



Written Text Quality and Socio-affective Strategy Use: Monolinguals versus Bilinguals across Different Proficiency Levels

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The primary purpose of the current study was to examine the writing performance and the use of socio-cognitive strategies among monolingual Persian and bilingual Turkish-Persian EFL learners across two proficiency levels. A mixed-method approach was employed to analyze the data gathered from the quantitative analysis of socio-affective writing strategy questionnaires as well as qualitative analysis of sample written texts and semi-structured interviews. Results of a series of two-way ANOVAs showed that bilinguals used more positive affective strategies than monolinguals. While the difference between high-proficient and low-proficient participants in strategy use was not significant, some differences were found between bilinguals and monolinguals across different proficiency levels concerning their overall writing quality. The findings also highlighted the underestimation of writing socio-affective strategy instruction, which can be considered as one of the reasons contributing to the writing problems of EFL learners.

Keywords: bilinguals, monolinguals, socio-affective strategies, proficiency level

Introduction

There is a consensus that to perform successfully especially in academic contexts, second language (L2) learners are required to possess a threshold level of writing skill. Learners should be aware of several aspects involved in writing to generate high-quality written output. Generally, a number of inter-related higher-order processes (setting the goal, generating ideas, and translating them into written forms) and lower-order processes (spelling and transcription) are involved in the production of a written text (Juel, Griffith, & Gough, 1986). Apart from the mental processes involved in writing, several factors have a bearing on how learners approach a written task and how they generate a written text. Amongst these factors is the learners' proficiency level (Rao, 2016; Wu, 2008) and the type of strategies they use (Charoento, 2016; Habok & Magyar, 2018).

Given the three broad learning strategies proposed by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) including cognitive (e.g., guessing and memorization), metacognitive (e.g., planning, monitoring, assessing), and socio-affective strategies (e.g., cooperating, encouraging, and rewarding), the bulk of research conducted

in this domain has been limited to cognitive and metacognitive strategies, and as asserted by Teng and Zhang (2016), there is a small research pool touching how employing social strategies might lead to variations in the learners' written product. It seems likely to depict a more comprehensive picture of the type of learning strategies employed by L2 learners by allocating as much emphasis to social strategies as that placed on other strategy types. Writing should not be considered a merely cognitive process, and as stated by Riazi (1997), literacy production is an interactional social process in which a dynamic interaction exists between the individual's cognitive processes and social/contextual factors involved.

In response to the need for adopting a social perspective in L2 writing, this study aims at investigating the socio-affective strategies used by monolingual and bilingual EFL writers across two proficiency levels (high and low). By exploring the interplay between monolingualism/bilingualism, proficiency level, and writing skill, this study fills the gap in previous literature and adds its contribution to these areas of enquiry.

Literature Review

Language Learning Strategies

It was just after the emergence of communicative competence when language learning strategies (LLS)s have received considerable scholarly attention in the field of applied linguistics (Grenfell & Macaro, 2007). The term strategy has been defined by various researchers (e.g., Chamot, 2004; Cohen, 1998; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford 1990), and it generally refers to a process that learners intentionally choose to use, and it is likely to lead to learning enhancement. Oxford (1990, 2017) argued that LLSs have the potential to be a powerful learning instrument which can lead to enhanced proficiency and self-confidence. To her, strategies have a facilitative role in the process of internalization, storage, retrieval, or use of the new language, and in order to develop learners' writing abilities, effective strategies and tools should be carefully employed. Moreover, Su and Duo (2010), who explored the correlation between LLS use and self-directed learning, concluded that the use of LLSs can effectively support the learners to become self-directed learners.

There are various learning strategy taxonomies proposed by various scholars, among which the classifications of Oxford (1990) and O'Malley and Chamot (1990) stand out as the most prominent ones. Oxford (1990), whose taxonomy is "perhaps the most comprehensive classification of learning strategies" (Ellis, 1994, p. 539), provided two broad categories of LLS: direct and indirect strategies. Direct strategies (memory, cognitive, compensation) are those that need mental "processing of the language" (p. 37) and can result in the direct involvement of learners with the target language. In contrast, indirect strategies (metacognitive, affective, and social) "support and manage language learning without directly involving the target language" (p. 135). A further classification proposed by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) specified three main categories, including cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective strategies.

