

## Effective Writing Strategies among Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners: A Photovoice-Based Study

<sup>1</sup>Somayeh Pournia

<sup>2</sup>Azizeh Chalak\*

<sup>3</sup>Hossein Heidari Tabrizi

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**Abstract:** Writing is one of the most crucial skills students need; however, many learners struggle to employ effective strategies to achieve coherence and creativity in their texts. Photovoice, as a well-structured instructional method, can create engaging classroom environments resembling real-world contexts. The study followed a quantitative quasi-experimental design to investigate the strategies students use in writing through the Photovoice method. Sixty intermediate female participants were chosen through convenience sampling from a private institute in Ardestan, Iran. The Oxford Quick Placement Test was run to ensure that the students were homogeneous in overall English proficiency. The participants were randomly divided into a control group (30) and an experimental group (30). Both groups took a writing pretest, after which the experimental group received Photovoice-based instruction and the control group followed traditional methods. The researchers systematically observed and quantified student behaviors using an observation checklist and a posttest. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (percentages and frequencies) and inferential statistics, including independent and paired samples t-tests. The results showed that Photovoice assisted learners in developing their writing strategies. The results also indicated that students in the experimental group effectively utilized planning and drafting strategies, enhancing coherence in their writing. The use of photographs as prompts fostered creativity, improved vocabulary, and encouraged reflective practices, ultimately enhancing critical thinking skills. The study might have relevant implications for language teachers, learners, curriculum designers, and language institutes by showing how employing Photovoice alongside effective writing strategies can actively engage learners and enhance their writing skills.

**Keywords:** Effective Writing Strategies, Intermediate EFL Learners, Photovoice, Photovoice-based Study, Writing Skill

### Introduction

In today's increasingly globalized world, English proficiency is a valuable advantage that can lead to higher education options, international collaboration, and career progression. Writing is one of the most crucial skills that learners need to acquire. The phases describe how humans organize thoughts into sentences that have meaning or illustrate a problem. Writing is also a productive skill that requires conveying ideas and meanings in context through written form. Writing focuses on conveying messages, as authors aim to provide readers with relevant, concise, and impactful information. They need to use efficient language and ensure their ideas are communicated without ambiguity.

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<sup>1</sup> Ph.D. Candidate in TEFL, somayeh.pournia@iau.ac.ir; Department of English, Isf.C., Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran.

<sup>2</sup> Professor of Applied Linguistics (Corresponding Author), azizeh.chalak@iau.ac.ir; Department of English, Isf.C., Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran.

<sup>3</sup> Professor of Applied Linguistics, heidaritabrizi@iau.ac.ir; Department of English, Isf.C., Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran.

Additionally, the material ought to be pleasant for people to read. For the readers to read the information and fully comprehend it, the writer should also use simple language while communicating with them.

Researchers from all across the world have recognized Photovoice as a method for participant empowerment, especially in participatory studies (Pournia et al., 2025; Sa'adah et al., 2023; Siregar et al., 2024). Photovoice, as a particular visual methodology, allows participants to actively participate in the research process while taking pictures, documenting, and reflecting on the strengths and concerns of their community, critically discussing important topics to create shared knowledge, and communicating with decision-makers (Sari & Sultan, 2022). Teaching writing skills requires the utilization of particular techniques or strategies that prioritize ideas, content, and effective mechanisms to produce a superb piece of language (Hayatolain & Ganji, 2023; Rosmawanty & Abdulrahman, 2021). A well-designed method of instruction can produce engaging classroom environments that are not too distinct from those in which students will exercise. Through some adaptation and adjustment, the Photovoice method has been used in language learning contexts with good results (Juniarti et al., 2022).

Although it is a simple way for people to connect and send messages to one another via writing, since writing demands sophisticated mental processes, including analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, it is generally regarded as the most challenging of the four language skills (Sa'adah & Munir, 2022). Moreover, writing is one of the essential skills that students must learn. It involves steps on how individuals organize their ideas into meaningful sentences or address specific issues. As stated by Hyland (2004), the writing process serves a specific goal and reflects the writer's own experiences. In addition to the issues faced by the students, other issues are originating from the teacher. The monotonous strategy employed by the majority of them discourages the students from developing an interest in learning to write (Yulianti et al., 2019).

Given the problems stated above, the present study aimed to identify the strategies that Iranian intermediate EFL learners employ to enhance their writing skills using Photovoice. Special attention was given to the specific strategies learners adopted in writing tasks while engaging with this photo-based method. The significance of this study lies in its focus on writing skill development, which is one of the most complex aspects of foreign language instruction. Moreover, investigating various methods and strategies to improve learners' writing abilities is essential. The findings were expected to highlight the potential of Photovoice as a participatory and visual-based method for fostering EFL learners' writing proficiency.

## Literature Review

### Theoretical Frameworks of Teaching English Writing Skill

EFL learners' writing abilities can be positively impacted by the use of suitable teaching factors that emphasize writing skill. Coherence and cohesion are two crucial components that play significant roles in improving the precision of students' writing skill (Altınmakas & Bayyurt, 2019; Chicho, 2022; Karimi et al., 2019; Sattar Boroujeni et al., 2018). The capacity to convey thoughts via writing is a necessary writing skill since it allows the writer to convey messages and ideas. For this reason, to write coherently, students must concentrate on connecting and linking concepts. Additionally, Chicho (2022) stated that cohesion unites related concepts and distinguishes texts from non-texts. When coherent devices are used appropriately, the reader may readily comprehend the connections between what has been written, what is being written, and what will be written. English Language Learners (ELLs) should focus on improving vocabulary and grammar to boost confidence in English writing. Teachers play a crucial role by providing sample writings, teaching sentence structure, and encouraging simple topic exploration. Understanding the characteristics of effective writing early is essential for ELLs' long-term writing success, emphasizing the responsibility of teachers to instill these traits from the beginning.

