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Research Article

Interactions in Digital Online Vs. Physical Classes: Analyzing the Impact of Interactive Language Learning Activities (ILLA) as a Main Lost Issue in Modern Learning Approaches on Iranian EFL Learners' Achievement in Writing

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Ph.D student Islamic Azad University, Takestan Branch Ngin.ndr76@gmail.com**ABSTRACT**

The present study aimed at analyzing the significant impact of utilizing Interactive Language Learning Activities on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' writing achievement in online versus physical classes. Initially, the OPT was run to purposefully extract a total number of 30 intermediate female students out of 100 EFL learners in the IELTS Mix Academy Language Institute in Mashhad City. Then, the final participants with intermediate levels in general English were randomly assigned to two experimental groups; the online versus physical class to receive the interventions for ten sessions in five weeks. After receiving ILLA writing interventions, the results revealed a significant difference ($p=.0$; $p<0.05$) between the scores of writing pre-test and post-test in the online group. Similarly, the data analysis showed the significant impact ($p<0.05$) of employing ILLA on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' writing achievements in the physical group. Comparing two different experimental groups at the pre-test phase showed no significant difference ($p=.40$; ($p>0.05$)) between students' levels in both groups. However, the results of the independent-sample t -test showed a significant difference ($p<0.05$) between Iranian EFL learners' writing achievements in the physical versus online group in the post-test phase; students in the physical setting faced more significant achievements in writing skills, compared to the online class. It was concluded that utilizing ILLA in online and physical classes had a significant impact on improving Iranian EFL learners' writing skills. The results of this study can assist teachers to find suitable strategies for writing skills in EFL classes.

Keywords: Interactive activities; Online classroom; Physical classroom; Writing skill





1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, being an effective writer is very important in the English learning process. Thus, writing instruction has become increasingly important in EFL classrooms. As a result, the ability to write is crucial for educational and personal reasons (Weigle, 2002). Hyland (2003) believes that both EFL learners and native speakers of English are faced with various difficulties when learning writing in practice. In other words, even being a native speaker of English does not result in writing effectively. Despite much focus on writing skills in EFL classes, it is still valuable to analyze the efficacy of various old and modern interventions for teaching this valuable skill to assess students' progress toward mastering writing.

According to Lyster (2007), writing is an integral part of any language and may just be one of the most valuable skills humans ever developed because it can be used from simple daily notes to translating and learning another language. The development in EFL composition has, to some extent, been influenced by developments in the teaching of writing to native speakers of English. Writing is the most difficult skill among the four language skills for many learners of EFL learners because of its complexity in spelling, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammatical structure (Swan, 2008). There is no one-to-one relation between the spelling and pronunciation of words in English. Since writing is considered a productive skill, the ELLs find it a more complex skill. While the English language learners start writing, they have to follow two important features of writing, i.e., coherence and organization. In this regard, the teachers of English should always teach learners how to write paragraphs and essays with good coherence and proper organization (Rao, 2019).

As Rao (2017) clarifies, “writing has many advantages to develop the learners’ critical thinking and they will be able to mention their ideas in written forms. It also helps them recover their ideas by bringing back their old and almost forgotten memories” (p. 34). It also clears their mind and makes them feel the need to speak their minds. It also helps the learners to analyze things and look at them from a different point of view. The learners also improve their verbal as well as written skills and while writing, they carefully select the right vocabulary and grammatical structure (Rao, 2017). Since writing is considered the most difficult skill to acquire for English language learners, English teachers should think of appropriate methods and the latest techniques in English language teaching and develop writing skills among the language learners.

The rapid development of technology has caused significant changes in human life. A computer has been regarded as a revolution affecting all areas of human life, including education, throughout history. In the traditional view of learning, the teaching and learning activity was done both by the teacher and the learners in a face-to-face manner (Qassemzadeh & Soleimani, 2016; Talebinezhad & Abarghoui, 2013). Today’s learners are well-known as digital natives or members of the Net Generation. They are born in the digital age and have been interacting with digital technology from an early age (Arteaga Sánchez et al., 2014; Prensky, 2001; Tapscott & Williams, 2008; Thompson, 2013).