This study revolves around an examination of the socio-affective category as a less explored strand in the literature on writing strategies. Socio-affective strategies consider the student's relation to society as a whole ranging from family to teachers, peers, and the community. As defined by Cohen and Dörnyei (2002), social strategies are used "for questioning for clarification, cooperation, peer revision, and self-talk" (p. 180), and they usually boost the awareness and also feelings toward others. Affective strategies (negative or positive) "serve to regulate emotions, motivations, stress, and attitudes" (Cohen & Dörnyei, 2002, p. 181) and mostly influence writing behavior (Burning & Horn, 2000). The negative affective strategies include "avoidance, passiveness, difficulty in concentrating, and showing lack of concern" (Shapira & Lazarowitz, 2005) which may eventually result in task abandonment. Positive strategies, on the other hand, include "anxiety alleviation, calming or self-relation techniques, such as deep breathing, meditation, listening to music, laughing, and self-rewarding" (p. 75).

Writing Skill and LLSs

Research on writing skill has been generally focused on the written product (Kroll, 2003). However, there has recently been a shift of focus with more attention being paid to the process of writing. Since “what learners produce” does not shed much light on the difficulties learners may experience in writing, so researchers and teachers have focused on “how learners write”. In so doing, special attention has been paid to writing strategies. Research findings in the L2 writing field (e.g., De Silva & Graham, 2015; Ferris, Liu, Sinha, & Senna, 2013; Wolfersberger, 2003) have demonstrated a positive significant effect of strategy instruction as well as learners’ strategic awareness and use on their written performance. Kato (2018) found that the quality of the written output was positively correlated with the amount of strategies used. Good writers tended to employ writing strategies (e.g., avoidance, evaluation, reformulation, and restructuring) more frequently and efficiently compared with their weaker counterparts.

One line of enquiry in the L2 writing literature concerns the interplay between proficiency level and the LLS use. There is ample evidence suggesting that high-proficient learners tend to use more and a broader range of language LLSs compared with their lower-level counterparts (Habok & Magyar, 2018; Rao, 2016; Wu, 2008). Chen (2009) argued that while advanced learners used fewer strategies, they tended to employ each strategy more efficiently than the weaker students, who used more strategies with no logical grounding. Some other studies provided evidence on the type of strategies employed by students at high/low proficiency levels. Charoento (2016) found that advanced students repeatedly used cognitive strategies while in a study by Wu (2008), the participants mostly availed themselves to metacognitive and social strategies.

Writing Skill and Multilingualism

The number of languages one has mastered affects the way s/he acquires different aspects of a novel language. According to Cenoz (2013), bilinguals are typically more experienced language learners and have a more extensive array of language strategies at their disposal compared with monolinguals. When encountered with new lexical items, structures, and language functions, rather than relating it to one linguistic subsystem as in the case of monolinguals, bilinguals tend to associate it with the corresponding subsystem they have access to. In other words, as asserted by Bialystok (2017), they continuously manage the competition between two language subsystems which are activated when new information is received.

To date, some studies have provided evidence on the preference of bilinguals over monolinguals in the acquisition different aspects of a novel language, including reading comprehension (Afsharrad & Sadeghi Benis, 2017; Modirkhamene, 2006; Sitthitikul, 2007), lexicon (Kalashnikova, Mattock, & Monaghan, 2014), phonology (Wang & Saffran, 2014), and grammar (Sanz, 2007). In addition, regarding the LLSs, Hayati and Deheimi Nejad (2010) also compared monolinguals and bilinguals in terms of direct and indirect LLS use. They found that bilinguals use more LLSs in general and social and compensation strategies in particular. However, with regard to writing, the studies are far and few between, and the literature is not rich. An exception is a study by Ransdell and Levy (1994), who investigated the writing quality and fluency of monolingual and bilingual students across two experiments. While in the first experiment, bilinguals were found to be superior in both measures, in the second they reduced fluency. The overall superiority of the bilinguals was attributed to their extensive experience in suppressing irrelevant information, a practice which is beneficial for their working memory in the long run.