The writing framework proposed by Mickan (2017) offers a comprehensive approach to enhancing writing abilities, emphasizing the writing process as a way to improve academic performance and linguistic competency. The detailed overview of Mickan's (2017) writing framework and its stages

offers a clear insight into how this model can be utilized to improve writing skill efficiently. Pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing are the main phases that make up this framework. Moreover, based on Rao's (2019) effective writing model, effective writing skill in English for ELLs involves several key characteristics. First of all, teachers should choose topics that align with learners' needs and interests, focusing on current and familiar subjects. Then, vocabulary selection plays a crucial role, emphasizing the use of appropriate and varied terms. Likewise, ELLs should master different grammatical structures to enhance their writing. Proper use of punctuation marks is also essential to convey meaning accurately. Additionally, maintaining a continuous flow of ideas without deviation from the topic is important. Besides, coherent organization and linking of ideas using appropriate language are vital for readability and engagement. Furthermore, teachers should guide ELLs in writing with simple language to attract a wider audience. Then, adapting writing to suit readers' needs and interests is crucial for effective communication. Finally, engaging readers through clear, understandable content is a key feature of effective writing. Besides, the ADDIE model (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation) for using blogs in learning creative writing provides a structured approach to enhancing students' writing skill (Almelhi, 2021).

### **Theoretical Frameworks of Photovoice**

Reviewing the literature, four main Photovoice protocols or models that provide detailed answers to specific questions have been utilized as a guide to writing a language. SHOWeD by Wang & Burris (1997), PHOTO by Graziano (2004), the Photovoice model by Koltz et al. (2010), and the 3Ws by Mitchell et al. (2018), each offer distinct yet complementary frameworks for engaging learners in reflective, critical, and creative thinking through photography and storytelling. The SHOWeD model encourages students to analyze their images by systematically answering questions about what they see, what is happening, how it relates to their lives, why the situation exists, and what actions can be taken to address it. Similarly, the PHOTO protocol prompts learners to describe their photos, explain the events captured, justify their choices in taking the images, reflect on what the pictures reveal about their lives, and explore opportunities for improvement. On the other hand, Koltz et al.'s (2010) Photovoice model emphasizes expository writing by guiding learners to discuss the context of their photos, the reasons behind capturing them, and their emotional responses during the process. Meanwhile, the 3Ws protocol by Mitchell et al. (2018) directs students to reflect on their images by identifying the observed phenomenon, explaining its meaning and causes, and brainstorming potential solutions. Collectively, these models serve as structured methodologies that not only enhance students' language learning and critical thinking but also empower them to express their experiences and perspectives in meaningful ways.

### **Empirical Studies**

Numerous empirical studies have been performed in recent years to investigate and confirm the potential impacts of Photovoice on language learning (Fadhilah, 2023; Juniarti et al., 2022; Prasetyanto et al., 2019; Pusparini, 2019; Putri, 2018; Rahma et al., 2020; Simanjuntak, 2020). They made a connection between photography and sociological research. Pusparini (2019) investigated the positive effects of reinforcement by teachers on student learning motivation and participation in an ELT classroom, emphasizing the importance of feedback and encouragement in enhancing student engagement and confidence. The findings indicated that the students are more active, expressive, and less anxious when they receive reinforcement from the teacher. By emphasizing the importance of creating a positive and supportive learning environment, teachers could effectively enhance students' willingness to communicate (WTC) in English (Rahma et al., 2020). This leads finally to the importance of keeping WTC as a key component of teachers' and educators' teaching strategy in designing tasks for their learners (Simanjuntak, 2020). However, it is important to note that the research could benefit from a more in-depth analysis of the potential limitations of teacher reinforcement. While the studies presented were largely positive, it would be valuable to explore any potential drawbacks or challenges associated with the Photovoice method.

Additionally, Juniarti et al. (2022) demonstrated that utilizing Photovoice in the teaching and learning process had many advantages, including improving written and oral communication, developing the ability to understand and respect other people's points of view, fostering positive relationships in the community, developing teamwork skills, facilitating awareness of the issue, increasing self-esteem, and stimulating intellectual curiosity. Moreover, Fadhilah (2023) employed Photovoice to investigate the English learning experiences of junior high school students in Indonesia. The qualitative study examined essential themes such as the classroom atmosphere, teacher-student interactions, peer cooperation, and elements affecting language anxiety and self-confidence. Besides, Altınmakas and Bayyurt (2019) emphasized evaluation as an ongoing process to enhance students' experiences, and Photovoice offered opportunities for such dynamic assessment in writing.

Researchers have also looked into the use of Photovoice in higher education reforms that aim to involve students in fostering analytical thinking and other skills, such as expressing viewpoints and developing creativity (Anderson et al., 2020; Rosmawanty & Abdulrahman, 2021; Tsang & Lian, 2021; Wass et al., 2020). Using focus group discussions, critical incident techniques, and Photovoice, Anderson et al. (2020) suggested that good teaching involves cognitive, emotional, and embodied work, emphasizing the profound influence of teachers on students. Students also acknowledged the complexities of power dynamics and the need for teachers to demonstrate care through attentiveness, openness, and responsiveness to students' needs. Additionally, Tsang and Lian (2021) investigated academic stress in Hong Kong through the innovative use of the Photovoice methodology. The study identified examination pressure, school administration practices, and parental expectations as key factors contributing to academic stress among students. A notable finding was the internal contradiction within the education system, where the emphasis on exam results conflicted with the purported goal of holistic education, leading to student distress.

Photovoice is distinctive in that it empowers young people to participate in all areas of research, from data collecting to data dissemination. It facilitates a collaborative learning process in which young people, politicians, and researchers may all contribute. Through the reflective process, Wass et al. (2020) emphasized Photovoice's capacity to participate in critical consciousness in education. However, due to the time and effort required for Photovoice, young participants may require a lot of encouragement to finish the project's tasks. Likewise, many people, particularly those who are in situations where Photovoice projects typically operate, might be confronted with problems, pressures, and competing demands that make participation difficult (Wangdi & Shimray, 2022). However, some researchers have viewed the duration of the project as an indicator of participant involvement (Beghetto et al., 2014; Catalani & Minkler, 2010; Hidi & Boscolo, 2008), while others have focused on the ethical concerns associated with visual methods and their potential to limit participation (Boyle & Yeager, 1997; Creighton et al., 2018; Wass et al., 2020).