Language learning strategies have long been associated with effective language learning (Cohen, 1998; Green & Oxford, 1995; Hsiao & Oxford, 2002; O’Malley & Chamot, 1990). Chamot (2005) clarifies the importance of writing strategies considering two reasons: First, strategies when used by EFL learners, help teachers get insights into the metacognitive, cognitive, social, and affective processes included in language learning. Second, strategies



help teachers understand the knowledge base of EFL learners toward helping the less successful in learning new writing strategies. Swan (2008) has proposed that teachers need to “involve problem-oriented strategies in their classrooms which desire conscious attention, and which are not employed automatically with all L2 learners without teaching” (p. 265).

Despite this much support for Interactive Language Learning Activities (ILLA) strategies, they are less than often practiced in language teaching settings, especially on online platforms. Therefore, ILLA strategies can be employed to improve writing performance among English language learning learners in various online and physical settings. Based on the mentioned background, various exciting problems and challenges reveal the importance of employing ILLA writing strategies for EFL learners

The main reason for the issue is that students have to use writing skills in English to do their assignments and papers, although they have not been taught writing skills fairly and effectively in schools, and they do not know how to compose their ideas. The problem may arise when dealing with EFL students in Iran because of the traditional methods that are employed by teachers in universities or English institutions (Beiki et al., 2020). The other aspect of the problem is related to the pedagogical setting.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the utilization of technology-based settings in online platforms teaching language has increased due to the temporary physical closure of educational institutions and academic places to follow the obligatory social distance health protocols. Therefore, changes in learning during the COVID-19 pandemic become a challenge as well as an opportunity for teachers to continue and expand traditional interactions into online learning platforms (Daniel, 2020). Most fully online courses before the COVID-19 pandemic were traditional physical courses with some real-time meetings using web conferencing tools. Hence, the question emerges whether instructors can take advantage of fully online courses immediately without insufficient previous research.

The main approach that might be observed within the traditional teaching models of writing is that, though having more time for students' participation, they mostly emphasize teacher-based correction and interactions (Qassemzadeh & Soleimani, 2016). Despite analyzing the impacts of various interactive-based interventions on different skills such as speaking (Namaziandost & Nasri, 2019; Omar et al., 2020; Saeed et al., 2016; Türkben, 2019; Yeganehpour, 2021), listening, (Ashraf et al., 2013; Noshad & Zamani, 2017; Rajaei, 2015), and even writing skills (Beiki et al., 2020; Moorhouse et al., 2021; Oanida, 2018; Zarandi & Rahbar, 2014; Yassi et al., 2022) in Iran and abroad, there is still a gap in this area. In other words, many studies attempted to analyze the impact of interactive activities on physical classes, whereas the present study aims at evaluating the impact of Interactive Language Learning Activities (ILLA) on improving Iranian EFL learners' writing skills in online versus physical classes.

To this end, the present research aimed at analyzing the significant impact of utilizing Interactive Language Learning Activities on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' writing achievement in online versus physical classes. Initially, the researcher aimed to find the significant impact of various techniques on Iranian EFL learners writing achievements in the Whatsapp writing course who receive ILLA as the writing intervention, compared to another writing course on the physical platform. The researcher attempted to compare the significant differences between online and physical online classes at the level of improving the Iranian intermediate EFL learners' writing skill achievements.



2-Review of related literature

1.1. E-Learning

The conventional method of education has undergone significant changes as a result of the advancement of information technologies and multimedia, as well as the use of the Internet as a new way of instruction (Wang et al., 2003). According to Yang and Arjomand (1999), the development of information and technology has resulted in the creation of new and additional situations for education in the modern day. E-Learning has been acknowledged on the agendas of schools and other educational institutions as having the potential to alter individuals as well as their knowledge, skills, and performance. In a rapidly expanding market for cybereducation, schools, universities, and other institutions of higher learning are reportedly competing with one another to increase their capacity to provide online courses (Love & Fry, 2006).