The paucity of bilingual research on writing on the one hand, and lack of robust literature on socio-affective strategies used by L2 writers, on the other hand, calls for more studies. This study aims to contribute to the existing literature by examining the interface between monolingualism/bilingualism (at high/low proficiency levels), socio-affective strategies, and writing skill. A further point is that the existing studies are far from conclusive if one wishes to get a deeper insight into the situational/contextual and individualistic nuances involved in text composition. To this end, triangulating

introspection/retrospection instruments is required to solicit individuals' perceptions of their learning experiences. This study thus employs a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview to provide an inclusive account of writing strategies used. The research questions specifically addressed are:

- RQ1: Are there any differences between monolingual Persian and bilingual Turkish-Persian EFL learners in the use of writing socio-affective strategies (positive and negative) across proficiency levels?
- RQ2: Are there any differences between monolingual Persian and bilingual Turkish-Persian EFL learners' total written text quality across proficiency levels?
- RQ3: Is there any relationship between participants' use of socio-affective writing strategies and their writing performance, language background, and level of proficiency?

Method

Participants

The present study's population from which the sample was obtained included a total of 282 Iranian undergraduate English language students (age range = 18-25) who voluntarily participated in this study. The bilingual participants (N = 149) were selected from three universities in East Azarbaijan province, Iran. They had learned Turkish as their first language (L1) and Persian as their L2. The monolinguals (N = 133) were selected from two universities located in Isfahan province, Iran, where Persian is spoken as the L1.

A TOEFL Sample Test was administered in order to divide the participants into two proficiency levels, low and high. To keep a tangible contrast between low and high proficiency levels, 43 participants, who had been placed as intermediate-level students based on the proficiency test scores, were excluded from the study. In addition, the data obtained from 54 participants discarded from analysis since they had left some questions on the questionnaire unanswered. Outliers were also excluded. Therefore, as illustrated in Table 1, the final sample of the study included 176 participants (69 males and 107 females).

TABLE 1
Participants' Characteristics

Language background	Level	N
Bilingual	LP*	42
	HP*	49
	Total	91
Monolingual	LP	39
	HP	46
	Total	85
Total	LP	81
	HP	95
	Total	176

* LP = Lower proficiency, HP = Higher Proficiency

Instruments

The following instruments were used to collect quantitative and qualitative data from the participants.

The TOEFL Sample Test. It was administered to determine the proficiency level of the participants. It consists of 60 multiple-choice items in two sections: reading comprehension (30 items) and structure

and written expressions (30 items). The internal consistency of the test was measured and found to be acceptable as indicated by Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.77. Also, ANOVA results of the experimental groups' TOEFL Sample Test scores revealed a significant difference between the participants [$F(8, 32) = 0.005, p = 0.03$].

The background information questionnaire. It was administered to determine the participants' background language, gender, and their perception of their own English proficiency level, based on a scale ranging from Excellent to Poor (Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair, Poor, and Very Poor). From the total population, 7 and 18 percent of the participants rated themselves as "excellent" and "very good" while 37 percent, 23 percent, and 15 percent perceived themselves as "fair", "poor", and "very poor" L2 language users, respectively.

Argumentative writing prompts. Four argumentative writing prompts were given to the participants to write about. They were required to write a 200-250 word passage on each of the following topics: social networking applications and websites: pros and cons, multiple-choice and essay-type testing formats, the pros and cons of the educational system in Iran, and what does the future life looked like. Prior to the task accomplishment, the participants were informed that their scores in the writing task would be considered as part of their final scores in the writing course.

The writing strategy questionnaire. It was taken and adapted from the writing strategy questionnaires developed by Petric and Czarl (2003), Peñuelas' (2012), and Teng and Zhang (2016). The questionnaire consisted of 30 items to which learners were required to choose their responses on a Likert scale. The following sentences are sample questionnaire items.

When I see an unknown topic, I lose my self-confidence.
I make my writing assignment fun for myself.
I don't like my writing to be discussed in front of the others.