In the Iranian EFL context, a few studies have been conducted on using teacher questions and questioning strategies for improving teaching materials in ELT classes (e.g., Barjesteh & Moghadam, 2014; Karimi et al., 2018, 2019; Pournia et al., 2025). Barjesteh and Moghadam (2014) revealed that guided questions played a crucial role in shaping students' thinking, helping them grasp the overall subject presented by the instructor. Additionally, these questions enabled students to develop their writing by responding to carefully designed prompts prepared by their teacher (Karmi et al., 2018). Similarly, Karimi et al. (2019) concluded that Photovoice provided a teaching method that helped students critically analyze the problems affecting their lives, question established ideas, and broaden their perspectives. Finally, Pournia et al. (2025) demonstrated that guidance questions played a crucial role in directing students' understanding while supporting their speaking and writing development.

Given the aforementioned benefits of Photovoice, the researchers consider it worthwhile to implement in the classroom. Utilizing effective strategies, the use of this method is expected to enhance students' writing skills, making it a valuable method for English writing classes. This study aimed to examine the specific strategies employed by intermediate-level English learners in Iran when using Photovoice in writing classes. By identifying and analyzing these strategies, the research sought to provide valuable insights into how students engaged with visual-based methodologies to develop their

writing proficiency. To achieve the objectives of the research, this study tried to investigate the following research question:

**Research Question One:** Which strategies do Iranian intermediate EFL learners employ in their writing skill while utilizing Photovoice?

## Methodology

### Design and Context of the Study

The study followed a quantitative quasi-experimental research design as it aimed to systematically examine, quantify, and analyze students' use of writing strategies through the Photovoice method. The researchers conducted the study at a private English language institute in Ardestan, Iran, in the academic year 2024–2025 to investigate the writing strategies employed by Iranian intermediate EFL learners using Photovoice.

### Participants

The participants of the current research were 60 intermediate EFL learners who were chosen through convenience non-random sampling from among 150 learners at a private institute in Ardestan, Isfahan province. The Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) results were utilized to establish their level of English proficiency. The participants were between the ages of 17 and 20. All participants had a mean self-reported duration of English language study of 8 years. Table 1 briefly indicates the demographics of the participants.

**Table 1**

*The Demographic Information of the Participants*

No. of Students	60
Age	17-20
Gender	Female
Native Language	Persian
Target Language	English
Proficiency Level	Intermediate
Sampling Technique	Convenience

Regarding the ethical issues, language learners were requested to sign a consent form before participating in the study. They were assured that their identity would remain anonymous and that their responses would be kept confidential. They were also informed that they could stop their participation in the study at any stage.

### Instructional Materials

#### *Touchstone*

The main textbook during the course for intermediate English language learners was Touchstone Level 4. Based on research into the Cambridge English corpus, Touchstone teaches English as it is really used. It presents natural languages in authentic contexts and develops conversation strategies (McCarthy et al., 2014). The first four chapters were taught in two different ways to each group of participants during the course.

#### *Paragraph Writing: From Sentence to Paragraph*

Paragraph Writing: From Sentence to Paragraph by Zemach and Islam (2017) was used as the other textbook that could cover pre-writing, while writing, and post-writing stages, and complement the

Touchstone for improving the participants' paragraph writing skill. It was an ideal choice for intermediate EFL learners, due to its clear, concise instruction that simplifies the complex process of writing into understandable components. The combination of simplicity, practicality, and comprehensive coverage of writing fundamentals rendered the book an invaluable resource for intermediate EFL learners aiming to enhance their writing capabilities.

### *Writing and Spelling Strategies*

Writing and Spelling Strategies: Assisting Students Who Have Additional Learning Support Needs by Schools (2007) was used as a supplementary resource to enhance the writing and spelling skills of intermediate EFL learners. The book's step-by-step guidance on spelling accuracy, sentence structure, and overall writing fluency made it particularly beneficial for students struggling with these areas. Moreover, its practical exercises and hands-on activities reinforced learning while keeping students engaged. By integrating adaptable strategies, the book supported learners in building confidence and improving their writing proficiency.

### **Instruments**

#### *Language Proficiency Test*

In the first stage, the Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) was applied to choose the participants of the study. It comprised sixty multiple-choice items. Based on the OQPT table, 30 learners who scored within the range of 28-47 were classified at the intermediate level of English proficiency and were chosen as the subjects of the study. The reliability of the test was estimated at .83 through the Cronbach Alpha coefficient.

#### *Pretest and Posttest of Writing*

The researcher used a pretest and posttest based on the TOEIC writing test, consisting of 8 questions, to measure learners' writing achievement. The test included three parts: writing sentences based on pictures (questions 1-5, 8 minutes), responding to situations via e-mail (questions 6-7, 10 minutes each), and writing an essay expressing and supporting an opinion (question 8, 30 minutes). The posttest mirrored the pretest with items rearranged, and each test lasted about one hour. Reliability was ensured by limiting topics and time, and two raters scored the tests. Inter-rater reliability was high ( $r = .97$ ). Content validity was also confirmed by two TEFL experts.

#### *Observation Checklist*

The researchers followed Hong et al.'s (2020) model for constructing the Photovoice observation checklist (See Appendix A). The first phase of the evaluation was related to the appropriateness and completeness of the constructions. Then the evaluators offered ideas for revisions and confirmed the topic items' dimensional attribution and readability. In the third review cycle, recommendations for improvement were made after assessing the amended topic's readability and annotations. Revision recommendations for the altered topic's content typesetting and text fluency were made during the fourth review session. Finally, five evaluators who had taken part in the activities, including classroom observations, were asked to try reading the checklist's items. Besides, the accuracy of the Photovoice researcher-made observation was also confirmed by the experts.