E-learning refers to the process of acquiring knowledge by electronic means, such as the Internet, a network, or a publicly accessible computer. E-learning may be summed up as the representation of skills and knowledge through the utilization of a network. Learning through the exploitation of electronic resources and processes. According to Mahanta and Ahmed (2012), it is not just about education and information but also about learning in a way that is appropriate for the individual. Even though technological features are a part of the definition of the word, Tavangarian et al. (2004) and similarly Triacca et al. (2004) both believe that the technology that was being employed was insufficient as a descriptor. E-learning is not only technical but also demonstrates some transformation of an individual's experience into the person's understanding via the knowledge-building process, as stated by Tavangarian et al. (2004), who exhibit the constructivist theoretical framework as a frame for their explanation. It is abundantly clear that there is some uncertainty regarding the exact characteristics of the expression, but it is also clear that all forms of E-learning, whether they take the form of applications, programs, objects, websites, etc., give people the chance to learn. (Moore et al., 2011).

E-learning has emerged to take on an increasingly significant role in educational establishments at the postsecondary level. Specifically, when it enters the educational presentation while encouraging processes of higher education institutions, the presentation and extensiveness of a variety of e-Learning instruments have been beginning many adjustments (Dublin, 2003). These changes have been brought about by the introduction of e-Learning. There are many distinct varieties of e-Learning, each of which can be implemented in several distinct ways in educational settings. Algahtani (2011) found, in his study of the effect and experience of e-learning in Saudi Arabia, that there are three main patterns of implementing e-learning in teaching. These patterns include "adjunct, blended e-Learning, and online" (Algahtani, 2011, p. 45). According to Algahtani (2011) and Zeitoun (2008), this method of application allows for the greatest possible level of autonomy on the part of the learners or pupils. Zeitoun (2008) went even further to emphasize that the online technique is shared among both individual and group instruction, where collaborative instruction is inclusive of synchronous and asynchronous learning (Zeitoun, 2008). Zeitoun (2008). According to Mahanta and Ahmed (2012), there are different types of e-learning tools which entitled as Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs), Really Simple Syndication/Rich Sites (RSS), Blogs, Podcasts, Wikis, Social Bookmarking, Video, web-based Forums,



Video/Audio Calls, etc.

1.2. Interactive Language Learning

Hadfield and Hadfield (2008) believe that the word interaction means more than just putting a message together; it involves also responding to other people. This means selecting the language that is appropriate for the person you are talking to (interlocutor); it means also, responding to what others say, taking turns in a conversation, encouraging people to speak, expressing interests, changing the topic, asking people to repeat or explain what they say and so on; to facilitate communication among them. Interaction is regarded to be a key factor for learners in the process of creating intelligible output since it enables students to practice their language skills while still in the classroom, as Hedge (2000) explains. Because of the interaction that takes place in the classroom, students have the opportunity to get feedback from the instructor as well as from their peers, which ultimately leads to an improvement in their language skills. Classroom interaction is considered an important factor in foreign language learning since it happens either between the teacher and the students or between the students themselves, person to person, or as a whole based on the available communicative condition. Some activities can be applied in language classrooms in which students can interact to solve a problem by exchanging meaningful communicative resources. Some interactive language learning activities according to Rivers (1987) are group decoding of a text, teaching face-saving gambits, and interpreting a story.

Interactive language learning activities, according to Rivers (1987) (must be attractive to catch student's attention but also use the target language not only to deal with the subject matter but also to regulate interaction by offering models of how to use interactional gambits in natural discourse, build the topic of the activity based on student's contributions and interest because for teacher some topics will appear irrelevant but for students may be very relevant from their perspective. In brief and taking into account the literature, we can say that interactive language learning activities should have the following characteristics:

- Allow interaction between two persons or more.
- Catch students' interest
- Activities should have a clear goal
- Activities in which students are asked to solve a problem, make decisions, or create something like a presentation, or picture.
- Activities in which students can put into practice their communicative abilities, gambits, and phrases that they have learned
- Activities in which students try out new language functions, for example, appropriate ways of opening and closing a conversation, polite ways of interrupting, making a request or making a negative comment, defending an argument, etc.

1.3. Writing

Writing is a psychological activity of the language used to put information in the written text. Brown says writing is a process to and up thinking you can not start our thinking (Brown, 2001). Writing is a combination of process and product of discovering ideas, putting them on paper, and working with them until they are presented in a manner that is polished and comprehensible to readers (Linse, 2005). It simply means that writing is an idea in our brain that we write down on paper to express to others.