The comments of 3 specialists in applied linguistics were also applied in questionnaire adaptation and modification, and then the questionnaire was pilot tested with 35 students randomly selected from the target population. The piloting procedure helped with the wording and sequencing of the questions, reduction of non-response rates, eliminating ambiguity, combining overlapping statements, and deleting some irrelevant items. The Cronbach's Alpha for the remaining 30 items was 0.87, which is an acceptable level of reliability (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010). To prevent any misunderstandings, the questionnaire was also translated to Persian, and its reliability was 0.71, which deemed to be a strong reliability quotient.

The semi-structured interview. It included 10 questions to triangulate and cross-validate the data gathered from the questionnaire. The questions were carefully designed based on the data collected from the questionnaire, and those with some ambiguity were removed after piloting. The following question is a sample interview question used in the present study

Question: Would you seek help from your peers in the process of writing? Do you talk to your fellows to have more ideas to write about?

Data Collection Procedure

Before starting the data collection procedure, the participants were briefed about the purpose of the study and were ensured that the data would be kept confidential. In the first session, the participants filled out a background questionnaire, and bilinguals and monolinguals were selected based on the responses to

the questionnaire. In the second session, a TOEFL Sample Test was administered in order to assign the participants to higher- and lower- proficiency levels through random stratification sampling.

Two writing prompts were given to the participants along with necessary instructions on how they should complete the task on the third data collection session. They were required to write two 200-250 word argumentative texts in 30-40 minutes. The participants did a similar task on session 4, only writing on two different prompts. After collecting the written texts, the socio-affective writing strategy questionnaire was distributed, and the participants were required to complete it in 15-20 minutes. This order (first compositions then questionnaires) was chosen so that the knowledge the participants gained from reading the questionnaire would not bias the strategies they used in the process of writing.

Finally, six monolingual participants (3 HP and 3 LP) and six bilingual ones (3 HP and 3 LP) were randomly selected to be interviewed on the afternoon of the same day (session 4). The participants were informed that the objective of the interview was to help identify the processes and behaviors which they activated in the process of L2 compositions. Each recorded interview lasted for about 20 minutes. The questions were asked in English and also in Persian in the case of any problems in comprehension, and the participants were able to answer the questions in either English or their mother tongue. Table 2 shows the procedures of data collection.

TABLE 2
The Procedure of Data Collection

First session	Second session	Third session	Fourth session
Filling out the Background questionnaire	Administration of OQPT	Writing on the first and second topics	Writing on the third and fourth topic
			Filling out the Questionnaire
			Interviewing with randomly chosen sample population

Scoring the Writing Samples

An evaluation scheme was adapted from those proposed by Jacobs, Zinkgraf, Wormuth, Hartfiel, and Hughey’s (1981), Ghanbari, Barati, and Moinzadeh (2012), and Weir (2005) for a general analytical rating scheme. Each text was evaluated on the scale of 100 possible points (see Appendix for the evaluation scheme). In terms of the syntactic accuracy, for the existence of more than one error, half a point was allocated, and for the absence of a syntactic error 1 score was awarded. A trained colleague was also requested to correct a sample of 10 randomly selected writings. The inter-rater reliability coefficient of 0.77 was obtained, which is considered acceptable.

Results

Quantitative Analysis

The first research question probed whether there were any differences between monolingual Persian and bilingual Persian-Turkish EFL learners in their use of writing socio-affective strategies. The descriptive statistics were shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3
Descriptive Statistics for Socio-affective Strategies Use

Language Background	Level	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Bilingual	LP	2.97	0.48	42
	HP	2.89	0.46	49
	Total	2.93	0.47	91
Monolingual	LP	2.90	0.47	39
	HP	2.93	0.61	46
	Total	2.91	0.54	85
Total	LP	2.94	0.47	81
	HP	2.91	0.54	95
	Total	2.92	0.51	176

* LP= Lower proficiency, HP= Higher Proficiency

Concerning the effects of the two independent variables (language background and proficiency level) on socio-affective strategy use, a two-way ANOVA was conducted. The results, presented in Table 4, revealed a non-significant main effect of language background on socio-affective strategy use ($p = .837$). The main effect of proficiency level on the use of socio-affective strategies was not significant either ($p = .734$). Moreover, no significant interaction effect was found ($p = .513$).