To validate the observation checklist, the researcher sent it again to five experts and asked their opinions on the content's appropriateness to fulfill the study's objectives. The researcher considered their recommendations and comments in the final draft of the instruments. It is worth noting that the evaluators (five females) possessed MA, and Ph.D. in TEFL and had ten to fifteen years of teaching experience focusing on language teaching methodologies. Following Lawshe's (1975) guideline, the five experts rated all items with a CVR index of 1.00, confirming their high content validity. Moreover,

the inter-rater reliability obtained by percentage agreement equaled 80% indicating strong consensus among the evaluators. The writing skill section items comprised 16 effective writing strategies that were adapted from Mickan's (2017) effective writing model stages, Rao's (2019) effective writing model, and the ADDIE model (2020) for using blogs in creative writing. The items included planning and drafting, descriptive strategies, analytical thinking, reflecting on learning experiences, emotional engagement, organizational pattern, originality, self-assessment, and peer assessment, engaging in the writing process, graphic organizers, visual analysis, storytelling, vocabulary expansion, critical thinking, peer feedback, and power strategies. The value of Cronbach's Alpha estimated for the observation checklist's reliability was .80, which was considered a 'very good' value based on the reliability standards suggested by DeVellis (2021).

### Data Collection Procedure

First, learners' general foreign language proficiency level was examined by administering the OQPT. A total of 60 intermediate EFL learners were selected via convenience sampling and homogenized based on the OQPT scores. They were randomly assigned to a control group (30) and an experimental group (30). Both groups took a TOEIC writing pretest to assess initial writing ability. The experimental group then received Photovoice-based instruction, while the control group followed conventional writing methods. Touchstone was the main course book for the two groups. The instructional sequencing and the content of the lessons were similar for both groups, except that the experimental group benefited from Photovoice to develop their writing ability.

In the next phase, the Photovoice method was practiced for the experimental group. Additionally, Zemach and Islam's (2017) Paragraph Writing: From Sentence to Paragraph, and Writing and Spelling Strategies: Assisting Students Who Have Additional Learning Support Needs by Schools (2007) were utilized as supplementary textbooks to the Touchstone, to enhance the participants' paragraph writing skill. The first week was all about getting familiar with Photovoice. The students received a guidebook that walked them through the basics of photo-taking. They were encouraged to capture images that reflected their personal lives, school environment, or community, especially during writing activities. Before they started, they were given clear ethical guidelines: if their photos included people, they had to ask for permission. Following Velea and Alexandru (2017), people could either refuse, allow their image to be used with their face blurred, or give full consent for their photo to be shared.

Once students had their photos, they brought them to class to use as a starting point for discussion and writing. Writing workshops introduced them to the writing process, and they were asked to write a three-paragraph descriptive essay (150–200 words). Since they had worked with descriptive texts in the past, they were already familiar with the structure. The process followed Mickan's (2017) writing framework, beginning with pre-writing. Students first collected images of things that interested them, such as plants, objects, and scenes from their daily lives. Once students had their photos, they got to work on their writing. In each session, five students shared their pictures, explaining why they chose them and telling the stories behind them. The teacher kept the discussion going by asking questions, encouraging students to think more deeply and express themselves more confidently. Every week, the teacher checked up on the students' progress and occasionally went with them to take pictures.

Their descriptions ranged in length from a few phrases to a few brief paragraphs. In the writing course, using Photovoice, students created texts using the paradigm put forward by Koltz et al. (2010). They had to write Photovoice texts discussing the context of the picture, why they took it, and how they felt about the writing process. Students created drafts at each step, shared them in small groups or couples, got feedback on their work, made the necessary revisions, and shared them again until they were happy with the finished product.

Besides, some checklists adapted from Writing and Spelling Strategies: Assisting Students Who Have Additional Learning Support Needs by Schools (2007) were given to students during the instructional sessions to complete based on the effective writing strategies. The researchers then received the checklists at the end of each session. They gave the students thorough instructions on how

to fill out these checklists before the start of each lesson. Additionally, the classroom included a camera, so the researchers could utilize video research to observe the strategies more precisely. Based on the checklists submitted by all thirty participants and the researchers' observations, comprehensive observation checklists were completed for them. The observation checklist was formatted into a table for investigating the strategies students employed in writing skills utilizing Photovoice. It enabled the researchers to systematically observe and record how students utilized their writing skills within the framework of a Photovoice method.

In the control group, traditional teaching methods were implemented, with the teacher focusing on textbook-based writing exercises and following the classical approach without any Photovoice activities. Students spent the first half of each lesson (about 35 minutes) learning conventional writing strategies, while the second half was devoted to practicing writing in the usual way. The topics covered were the same as those given to the experimental group, ensuring consistency in content. Finally, after completing the treatment phase, both groups were administered the TOEIC writing posttest to assess any changes in their writing performance.

### Data Analysis Procedure

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including percentages and frequencies, to summarize the writing strategies employed by the participants. The observation checklist data were systematically quantified and reported to provide an overview of students' strategy use in writing through Photovoice. In addition, inferential statistics, including independent and paired samples t-tests, were applied to examine statistical differences.

## Results

### Results of English Language Proficiency Test

Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) was administered to determine the participants' proficiency level before the study. Figure 1 below depicts the distribution of the OQPT on a normal curve.

**Figure 1**

*Distribution of OQPT Scores*

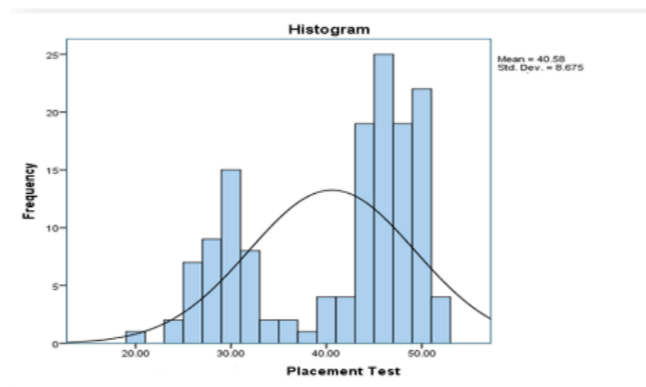


Figure 1 shows that the mean, median, and mode of the test scores were 40.58, 44.00, and 46.00, respectively. For the present study, all of the participants were homogeneous in terms of their general foreign language proficiency and were at the intermediate level.

