For emotional scaffolding, teachers should preface critical feedback with a positive priming statement that acknowledges effort. Finally, instructors can implement feedback trackers where students log how they acted on comments, turning abstract advice into visible, incremental wins that build self-efficacy.

It is imperative to admit a couple of constraints in the present research. Initially, data were collected from a convenient group of students in one Iranian city, which means the findings might not be fully generalized to all students learning English elsewhere. Also, because the data were gathered at one time span, it cannot be definitively concluded that enjoyment causes changes in motivation, only that the two are connected. Looking ahead, such limitations open up some paths for other researchers. What happens to the discovered relationships in this study across various proficiency levels? It would also be valuable to compare different learning environments—do students in private schools experience these dynamics differently than those in public schools? Finally, it is also possible to develop and test practical training workshops for teachers that focus on helping them read students' emotional cues and adapt their feedback to build enjoyment, not just to correct errors.

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