TABLE 4
Result of ANOVA for Total Socio-affective Strategies Use

Source	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Sq.
LB	1	.01	.04	0.837	.000
Level	1	.03	.12	0.734	.001
LB* PL	1	.11	.43	0.513	.002
Error	172	.26			
Total	176				

* LB = Language Background, PL = Proficiency Level

To have more accurate and clearer results, positive and negative affective strategies were analyzed separately, the results of which are presented in the following sections.

Positive Socio-affective Strategies

Descriptive statistics (Table 5) revealed that bilinguals used more positive socio-affective strategies ($M = 3.18$) than monolinguals ($M = 2.85$). LP participants also used slightly more positive socio-affective strategies ($M = 3.10$) than HP ones ($M = 3.03$). An ANOVA was run on positive socio-affective strategies (Table 6). The main effect of language background on using positive socio-affective strategies was significant [$F(1, 172) = 5.14, p = .025, \eta_p^2 = .029$]. The results also showed that the effect of proficiency level on the use of positive socio-affective strategies was not significant ($p = .498$), nor was the interaction effect ($p = .347$).

TABLE 5
Descriptive Statistics for Positive and Negative Socio-affective Strategies

	Positive	Negative	Std. Deviation	N
Bilinguals	3.18	2.38	0.21	91
Monolinguals	2.85	2.88	0.65	85
Total	5.03	5.26	0.73	76
LP	3.10	2.77	0.45	81
HP	3.03	2.79	0.56	95
Total	6.13	5.56	0.76	176

TABLE 6
Result of ANOVA for Positive Socio-affective Strategies Use

Source	df	Mean Score	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Sq.
LB	1	2.24	5.14	.025	.029
PL	1	.20	.46	.498	.003
LB*PL	1	.39	.89	.347	.005
Error	772	.44			
Total	176				

* LB= Language Background, PL= Proficiency Level

Although the main effect of language background was not very strong ($\eta^2 = .029$), and thus bilingualism was found to have a positive role in the use of the socio-affective strategies. It can be justified by considering the fact that the participants, who have already encountered the difficulties of learning an additional language, could manage how to regulate their own learning, how to react to their feelings in demanding language tasks, and how to make use of environmental help such as the competent peers and the teacher.

Negative Socio-affective Strategies

With regard to negative socio-affective strategies, monolinguals ($M = 2.38$) had a higher mean than bilinguals ($M = 2.88$). Also, LP group's mean ($M = 2.68$) was slightly higher than that of the HP group ($M = 2.77$). Participants in bilingual LP group had a higher mean ($M = 2.79$) than those in bilingual HP group ($M = 2.77$) while the relationship was exactly the opposite for monolinguals: monolingual LP group ($M = 2.56$) used fewer negative affective strategies than monolingual HP group ($M = 2.80$). To check whether the differences were meaningful, an ANOVA test was run. The results of ANOVA are illustrated in Table 7.

TABLE 7
Result of ANOVA for Negative Socio-affective Strategies Use

Source	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Sq.
LB	1	.16	.23	.632	.001
Level	1	.01	.02	.901	.000
LB * PL	1	3.05	4.44	.037	.025
Error	172	.69			
Total	176				

As indicated above, neither language background ($p = .632$) nor proficiency level ($p = 0.901$) had a significant effect on the participants' use of negative socio-affective strategies. On the other hand, the interaction effect of two variables was significant though this effect was not a strong one ($\eta^2 = .025$) meaning that bilinguals and monolinguals differed in their use of negative affective strategies, depending

on their proficiency level. That is, the frequency of negative strategies while lower in HP bilinguals was higher in HP monolinguals.

The second purpose of the study was to find out differential effects of language background and proficiency level on the participants' total written text quality. Table 6 shows the descriptive statistics for total text quality.