### Descriptive Statistics of the Pre/Post Tests

The descriptive statistics, including the mean, number of participants, and standard deviation, of the writing test scores for both the control and experimental groups across the pretest and posttest are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Descriptive Statistics for the Writing Test Scores*

Variables	Group	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Pretest writing	Control	158.17	30	1.65
	Experimental	158.15	30	1.65
Posttest writing	Control	158.83	30	1.75
	Experimental	164.78	30	2.55

As shown in Table 2, the means of the component writing control group pretest and writing experiment group pretest are equal to 158.17 and 158.15, respectively. Additionally, the means of the component writing control group posttest and writing experiment group posttest are equal to 158.83 and 164.78, respectively.

**Results of the Inferential Statistics**

To apply parametric statistical tests, the data had to be checked for normality and normal distribution. According to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for goodness of fit results, the data gained were not normally distributed for none of the Pretest writing Experiment Group because: ( $p < 0.05$ ). However, due to the high number of participants and the purpose of the study, which required the comparison of two independent and dependent means, the study could statistically apply parametric t-tests, independent-samples, and dependent-samples according to the Central Limit Theorem (See Table 3).

**Table 3**

*Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test Results*

Groups		Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
		Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest	Experimental	.188	30	.008
Posttest	Experimental	.087	30	.200
Pretest	Control	.145	30	.106
Posttest	Control	.140	30	.140

Considering that the data did not meet the conditions of the heteroscedasticity test of variance, homogeneity of variance, normality of residuals, and homogeneity of the regression slope, as a result, covariance analysis is not used. Therefore, to analyze the data, first calculate the difference between the post-test and the pre-test. Then, with the newly obtained differentiated data, a comparison is made between the two control and experimental groups. Table 4 summarizes the descriptive statistics and the average differences between the pre-test and post-test writing scores of the control and experimental groups.

**Table 4**

*Descriptive Relation Between groups and their writing*

Groups	Pre test		Post test		Average difference between pre-test and post-test	T	P-value
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation			
Control	158.17	1.65	158.83	1.75	0.66	-7.97	0.000
Experimental	158.15	1.65	164.78	2.55	6.63	-12.98	0.000

As depicted in Table 4, the results of the dependent t-test indicated that there were significant differences between the two pretest and posttest mean scores for writing in the control and experiment groups ( $p < 0.05$ ). Moreover, the average difference between the pre-test and post-test writing scores for the control group and the experimental group is 0.66 and 6.63, respectively. The experimental group

has shown greater improvement than the control group in the post-test compared to the pre-test. T-test results for the relation between groups and their writing are given in Table 5.

**Table 5**

*T-test Results for the Relation Between groups and their writing*

F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
80.87	0.000	-11.542	58	0.000
		-11.542	30.514	0.000

As presented in Table 5, the results of the independent t-test indicated that there were significant differences between the two control and experiment groups' mean scores for writing ( $t(30.514) = -11.542, p = 0.000$ ). Figure 2 shows the groups' performance on the pretest and the posttest.

**Figure 2**

*The Groups' Performance on Pretest and Posttest*

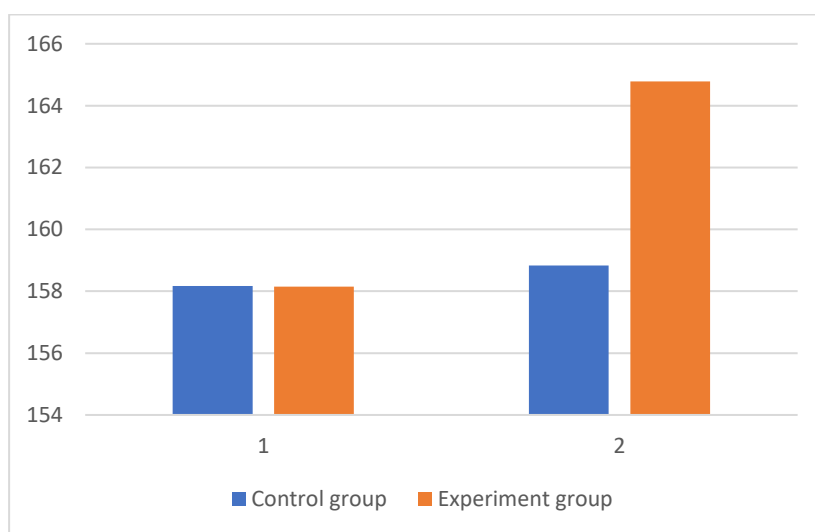


Figure 2 shows that the participants in the experimental group had better achievements than those in the control group. In other words, the participants who benefited from the Photovoice intervention significantly exceeded the control group in the posttest.

### Descriptive Statistics for the Writing Skill during the Observation

The following section offers a detailed analysis of the descriptive statistics for the writing skill that were observed during the implementation of the Photovoice project. Table 6 illustrates the frequency and effectiveness of various writing strategies that were employed by the students. These strategies include planning and drafting, the use of sensory details, and the ability to connect photo content with broader themes. The results provide information about how Photovoice influenced students' writing skill.

**Table 6**

*Descriptive Statistics for the Items of Observation Checklist*

Statement	Rarely		Occasionally		Frequently		Very Frequently		Mean	Std. D
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%		
1) Strategies employed during planning and drafting	1	3.3	1	3.3	8	26.7	20	66.7	3.56	.72