The writing process is the stage a writer produces something in its final written form. This process, of course, is affected by the content (subject matter) of the writing, the type of the writing (shopping lists, letters, essays, reports, or novels), and the medium it is written in (pen and paper, computer word files, live chat, etc). Process writing as a classroom activity incorporates the four basic stages. The firstly is planning (pre-writing). In the planning stage, writers have to think about three main issues. In the first place, they have to consider the purpose of their writing since this will influence not only the type of text they wish to produce, but also the language they use, and the information they choose to include. Secondly, experienced writers think of the audience they are writing for since this will influence not only the shape of the writing but also the choice of language. Thirdly, writers have to consider the content structure of the piece, that is, how best to sequence the fact, ideals, or arguments that they have decided to include (Harmer, 2007).

Writing is any activity in the classroom that encourages students to write. It stimulates thoughts for getting started about the topic before writing the first draft. It moves students away from having to face a blank page toward generating tentative ideas and gathering information for writing. Prewriting becomes a way of warming up writers' brains before they write (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). The second is drafting (writing). At the drafting stage, the writers focus on the fluency of writing and are not preoccupied with grammatical accuracy or the neatness of the draft. The writer can refer to the first version of a piece of writing as a draft. This first goes at a text that is often done on the assumption that it will be amended later. As the writing process proceeds into editing, several drafts may be produced on the way to the final version (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). The third stage is revising, revising occurs when a writer looks for feedback from a teacher or another student. The teacher does not need to be the only person to give students feedback. Besides learning to revise on their own, their classmate, caregivers, or classroom aides can help students revise. When it comes time for students to revise their work, they look through their texts with the comments they received in the replying stage in mind. They review what was written to determine how well they were able to convey their concepts to the reader and then make any necessary adjustments (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

3-Research questions

This study aimed at answering the following questions:

- Q₁.** Does employing Interactive Language Learning Activities in the online class have any significant impact on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' writing achievement?
- Q₂.** Does employing Interactive Language Learning Activities in the physical class have any significant impact on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' writing achievement?
- Q₃.** Are there any significant differences at the level of improving the Iranian intermediate EFL learners' writing skill achievements between online and physical classes after employing ILLA?

4-The present study

4.1 Subjects

The present study was designed based on the sequential explanatory method; a quantitative method. From the data collection and data analysis viewpoint, the current study was designed based on a quantitative method to analyze the data statistically and to compare



the significant impact of utilizing Interactive Language Learning Activities on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' writing achievement in online versus physical classes. Initially, a total number of 100 EFL learners in the IELTS Mix Academy Language Institute were asked to participate in a proficiency test. Thus, purposeful sampling was run to select the final participants of the study. To this end, after running the Oxford Placement Test (OPT), 30 intermediate female students were selected as the final participants of the present research. The frequency of participants in each group is presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Distribution of Participants in the Control and Experimental Groups

Participants	Female	Male
Online	15	0
Physical	15	0

4.2 Materials and Instruments

Different instruments were employed to collect statistical data for the current study.

Oxford Placement Test

Before running the study with the final selected participants, the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) including Listening/Reading Test (N=20) and Grammar/Vocabulary Test (N=20) items was administered to homogenize the final 30 participants.

Achievement Tests

To have a standard criterion to evaluate the students' achievements after training, the researcher constructed and distributed two writing tests among all participants in two experimental groups twice; once as a writing pretest before embarking on the study and another time as a posttest at the end of the study. Thus, after dividing the final participants into the two experimental groups, participants were asked to engage in a writing pre-test activity to statistically evaluate the student's prior knowledge of writing as the pre-test. Finally, another writing activity with different topics was administered as the post-test to measure the impact of the ILLA on learners' final writing improvement.

The written texts produced by the participants were assessed for quality according to the criteria from Jacobs (1981), which were considered as guidance for the process of scoring. The reason for adopting these criteria is reliability, as used by other researchers conducting similar studies. An analytical writing scoring scale was used to score the EFL learners' writing pre-test and post-test. The main purpose of the scoring was to rank the performance of the students to investigate the difference in the use of writing strategies between those students. The rank was relative to the standard test of Jacobs (1981), in which readers made five analytical assessments of the same essays.