TABLE 8
Descriptive Statistics for Total Text Quality

Language Background	Level	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Bilingual	LP	66.97	10.45	42
	HP	70.47	10.30	49
	Total	68.68	10.46	91
Monolingual	LP	59.14	13.37	39
	HP	66.12	14.90	46
	Total	62.71	14.52	85
Total	LP	63.14	12.53	81
	HP	68.24	12.97	95
	Total	65.69	12.97	176

* LP= Lower proficiency, HP= Higher Proficiency

Since the normality assumption was violated, two Mann Whitney U tests were run to find differences between the participants of different groups. The results of the first Mann Whitney test revealed a significant difference in writing performance between monolinguals (*Mdn* = 60.50) and bilinguals (*Mdn* = 67), [*U* = 2740.5, *Z* = -3.35, *p* =0.001, *r* =0 .21]. The second Mann Whitney U test examined differences between HP and LP groups in terms of writing performance. The results of the test indicated that the HP group (*Mdn* = 69.25) significantly outperformed the LP one (*Mdn* = 60.75), [*U* = 2759.50, *Z* = -3.29, *p* = 0.001, *r* = 0.25]. High proficiency and bilingualism were thus found to lead to better writing gains.

The third research question addressed the relationship between the participants' socio-affective strategy use and their overall written text quality across monolingual and bilinguals at different proficiency levels. The results of Pearson Product Moment correlations are illustrated in Table 9.

TABLE 9
Correlation between Socio-affective Strategies and Text Quality

Proficiency	Bilinguals			Monolinguals		
	n	Pearson R	Significance	n	Pearson R	Significance
LP	42	.35	.005	39	.27	.021
HP	49	.66	.001	46	.49	.001

As shown above, all correlations found across different proficiency levels and language background conditions are positive. In terms of proficiency, the results showed stronger correlations for the participants at higher proficiency among both bilinguals (*r* = .66, *p* = ≤ .05) and monolinguals (*r* = .49, *p* = ≤ .05) in comparison with lower proficient bilinguals (*r* = .35, *p* = ≤ .05) and monolinguals (*r* = .27, *p* = ≤ .05). With respect to language background, a strong relationship was found between socio-affective strategy use and overall text quality for bilinguals (LP: *r* = .35, HP: *r* = .66, *p* ≤ .05) rather than monolinguals (LP: *r* = .23, HP: *r* = .49, *p* ≤ .05), regardless of their proficiency level.

Qualitative Analysis

By qualitative analysis, we intended to discover more detailed information about the patterns established by the quantitative analysis. As suggested in the literature (e.g., Dörnyei, 2007), combining the qualitative and quantitative data provides a broader picture of the study and also leads to a higher

validity and reliability of the research. The first area of inquiry was concerned with the use of positive and negative socio-affective strategies. In quantitative analysis it was found that bilinguals significantly used more positive strategies. For example, the difference between the two groups in the number of positive options chosen for *'I give myself a reward for completing the assignment'* was big indeed; More bilinguals (43.2%) than monolinguals (19.3%) had positive answers to this statement. As another example, the number of positive options selected by bilinguals (65.6%, $M = 2.99$) and monolinguals (60.4%, $M = 2.70$) for *'I make my writing assignment fun for myself'* were different, too.

In other items, the differences between the two groups were not large. Roughly similar number of bilinguals (53.5%, $M = 2.61$) and of monolinguals (51%, $M = 2.65$) reported to *lose their self-confidence when they see an unknown topic*. A careful look at the percentages obtained for each option of this item across the two groups revealed that the number of positive options chosen by bilinguals were more than those chosen by monolinguals; however, monolinguals chose the fifth option (*always*) more frequently while bilinguals chose the third option (*sometimes*) more. The fourth option (*usually*) was chosen rather similarly by both groups. The difference in the means of the two groups may be explained by their ability to resort to their L1. When the English topic is unknown, in order to overcome the difficulty, monolinguals could more easily use their L1 than bilinguals did. Monolinguals had a useful tool (Persian-English dictionary) to help them translate ideas from their mother tongue (Persian) to English. On the other hand, bilinguals did not have access to a Turkish-English dictionaries and were more likely to lose confidence when faced with an unknown topic.

The results obtained from the interviews not only confirmed higher use of positive socio-affective strategies by bilinguals, but also revealed that bilinguals (4 out of 6) were more aware of the strategies they used in order to decrease their frustration self-consciously in comparison with monolinguals (2 out of 6). For example, the attitudes and perceptions of one bilingual participant toward an interview question, *"How do you feel when you cannot finish a written task in allocated time, when you cannot express what you mean or when you notice many mistakes in your first draft? How do you cope with it?"* are presented below, and the differences in their attitudes are obviously observable.