2) Use of sensory details, figurative language, and vivid descriptions	2	6.7	2	6.7	11	36.7	15	50.0	3.30	.87
3) Ability to analyze photo content and connect it with broader themes	1	3.3	3	10.0	10	33.3	16	53.3	3.36	.80
4) Use of Photovoice to reflect on learning experiences in the writing process	1	3.3	5	16.7	12	40.0	12	40.0	3.16	.83
5) Expression of emotional reactions during the writing process	0	0	6	20.0	11	36.7	13	43.3	3.23	.77
6) Following the Photovoice organizational pattern in writing	0	0	1	3.3	8	26.7	21	70.0	3.66	.54
7) Originality of Photovoice texts and adherence to the organizational pattern	0	0	5	16.7	9	30.0	16	53.3	3.36	.76
8) Reflection on ideas and writing through self-and peer assessment	1	3.3	1	3.3	11	36.7	17	56.7	3.46	.73
9) Engagement in the entire writing process, from observation to submission	1	3.3	1	3.3	9	30.0	19	63.3	3.53	.73
10) Use of mind mapping or other graphic organizers	1	3.3	1	3.3	9	30.0	19	63.3	3.53	.73
11) Identification of key elements, themes, and emotions in photographs	1	3.3	4	13.3	10	33.3	15	50.0	3.30	.83
12) Use of photos as prompts for storytelling	1	3.3	1	3.3	7	23.3	21	70.0	3.60	.72
13) Describing images to expand vocabulary and expression skills	0	0	3	10.0	8	26.7	19	63.3	3.53	.68
14) Critical analysis of images and connection to broader issues	1	3.3	3	10.0	8	26.7	18	60.0	3.43	.81
15) Sharing photos and providing/receiving feedback	1	3.3	0	0	6	20.0	23	76.7	3.70	.65
16) Planning, Organizing, Writing, Editing, Rewriting	0	0	1	3.3	3	10.0	26	86.7	3.83	.46

The first statement evaluated the strategies that the students used during planning and drafting. The mean score was 3.56 (SD = .72) and 93.4% of the students frequently or very frequently employed effective strategies. Conversely, a limited number of the students (6.6%) were not highly proficient in organizing their thoughts and planning their writing. The second statement assessed the students' use of sensory details, figurative language, and vivid descriptions in their writing. The mean score was 3.30 (SD = .87) and 86.7% of the students frequently or very frequently used these elements in their writing. This suggested that more than two-thirds of the students were able to enhance their texts with rich and engaging descriptions and only a small portion (13.4%) rarely or occasionally used such techniques. The third statement measured the ability to analyze photo content and connect it with broader themes. The mean score was 3.36 (SD = .80) and 86.6% of the students frequently or very frequently showed this ability and enhanced the depth and relevance of their writing. Simply a few students (13.3%) were not skilled at interpreting photographic content and relating it to larger concepts.

The fourth statement examined how students used Photovoice to reflect on their learning experiences. The mean score was 3.16 (SD = .83) and 80% of the students frequently or very frequently used Photovoice in this manner. Conversely, 20% of the students were not reflective and could not integrate their learning experiences into their writing. The fifth statement evaluated the expression of emotional reactions during writing. The mean score was 3.23 (SD = .77) and 80% of the students frequently or very frequently expressed their emotions. On the other hand, 20% of the students were not able to convey their emotional responses effectively. The sixth statement assessed the students' consideration of the Photovoice organizational pattern. The mean score was 3.66 (SD = .54) and 96.7%

of the students frequently or very frequently followed this pattern. This meant that most of the students were successful in organizing their writing according to the prescribed structure that ensured coherence and clarity of their writing.

The seventh statement evaluated the originality and adherence to the organizational pattern. The mean score was 3.36 ( $SD = .76$ ) and 80.3% of the students frequently or very frequently demonstrated originality in their writing and were creative in their approach while they also considered the required structure. The eighth statement measured reflection on ideas and writing through self-assessment and peer assessment. The mean score was 3.46 ( $SD = .73$ ) and 93.4% of the students frequently or very frequently engaged in reflective practices. This indicated that almost all of the students were actively assessing their own and others' work. The ninth statement assessed the students' engagement in the entire writing process. The mean score was 3.53 ( $SD = .73$ ), and 93.3% of the students were frequently or very frequently involved in every stage of their writing. This included planning, drafting, revising, and finalizing their work. Their high level of involvement indicated that they had a strong commitment to producing well-developed and accurate written pieces.

The tenth statement evaluated the use of mind mapping or other graphic organizers. The mean score was 3.53 ( $SD = .73$ ) and 93.3% of the students frequently or very frequently used these tools. On the other hand, only 6.6% of the students could not effectively use visual aids to organize their thoughts and plan their writing. The eleventh statement measured the students' ability to identify key elements, themes, and emotions in photographs. The mean score was 3.30 ( $SD = .83$ ) and 83.3% of the students frequently or very frequently demonstrated this ability and were skillful at analyzing and interpreting photographic content. The twelfth statement assessed the students' use of photos as prompts for storytelling. The mean score was 3.60 ( $SD = .72$ ), and 93.3% of the students frequently or very frequently used photos or visual prompts to strengthen their narrative writing. This reflected that the students effectively used visual aids to enrich their stories and make their writing more engaging.

The thirteenth statement evaluated the students' ability to describe images to expand vocabulary and expression skills. The mean score was 3.53 ( $SD = .68$ ) and 90% of the students frequently or very frequently engaged in this practice to enhance their overall writing proficiency. On the other hand, 10% of the students could not effectively use image description as a tool to develop their language skills. The fourteenth statement measured the ability to critically analyze images and connect them to broader issues. The mean score was 3.43 ( $SD = .81$ ), and 86.7% of the students frequently or very frequently demonstrated this skill and could relate photographic content to wider contexts. This suggested that most students were good at using images to explore and discuss larger themes and issues. The fifteenth statement assessed the students' practice of sharing photos and providing/receiving feedback. The mean score was 3.70 ( $SD = .65$ ) and 96.7% of the students frequently or very frequently participated in this activity to enhance their writing skill. This high level of engagement in peer feedback suggests that almost all of the students valued collaborative learning and used it. The sixteenth statement evaluated the overall process of planning, organizing, writing, editing, and rewriting. The mean score was 3.83 ( $SD = .46$ ), and 96.7% of the students frequently or very frequently followed this comprehensive writing process. This showed that the students were very careful in their writing tasks. It also indicated that they understood and valued the importance of each step in producing high-quality written work.