These assessments targeted different aspects of the composition: content (30 points), organization (20 points), vocabulary (20 points), writing accuracy (25 points), and mechanics (5 points), as shown in Table 3. In addition, the individual scale and the overall summed scale were broken down into numerical ranges that correspond to four mastery levels: excellent to very good (83–100 points), good to average (63–83 points), fair to poor (52–63 points), and very poor (34–52 points). Each writing sample was marked by two assessors, the researcher and one of her colleagues at the English Language Unit who had a Ph.D. in Applied



Linguistics. The assessors used the marking scheme. The mean of the two rater values was used as the final writing score. Jacobs's (1981) writing scoring rubric was shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

Jacobs (1981) Writing Scoring Rubric

Score	Level (points)	Criteria
Content	30	Knowledge of subject, substance, development of thesis, and relevance to the topic.
Organization	20	Fluency, well-organization, logical sequencing, and cohesion.
Vocabulary	20	Effective word/idiom form.
Writing Accuracy	25	Sentence constructions, agreement, tense, word order, functions, articles, and prepositions.
Mechanics	5	Spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, and handwriting.

Interactive Language Learning Activities

The researcher organized six different categories of writing activities. First of all, before running the interventions, the researcher presented several examples of each writing strategy for EFL learners. The selected writing activities were: Freewriting, Note-taking, Letter-writing, Description, Storytelling, and Summarising activities. The process of employing each activity was presented in the procedure section. All these processes/strategies have the same concept of how writing should be taught and done.

Procedure

First of all, a total number of 100 intermediate EFL learners in ELTS Mix Academy Language Institute in Mashhad city were selected. To ascertain the homogeneity of participants in terms of their general English language proficiency, the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) consisting of 20 questions was administrated among whole participants before conducting the study. Thus, a total number of 30 intermediate female students were selected. The final participants with intermediate levels in general English were randomly assigned to two groups; the online versus the physical class. The study lasted for ten sessions in five weeks. Thus, after dividing the final participants into one control and two experimental groups, a pre-test including 20 questions was distributed among learners to statistically evaluate the student's prior knowledge of writing designed by the researcher. After that, during ten pedagogical sessions, both experimental groups received ILLA interventions for writing. The intervention for both groups was the same as follows:

Freewrite: Students write on a given topic for 2-5 minutes without stopping (i.e., they are not allowed to lift their pen or pencil from the paper or make corrections). Freewrites were not intended to be corrected for grammatical accuracy. The focus was on developing fluency and processing ideas rather than on writing accurately. In freewriting, the teacher concentrated on generating thoughts and producing language. Freewriting was used in pre-writing, processing course material, summarizing, generating ideas and vocabulary, etc. Freewrites were used at the beginning of a class session to focus attention on the target language and the



topic to be covered or at the end of a class session to help students process what they learned in that session. For example, free-writing was used on an almost daily basis to generate vocabulary on basic topics such as describing one's self, family, and living situation, or to prepare the class to discuss cultural topics, school system, living situations, etc.

Note-taking. Notes were used for a variety of purposes and audiences, such as excusing yourself from an appointment, expressing opinions, or responding to another student's opinion as in a classroom debate. Note-taking in lectures or readings helped students to organize thoughts and highlight key ideas. For example, students wrote a note to the teacher explaining why he or she wasn't in class last Friday, on a cultural or historical topic students take notes outlining, etc. This activity could be run individually or in group work.

Letter-writing. Students could learn appropriate forms of correspondence through letter writing. Letters were used in a variety of ways and at all levels. Students could write personal letters or letters to the editor, to a person, to parents, etc. For example, students were asked to write a letter or postcard telling about their recent travels, including appropriate greetings and closings, and concentrating on verb forms (past tense). This activity could be run individually or in group work.

Description. The description was used with any topic and at all levels. Pictures, objects, and texts were used as a basis for description. For example, at the beginning level students write simple descriptions of themselves, their classmates, their families, their homes, their daily activities, etc. This activity could be run individually or in group work.

Story-telling. In story-telling, students practiced writing cohesive narratives with logical sequences of events. Writing stories involved practicing many elements important in communication: description, transition, point of view, interpretation, etc. As students wrote their stories and reviewed the work of their peers, they develop an understanding of these aspects of narration. For example, students organized a set of related pictures into a sequence and then wrote 1-2 sentences for each picture in the group. Afterward, they organized the story into a smooth narrative.