When I am in lack of time, I feel stressed at first. But I know that when I'm stressed, I do terribly. So I try to keep calm. I tell myself that I can do my best up to the part that I can. I also promise myself to practice more at home to write faster for next task. Also, when I don't have any ideas to tell or I can't tell them, or ... sometimes ask for help from teacher or my friends ... and sometimes I write the topic at middle of the page and jot down whatever comes to my mind... whatever I remember from movies, series, or book. I think we are here to learn so if we have problems or mistakes it's Ok. All language learners have problems. We can ask teacher or the smart classmates to correct our mistakes.

The second area of concern was related to the difference between HP and LP participants in positive and negative strategy use. Similar to statistical results, no noticeable difference was found between HP and LP participants in the frequency of using positive and negative socio-affective writing strategies. For instance, LP (78.4%, $M = 3.39$) and HP (76.2%, $M = 3.24$) participants' positive answers to *'I encourage myself by telling that I can write well'* were not markedly different. This may be attributable to the fact that higher level participants had done more writing tasks, and the writing task was easier for them. But LP participants needed to constantly remind themselves that they could fulfill the task. Moreover, the difference was bigger for *'I make my writing assignment fun for myself'*. LP participants used this strategy more frequently (67%, $M = 2.97$) than HP ones (58%, $M = 2.91$). Since writing seems to be more demanding for lower level participants than higher level ones, they are more likely to try to make the assignment fun so that they can overcome the difficulty.

With respect to negative affective strategies, LP and HP participants' performances were more apparently different. First, 34.1 percent of lower level participants chose a positive option for *'writing is a difficult task that makes me nervous'* while fifty percent of higher level students believed that writing was

difficult and made them nervous. This may be explained by the low-level participants' lower English proficiency, which may lead to their apprehension and frustration when faced with such a task. This is in agreement with that of Magno (2008) who found a correlation between writing apprehension and writing performance.

The second item, in which the two groups were different, though not significantly, was '*I get disappointed when I see my mistakes*'. In answer to this statement, more LP participants (55.7%, M = 2.82) compared to HP ones (39.8%, M = 2.34) tended to choose one of the positive options (*sometimes*, *usually*, and *always*). This might be related to the number of mistakes. Because of their proficiency level, HP participants make a limited number of mistakes. This is less likely to make them disappointed.

The analysis of interviewees' answers also supported the above results. No striking differences were observed though some disparities were observable in subcategories. Two excerpts from HP and LP participants' answers to the question "*Do you read other students' English written works and give them your opinions? Why? Do you like them to do so?*" are presented respectively below.

It's fun to read each other's work and comment on their writing. This gives us ideas to write and develop the topic. I like it. It's a kind of mutual work. We ask each other about grammar, appropriate lexical items, how to express our thoughts and how connect the ideas to each other. If each of us does not have enough information, we ask the teacher.

Actually, there is an active interaction in the class while writing. Writing is a pleasure for us when the topic is interesting. Sometimes, we ask each other about the topic, about grammar, about unknown words, and punctuation rules. I prefer to ask my classmates rather than the teacher.

Overall, the analysis of interview data revealed that bilinguals tended to be more self-conscious and reflective towards their writing skills, and they tended to rely more on socio-affective strategies than the monolinguals to self-regulate their performance. For instance, they discussed the topic with others, used and provided peer feedback, brought some video clips to class on writing instruction, and consulted the study guides.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the present study demonstrated no statistically significant differences between bilinguals and monolinguals in the frequency of the socio-affective strategies use across high and low proficiency levels. Regarding the positive strategies, bilinguals were found to use significantly more positive socio-affective strategies rather than monolinguals, regardless of their proficiency level. In addition, the use of negative socio-affective strategies was found to differ with respect to language background and proficiency level. High-proficient bilinguals seemed to use less negative strategies in comparison to their counterparts. Finally, bilingualism and the frequency of the socio-affective strategies used were highly correlated with the quality of written texts.