The descriptive statistics in Table 6 showed that there was a generally high level of proficiency among the students in terms of different writing skill. Many of them showed effective planning and drafting strategies, rich use of sensory details, and the ability to connect photographic content with broader themes. Students also showed strong engagement in the complete writing process and actively participated in self and peer assessments. The high levels of originality, following the organizational patterns, and critical analysis skills also support the effectiveness of the Photovoice intervention in enhancing students' writing abilities. The descriptive results for the observation checklist showed that the program was successful in developing the students' writing skill. Figure 3 displays the observational data for the writing skill.

Figure 3

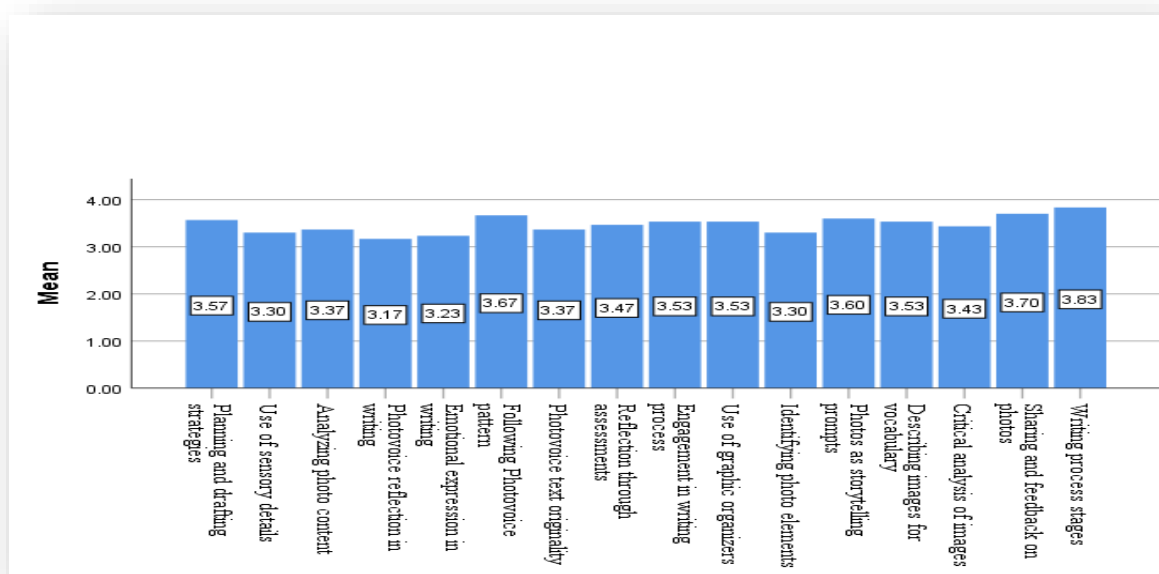
*Observational Data for the Writing Skill*

Figure 3 shows the frequency distribution of various writing skills that were employed by the students. The highest mean score was observed for Planning, Organizing, Writing, Editing, and Rewriting with a mean of 3.83. Conversely, the lowest mean score was for using Photovoice to reflect on learning experiences in the writing process, which had a mean of 3.16.

### Discussion

The results revealed that utilizing Photovoice had a statistically significant impact on improving writing strategies. The results of the observation checklist also indicated that the students used different strategies to enhance their writing skill through the Photovoice method. One main strategy was careful planning and drafting. The students engaged in brainstorming sessions and mind mapping to organize their thoughts and structure their essays effectively. This helped them in producing coherent and well-organized texts. The students also employed the use of sensory details, figurative language, and clear descriptions to create rich and engaging narratives. This strategy was particularly evident in their ability to analyze the content of the photo and connect it with broader themes, which not only improved their writing but also showed that they had a deep understanding of the subject matter. Reflective writing was another main strategy, as the students used Photovoice to reflect on their learning experiences. This reflective practice included self-assessment and peer assessment. In fact, the students reviewed and provided feedback on each other's work. The reflective strategies helped them identify areas that needed improvement and enhance the quality of their writing.

Furthermore, the students followed the Photovoice organizational pattern, which provided a structured approach to their writing. This pattern helped them have a clear and logical flow in their essays. Originality and creativity were also emphasized, and the students were encouraged to think outside the box and express unique perspectives in their writing. Engagement in the entire writing process was another observed strategy. The students always participated in all stages of writing. The use of graphic organizers, such as mind maps, also facilitated the visualization and organization of their ideas in the writing process. Additionally, the students demonstrated critical analysis skills by identifying the main elements, themes, and emotions in photographs and connecting them to broader issues. This analytical approach improved their writing and provided deeper information about the topics that they explored. In addition, using photographs as prompts for storytelling helped the students

expand their vocabulary and expression skills and made their writing more expressive. Finally, sharing photos and providing or receiving feedback on descriptions created a collaborative learning environment. This interaction encouraged the students to refine their writing based on constructive feedback and improved their writing skill. In sum, the strategies that were employed in writing skill using Photovoice included thorough planning and drafting, use of sensory details and figurative language, reflective writing, following the organizational patterns, engagement in the writing process, critical analysis, and collaborative feedback.

Reviewing the related literature, the findings of this investigation support the results of the study conducted by Altınmakas and Bayyurt (2019), who stated that evaluation is an ongoing procedure that aims to comprehend and enhance the educational experience of students. Moreover, learners could adapt their writing by taking into account the interests and needs of their audience. This adaptation had the potential to expand readership, which would raise the writing's appeal and elevate the writer's profile. For this reason, instructors are essential in helping students understand how to produce content that effectively connects with their readers. In accordance with the present results, Juniarti et al. (2022) claimed that to influence students' writing habits, teachers might adapt their pedagogical strategies, provide engaging assignments, and allow students to choose topics that they are interested in. They also noted that motivating students to write involves a simple, effective strategy that is based on their interests. Similarly, in agreement with the findings of Rahma et al.'s (2020) study, the research findings suggested that teachers' positive feedback has the potential to significantly increase students' willingness to speak in English.