Summarising. Summaries of texts were used to check comprehension and to develop writing skills beyond the sentence level. For example, at a lower level, students wrote five sentences about the content of a text. Then they were asked to put these sentences in a logical order, combining sentences where appropriate to form a summary. Also, students wrote a summary of a story from the perspective of a minor character in the text. This encouraged a deeper understanding of the text and a greater awareness of the significance of the point of view. Hence, students wrote a book review based on a text they read. This review included a short plot and character summary as well as all the other elements of a good review. This activity could be run individually or in group work.

Finally, after treatment, another test with similar content in a different order was administered as the post-test to measure the impact of ILLA on Iranian EFL learners' final writing achievement. The researcher collected the pre-test and post-test scores in both groups of the study. Consequently, the results of the statistical analysis were utilized to answer the research questions and to investigate the hypotheses of the present study.

Data Analysis

To statistically conduct the current dominant quantitative research, the data was collected in such a way that could be used for computer data processing using SPSS software



to address the research questions. In the current study, there were two main groups: the physical group which was participating in the ordinary class, and the online group which participated in the synchronous online class. Each group was analyzed statistically in two quantitative steps; the pre-test and the post-test according to various statistical methods such as Paired Samples *t*-Test, or the Independent-Samples *t*-Test. Finally, the differences among students in both groups were examined to evaluate their writing achievements using the Independent Samples *t*-Test technique.

5- Results

First of all, the online version of the Oxford Placement Test was run to homogenize the final participants of the study. OPT is a computer-based test that reports the candidate's English language proficiency scores on a continuous numerical scale. It is a reliable tool ($r=.78$) intended for placing students in language courses at the optimal level. The results of the one-sample OPT for 100 students were shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Results of Oxford Placement Test

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
OPT	30	30.00	42.00	1037.00	34.5667	2.50080
Valid N (listwise)	30					

The final 30 students with results close to the mean ($M= 34.56$) and the minimum to the maximum level (30-42) were chosen as the final intermediate participants. The mean score of the final 31 participants of the study and the standard deviation was $M= 34.56$ and $SD=2.50$, respectively. Then, all participants were randomly divided into physical and online experimental groups to run the current study; a traditional setting versus an online-based one. After collecting and summarizing the data, initially, the results of the one-sample Shapiro-Wilk Test for the pre-test and post-test in the physical and online experimental group were presented in Tables 4.2 and 4.3, respectively.

Table 4.2

The Results of the Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test in Physical Group

	Kolmogorov-Smirnova			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest physical	.135	15	.200*	.952	15	.557
Posttest physical	.211	15	.072	.893	15	.073

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 4.3



The Results of the Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test in Online Group

	Tests of Normality					
	Kolmogorov-Smirnova			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest Online	.168	15	.200*	.901	15	.100
Posttest Online	.181	15	.198	.896	15	.082

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

In the present study, numerical data for the continuous variables were also normal ($p>0.05$) based on the Shapiro-Wilk test. To this end, the normality test results in the pre-test and post-test variables in the physical group were calculated as .200 and .072, respectively. Also, the normality test results in the pre-test and post-test variables were defined as .200 and .198, respectively. Therefore, the results of the test revealed the normal distributions of data in both pre-test and post-test in the online experimental group. After presenting the preliminary analysis to verify the reliability and the normality of the writing pre-tests and post-tests in both physical and online groups, the researcher attempted to run the statistical analysis to answer the research questions of the study.

4.1.1 Research Question one

Research question (1) attempted to analyze the significant impact of employing Interactive Language Learning Activities in online classes on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' writing achievement. Thus, paired sample t -test was run to find the significant difference between writing pre-test and post-test in the online experimental group. The results of the paired sample t -test were given in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

Results of Paired Sample t -Test between Pre-test and Post-test in Online Group

		Paired Samples t-Test							
		Paired Differences							
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair	Pretest Online Posttest Online	-5.60000	3.64104	.94011	-7.61634	-3.58366	-5.957	14	.000



Table 4.4 revealed a significant difference ($p=.00$) between the scores of writing pre-test and post-test among Iranian intermediate EFL learners in the online class after running ILLA as the writing-aided intervention. Therefore, the first null hypothesis was also rejected and the results of the paired sample t -test showed a significant difference ($p<0.05$) in the writing achievements among the post-test scores and pre-test in the online experimental class.