The overall outperformance of the bilinguals is theoretically consistent with dynamic model of multilingualism (DMM) (De Angelis & Jessner, 2012). DMM assumes an interconnection and a dynamic interaction between two or more linguistic systems in bi/multilinguals, which affects the development of proficiency in different aspects of language. According to De Angelis and Jessner (2012), a dynamic view of multilingualism is a necessary presupposition in understanding how writing in bi/multilinguals develops over time. The presence of two or more linguistic subsystems in a single multilingual system affects the writing processes and how individuals approach a given writing task.

That both of the multilingual and monolingual groups at high/low proficiency levels employed roughly similar frequency of the socio-affective strategies is consistent with the findings of Baker and Boonkit (2004) also found no statistically significant difference between more successful and less successful

groups in terms of using writing/reading affective strategies. This finding, however, does not concur with that of Kato (2018) who reported the more frequent and more efficient use of writing strategies among high proficient learners in comparison with their less proficient fellows.

In general, quality of the texts written by participants, regardless of their proficiency level, was highly correlated with the bilingualism and the frequency of the socio-affective strategies used. It can be justified by the influential effects of positive strategies' use in decreasing frustration, anxiety, and increasing self-efficacy. The strongest correlation was found in HP bilingual group suggesting that as the proficiency level of the learners gets higher, they learn to use more strategies to self-regulate their performance and demonstrate better performance. It may be attributed to bilinguals' prior experiences in learning and using the L2 in addition to their mother tongue, which prepares the ground for their discovery of the most efficient learning strategies fitting with their learning style and individual preferences.

Finally, as the result of the qualitative analysis, it was established that participants with higher proficiency level used strategies with higher self-awareness and self-reflection. Since they were more confident learners, they were able to develop the strategic approach to their English writing. Despite the general trend observed in terms of the dependency of the interviewees on the teacher, bilinguals manifested more autonomy in their performance. They developed "a learning structure in which control over the learning can be exercised by the learner" (Griffiths, 2008, p. 118).

The implications of the present research could be the instruction and incorporation of strategic teaching/learning among teachers and students so as to foster the awareness of strategic behavior and to arrive at more promising L2 achievements. The findings suggest that the teachers' awareness of the types of strategies preferred/used by students in a class may provide great affordances for learning by adjusting, adapting, and individualizing the instruction to the students' preferred styles/strategies. Moreover, bilingualism remains an advantage when it comes to learning a novel language. Given the multilingual context of most Asian EFL contexts, L2 teachers, practitioners, and material designers may design/develop teaching material/syllabus content in a way to take advantage of this potentiality.

Like every other study, the present research also has some limitations which can be addressed by future research. First, this study revealed some differences between Farsi monolinguals and Turkish-Farsi bilinguals in their performance; however, the benefits of bilingualism may be different for bilinguals with different background languages. By comparing bilinguals of different background languages, future research can not only find differences between bilinguals and monolinguals in general but also how each specific language may be of help in the process of learning additional languages. Second, we assessed the overall text quality at the macro discourse level while it would be more fruitful if future research experimentations will focus on micro sentential and phrasal levels. Finally, in the present study, the use of strategies was investigated during the writing process; future research may address this topic at different stages of writing (pre-writing, while-writing, and post-writing).

While this study may be limited in procedure and scope, it is hoped that the findings will make a contribution to the promotion of useful practices for avid bilingual and monolingual learners and will give insights on the strategies' instruction/use by teachers/learners.

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Appendix

The Writing Evaluation Scheme

Different Aspects of Writing in Scoring

Main category	Subcategories
Content (0-24)	a) Thesis statement (6) b) Related ideas (6) c) Development (6)
Organization (0-20)	a) Effectiveness of introduction (5) b) Effectiveness of conclusion (5) c) Separate paragraphs (5)
Discourse (0-20)	a) Topic sentence (4) b) Paragraph unity and coherence (8) c) Cohesion: i) Reference (4)
Syntax (0-12)	a) Clause structure and parallel structure (1) b) Word order (1) c) Tense and voice (1) d) Subject-verb agreement (1) e) Verb form (1) f) Singular/plural nouns (count non-count) (1) g) Modifying (1) h) Part of speech (1) i) Prepositions (1)
Vocabulary (0-12)	a) Effective word choice (4) b) Appropriate register (4) c) Collocation (4)
Mechanics (0-12)	a) Spelling (3) b) Punctuation (3) c) Neatness and appearance (3)