The findings of this study are consistent with Rao's (2019) emphasis on the role of strategies such as planning and drafting in writing development, as well as Mickan's (2017) view of writing as a socially situated practice. Photovoice provided learners with a meaningful and authentic context for writing, which enhanced both coherence and creativity in their texts. In the Iranian EFL context, where writing instruction is often exam-oriented and product-focused, Photovoice shifted attention toward process, reflection, and collaboration (Karimi et al., 2018, 2019; Pournia et al., 2025). Moreover, the cultural familiarity of Iranian learners with interpreting images and symbols, rooted in rich literary and artistic traditions, may have amplified the method's effectiveness compared to more individualist or product-oriented contexts.

In line with Mickan's (2017) effective writing model, pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing were the main strategies for utilizing Photovoice in writing skill. Besides, the students used sensory details, metaphorical language, and detailed descriptions to construct rich and compelling narratives. As Putri (2018) indicated, by fusing fun, creativity, and teamwork, the Photovoice method encouraged the learners to get involved in class activities. In the current research, every step of the writing process was always engaged by the students. Throughout the writing process, the usage of graphic organizers like mind maps helped them visualize and arrange their ideas. Likewise, Karimi et al. (2018) demonstrated how employing a graphic organizer during the prewriting stage significantly improved the quality of written assignments. More specifically, consistent with the assertion made by Karimi (2019), the students used mind mapping and brainstorming strategies to efficiently arrange their ideas and compose their essays, and they were able to produce texts that were ordered and logical.

However, the results of this study contradicted the findings of some researchers (e.g., Beghetto et al., 2014; Boyle & Yeager, 1997; Hidi & Boscolo, 2008). Based on Boyle and Yeager's (1997) research, employing graphic organizers can provide challenges for students. They argued that ambiguous linkages in graphic organizers could decrease learning outcomes and make it difficult to comprehend new ideas. In other words, students' originality, independent thought, and innate desire to write might be stifled by graphic organizers, which force them to write linearly (Beghetto et al., 2014; Hidi & Boscolo, 2008).

### Conclusion and Implications

The findings showed that Photovoice promoted the application of more inventive and dynamic language techniques, including improved critical thinking, contextual word usage, and story building. The special strategies for improving writing skills using Photovoice not only made language production easier but also provided the learners with more interesting and meaningful learning experiences. Through the use of visual prompts, students were able to ground their language output in real-world situations, resulting in a more genuine and authentic context for teaching and learning the English language.

Additionally, for the writing skill, the strategies that were employed by the students, as seen through the observation checklist found that the students used planning and drafting strategies effectively and employed techniques like mind mapping and graphic organizers, which enhanced their ability to present their writing coherently. They showed a strong willingness to use sensory details, figurative language, and clear descriptions in their writing, which improved the quality of their writing. The use of photographs as prompts helped them generate ideas, fostered their creativity, and enhanced their vocabulary. The students also engaged in reflective practices and used self-assessment and peer feedback to refine their writing, and finally improved their analytical and critical thinking skills.

Furthermore, Photovoice, built on a concept of cooperation, empowerment, and creative self-expression, was a method that offered possibilities and chances for language teaching and learning. The noteworthy outcomes of the study underscored Photovoice's potential as a powerful method in language instruction, providing a novel prospect for educators to investigate in their endeavors to enhance elocution and composition abilities. Besides, Photovoice, as an innovative method of English language instruction including rich research data, photography, narratives, critical reflection, collective activities, social change, and enhanced knowledge of personal and communal concerns, was suitable for a wide range of participants. The Photovoice method allowed the participants to consider their societal problems right away, and this thinking showed up in every step of the project's execution.

In general, the Photovoice narratives provided insightful empirical data on the strategies that EFL learners employed in writing through the Photovoice method, offering practical implications for enhancing writing instruction in EFL classes. However, the researchers limited the time for the learners to present their photo descriptions. This might have negatively influenced the participant's presentations. The participants could offer socially desirable replies or fail to correctly share the strategies they utilized throughout the speaking and writing assignments. This might change the accuracy of the data and, as a result, the findings of the research. Moreover, the study only included female participants from a single private institute, which limits the generalizability of the findings to the wider population of intermediate EFL learners in Iran. The study's limited sample size was also an issue since it could not accurately reflect the entire Iranian population of intermediate EFL learners. Besides, future research might allow for longer and more flexible times for the participants to contribute their ideas, which would help to overcome the problem of photo descriptions having a restricted presentation time. Methods for lessening the impact of social desirability bias on data collecting should also be investigated in future studies. This study focused on Iranian intermediate EFL learners within a specific cultural and educational context, which might limit the generalizability of the findings to other settings. Therefore, while interpreting and applying the findings, these issues and the previously noted limitations should be carefully considered, as the researchers take full responsibility for any errors or weaknesses in the research.

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Appendix A

Comprehensive Observation Checklist for Assessing Student Strategies in Writing Utilizing Photovoice

Category	Observation Items	Frequency
Photographic Engagement (Writing)	Explanation	V Frequently Occasionally Frequently Rarely
1. Planning and Drafting	Strategies employed during planning and drafting	
2. Descriptive Techniques	Use of sensory details, figurative language, and vivid descriptions	
3. Analytical Thinking	Ability to analyze photo content and connect it with broader themes	
4. Reflecting on Learning Experiences	Use of Photovoice to reflect on learning experiences in the writing process	
5. Emotional Engagement	Expression of emotional reactions during the writing process	
6. Organizational Pattern	Following the Photovoice organizational pattern in writing	
7. Originality	The originality of Photovoice texts and adherence to the organizational pattern	
8. Self-Assessment and Peer Assessment	Reflection on ideas and writing through self-assessment and peer assessment	
9. Engaging in the Writing Process	Engagement in the entire writing process, from observation to submission	
10. Graphic Organizers	Use of mind mapping or other graphic organizers	
11. Visual Analysis	Identification of key elements, themes, and emotions in photographs	
12. Storytelling	Use of photos as prompts for storytelling	
13. Vocabulary Expansion	Describing images to expand vocabulary and expression skills	
14. Critical Thinking	Critical analysis of images and connection to broader issues	
15. Peer Feedback	Sharing photos and providing/receiving feedback on descriptions	
16. Power Strategy	Planning, Organizing, Writing, Editing, Rewriting	