4.1.2 Research Question Two

Analyzing the significant differences significant impact of utilizing Interactive Language Learning Activities in the physical class on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' writing achievement was considered in the second question of the study. Therefore, paired sample t -test was run to find the significant difference between writing pre-test and post-test in the physical experimental group. The results of the paired sample t -test were given in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5

Results of Paired Sample t -Test between Pre-test and Post-test in Physical Group

		Paired Samples t-Test							
		Paired Differences			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper			
Pair	Pretest Physical Posttest Physical	-3.13333	4.58050	1.18268	-5.66993	-.59674	-2.649	14	.019

As Table 4.5 revealed, the mean score of both the writing pre-test and post-test in the physical experimental group was 3.13 (SD=4.58). Analyzing data revealed a significant difference ($p=.01$) between the scores of writing pre-test and post-test in the physical group after receiving Interactive Language Learning Activities as the writing-aided pedagogical intervention. Therefore, the second null hypothesis was rejected and the results of the paired sample t -test showed a significant difference ($p<0.05$) among Iranian EFL learners' writing achievements in the post-test scores versus the pre-test ones in the physical setting.

4.1.3 Research Question Three

The third question attempted to compare two different experimental groups at two different phases; pre-test and post-test writing scores after receiving Interactive Language Learning Activities. The results of the independent sample t -test of the Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' differences in pre-test scores between physical and online experimental groups were presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6

Results of Independent Samples t -Test between Physical and Online Groups in Pre-Test

Independent Samples Test



		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Pre-test	Equal variances assumed	.076	.785	-.855	28	.400	-1.33333	1.55859	-4.52596	1.85930
	Equal variances not assumed			-.855	27.931	.400	-1.33333	1.55859	-4.52632	1.85965

As presented in Table 4.6, no significant difference ($p=.40$) between students' levels at the pre-test phase was found between the physical and online groups. In other words, the results of the independent-sample t -test showed no significant difference ($p>0.05$) between the physical and online groups' writing skills before running the ILLA interventions.

Therefore, after running the Interactive Language Learning Activities interventions among Iranian intermediate EFL learners, another writing test entitled post-test was run to observe the differences between both groups after receiving the ILLA interventions. Table 4.7 described the descriptive results of participants' writing achievements between the physical and online classes in the post-test phase.

Table 4.7

Results of Writing Scores between Physical and Online Groups in Post-Test

		Group Statistics			
		Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Post-test	Physical Group		15	48.4000	4.68737
	Online Group		15	44.6000	4.45293

As Table 4.10 revealed, the mean scores of the physical and online experimental groups in answering the writing post-test were 48.40 (SD=4.68) and 44.60 (SD=4.45), respectively. Therefore an Independent Sample t -Test was run to find the significant difference in participants' writing achievements between physical and online groups in the post-test. The results of the independent sample t -test were given in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8

Results of Independent Samples t -Test between Physical and Online Groups in Post-Test

		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Post-test	Equal variances assumed	.114	.738	-2.276	28	.031	-3.80000	1.66933	-7.21947	-.38053
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.276	27.927	.031	-3.80000	1.66933	-7.21987	-.38013



Comparing the impact of Interactive Language Learning Activities in the online class on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' writing achievement between physical and online groups, Table 4.11 showed a significant difference ($p=.03$) between the physical and online groups. Therefore, the results of the independent-sample t -test showed a significant difference ($p<0.05$) between Iranian EFL learners' writing achievements in the physical versus online group in the post-test phase, resulting in the rejection of the third null hypothesis of the present research. In other words, employing Interactive Language Learning Activities interventions in the physical experimental group ($M=48.40$) resulted in much more improvement in participants' writing skills, compared to the students in the online experimental group ($M=44.60$) who were affected less than the online one after receiving ILA.

Consequently, the results and findings of the present study revealed the significant impact ($p<0.05$) of utilizing Interactive Language Learning Activities on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' writing achievement in both physical and online English classes. However, students in the physical setting faced more significant achievements in writing skills, compared to students in the online class. The results of the present study were compared with previous similar studies to observe the similarities and differences between the results.

6-Discussion



The results of the present research were compared with similar case studies that aimed at analyzing the impact of Interactive Language Learning Activities interventions in online versus physical settings on improving Iranian intermediate EFL learners' writing skills. Here, the researcher attempted to highlight the similarities and differences, proving to what extent the results of the current research are supported by the findings of other similar empirical types of research in the literature review.

In a similar attempt in utilizing interactive interventions for writing improvement, Moorhouse et al. (2021) conducted an online mixed-method survey of 75 university-level English language teachers who had engaged in synchronous online teaching due to COVID-19, to explore the competencies that teachers need to use interaction as a tool to mediate and assist language learning in synchronous online lessons. Supporting the results of the present study in proving the significant impact of interaction-based interventions on improving Iranian EFL learners' writing skills, their data analysis showed teachers agreement on the important role of employing interactive interactions in the synchronous online classroom; 97% (N=73) of respondents agreeing that interaction was important or very important when teaching.

In a similar vein, Aninda (2018) employed various interactive activities such as planning, acting, observing, and reflecting among 28 students. Similar to the present study in showing the significant impact of interaction-based interventions on improving Iranian EFL learners' writing achievements, her finding also revealed that the use of an interactive learning approach improved the students' writing descriptive text ability and also students' learning activities. Supporting the findings of the current study, her data analysis revealed improvement in the students' writing descriptive text ability in the post-test and delayed post-test scores.

In line with the objectives of the present study in analyzing the impact of interactive-based interventions, but different in employing the methods for speaking skills, Saeed et al. (2016) analyzed the role of learner-learner interaction in the development of speaking skills of 52 international postgraduate students who enrolled in an intensive English course at the language center at Universiti Utara Malaysia. Supporting the results of the present research in the case of the significant impact of utilizing interactive-based interventions on improving EFL learners' language achievements, their findings indicated that learner-learner interaction played a significant role in the classroom since students were able to improve their speaking skills in the classroom atmosphere. Their analysis also confirmed notable concern over employing learner-learner interaction instructions in the development of speaking skills.

5. Conclusion and Pedagogical Implications

Writing is considered one of the most important skills for language learning since it is a skill that is used widely in everyday life and it develops faster than any other skill. The importance of employing various interactive-based interventions such as ILA is evident because it can assist EFL learners to improve cooperating and sharing knowledge when writing various topics. Consequently, the present study intended to compare both physical and online experimental groups in terms of employing different ILA pedagogical interventions,



aiming to observe which group was superior to the other in improving writing skills. The present study concluded that employing ILLA interventions such as Freewriting, Note-taking, Letter-writing, Description, Storytelling, and Summarising activities can reinforce Iranian EFL learners' general writing achievements in both physical and online classes. Moreover, the researcher concluded that utilizing ILLA in physical and face-to-face writing classes has a more significant impact on improving students' writing achievements, compared to the online classes. In other words, the technology attraction did not result in increasing interactive activities among EFL learners. Consequently, it can be concluded that utilizing interactive-based interventions such as ILLA in online and physical classes is accompanied by various benefits, assisting EFL learners to improve their writing skills through cooperation. The results and conclusion of the present study can be utilized as a guideline for the following addresses.

The results of the current research can be utilized by various addresses; English teachers in any academic environment can refer to the results to be familiar with various strategies that are useful in improving students' writing achievement. Also, employing various interactive-based materials can assist teachers to find better strategies for their EFL classes. Moreover, understanding the significant impact of ILLA as a writing material can help students to improve their final writing achievements, especially the young population who have a positive viewpoint on cooperative and interactive activities in their life. The findings of this research can help EFL students to get familiar with various writing-aided materials such as ILLA. Moreover, students may realize the difference writing -based material in physical versus online materials, getting familiar with the strengths and weaknesses of each tool in various contexts. Consequently, different material and syllabus designers may benefit from the results of the current study to design writing materials assisting teachers and students to improve their subsequent writing skills in any academic setting.

As the further research suggestion, it must be mentioned that a small group of 30 Iranian EFL learners participated in the current study, and each experimental group was limited to 15 students because it was impossible to apply the interactive-based strategies to more students in the limited time of teaching and learning writing activities. Therefore, the significant differences between physical and online classes in employing interactive-based materials such as ILLA can be analyzed among more participants in different online and traditional groups to achieve further results. Indeed, the present study employed intermediate students; thus, a similar study may be conducted to analyze the significant impact of interactive-based materials on improving writing skills among other elementary or advanced proficiency levels. Consequently, the same study with different writing materials, participants, and settings can be the subject of future studies

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