

WRITING STRATEGIES APPLIED BY THE FOURTH SEMESTER STUDENTS IN THEIR ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING AT ENGLISH STUDY PROGRAM OF UNIROW TUBAN

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Abstract

This study is aimed to describe writing strategies applied by the fourth semester students of English language education program of PGRI Ronggolawe University Tuban in their argumentative writing. It includes 1) kinds of writing strategies applied by the students in their argumentative writing 2) the application of those kinds of strategies. This research used descriptive qualitative method. The subject of this research was five students who got the highest score in their previous writing subject. The researcher modified SILL questionnaires based on (Oxford, 1996) to observe their writing strategy, which covers six categorizes of strategies namely cognitive, metacognitive, memory, compensation, affective, and social strategy. The data from the questionnaire and the interview were analyzed descriptively. The result of this study indicated that all students applied all kinds of writing strategies. Compensation strategy became the most dominant strategy used by the students, followed by metacognitive strategy, memory strategy, cognitive strategy, affective strategy and social strategy. The students had different way to apply writing strategies. It depended on their condition and their needs while writing a text.

Keywords: Writing Strategies, Argumentative Writing

INTRODUCTION

English is one of the most important elements in education to develop human sources. In teaching and learning process of English, there are four skills taught: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. "Writing is about expressing knowledge and the students have to express their knowledge as thoughtfully and clearly as they can" (Urquhart & McIver, 2005). Moreover, writing needs well knowledge on sentence pattern, vocabulary, mechanic, and the way to organize idea in good written form. As stated by (H D Brown, 2007) writing is a process of getting products influenced by such elements as vocabulary, grammar, organization, content, mechanic, and style of writing. The

students also have to consider whether the purpose of their writing can be understood or not by the readers (Stefanovicová, 2011). In fact, writing is a skill that more difficult than other language skills, such as listening, reading and speaking. The students find many difficulties when they start looking for some reasons to write and generating their ideas into a text. Idea generation is an important component of human innovation and creativity (Chou, 2001). Writing consisted of several elements such as contents, organization, vocabulary, language use, and the mechanics as well (Crusan, 2013). That human being universally learns to talk, but writing is learned to be behavior (H D Brown, 2007). The language learner must be engaged in communicating his ideas and feelings because writing is a visual representation of listening and speaking, also says that writing is a two-step process. The first process is figuring out the meaning and the second process is putting the meaning into language. Writing represents what we think and what we feel. One way to produce a written text, (H Douglas Brown, 2000) stated that the students often feel that they do not have the necessary knowledge and experience of language that writing demands.

According to (Oshima & Hogue, 2000) there are six kinds of writing academic. The first is paragraph writing. A paragraph is a group of related sentences that discuss one (and usually only one) main idea. The second is essay writing. An essay is a piece of writing several paragraphs long and only have a topic and they are claims of fact or definition (Setyowati et al., 2020). The third is descriptive writing. Its purpose is to provide facts or information. The fourth is analytical writing. Analytical writing includes descriptive writing, but also requires the writers to re-organize the facts and information to describe into categories, groups, parts, types or relationships. The fifth is persuasive/argumentative writing. Persuasive writing has all the features of analytical writing that is information plus re-organizing the information, with the addition of the writers' point of view. The last is critical writing. Critical writing is common for research, postgraduate and advanced undergraduate writing.

A number of factors seemed to influence students' writing. (Jani & Mellinger, 2015) in their article found that there are five factors which influencing the college students' writing. The first is students' level of effort. The second factor is students' relationship with course content. The third factor is the educational support students receive, including faculty feedback and direction on assignments. The fourth factor is

students' perception of their role in the learning process. The fifth factor is students' perceived self-efficacy regarding their writing ability. Many people believe that one of the key factors which affect writing is the writing strategies (Al Asmari, 2013). Having a variety of writing strategies and skill can help students complete their writing tasks successfully (Hammad, 2013).

Writing strategies are applied in the process of writing. Based on (Oshima & Hogue, 2000) there are four steps of writing. The first is pre-writing, planning (outlining), writing, and polishing draft. There are some classifications of writing strategy proposed by experts. (Oxford, 1996) proposes language learning strategy, in which the parts of the LLS can be applied in writing. The strategies are divided into two main classes, direct and indirect strategies. Those strategies are subdivided into 6 groups. The strategies are memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies.

Based on the study that has reported by (Raofi et al., 2014) *A Qualitative Study into L2 Writing Strategies of University Students* all of the participants reported using more metacognitive strategies such as organizing ideas and revising content than less skilled ones. The second previous study that has reported by (Penuelas, 2012) *The Writing Strategies of American University Students: Focusing on Memory, Compensation, Social and Affective Strategies*. It showed that there are various strategies used by the students at the university, not only found the strategy the writer also found the relation between the frequencies of strategy use and grade in English.

Based on the explanation above, it is necessary to know kind of writing strategies in order to make the learners especially Indonesian learners who learn English as Foreign language easier while writing some text. The subject of the first previous study by (Raofi et al., 2014) is twenty one undergraduate students who learn English as a second language at a national university in Malaysia. The subject of the second previous study by (Penuelas, 2012) is 231 American undergraduate students taking English writing courses in the US, they learn English as the first language. In this study the researcher wants to observe only five students who learn English as foreign language in argumentative writing at PGRI Ronggolawe University which have the highest score in the previous writing subjects. According to (Penuelas, 2012) that the higher the writers' proficiency in English, the more strategies they used. It means that the students who have good score in the previous writing

subject, they certainly use many kinds of writing strategies more often than the students who get lower score. The problems of the Indonesian EFL students is the feeling of anxiety when writing because of their negative perception of writing (Toba & Noor, 2019).

This study focused only on each kind of writing strategy used by the fourth semester students in their argumentative writing and how they applied those strategies. The result of this study, hopefully can give some benefits for the students to motivate them which have lower score that there are many kind of writing strategies which can improve their writing skill and help the students to write easily. For the English teachers, as writing is difficult to master so it is important to know each kind of writing strategy and how to apply them. The teacher can introduce some type of writing strategies to the students using this study as the reference.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research used mixed methods. In this approach, a researcher collects both quantitative and qualitative data, analyzes them separately, and then compares the results to see if the findings confirm or disconfirm each other (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The data was collected by using questionnaire and interview. The researcher shared the questionnaire and interviewed only 5 students in the fourth semester of English Language Education Program at UNIROW who have the highest score in previous writing subject. They are considered to have good enough ability in argumentative writing class. According to (Penuelas, 2012) that the higher the writers' proficiency in English, the more strategies they used. The research instruments used by the researcher were interview sheet and Inventory of learning strategies. The inventory of learning strategies was adopted from (Oxford, 1996) in the L2 strategy field, since we believed that "comparing self-regulation models from areas of psychology with the learning strategy models in foreign languages demonstrates that the two fields can benefit greatly from the other's knowledge" (McDonough, 2001). The Inventory asked respondents to say on a 5-point scale how frequently they used the strategies that were indicated. After collecting the data, the researcher analyzed the data using qualitative and quantitative data analysis. For quantitative data analysis, the researcher used SPSS IBM version 25 to analyze data from close-format questionnaire. Meanwhile, the data from

open-format questionnaire and interview were analyzed using Qualitative data analysis. The steps are identifying, coding, and classifying, describing, interpreting, conclusion.

RESULTS

After obtaining the data, the researcher found kind of writing strategy applied by the students. The research findings can be seen from table 1.

Table 4.4: Writing Strategies applied by the students

No	Subject	MS	CogS	ComS	MCS	AS	SS	OLS	MOSTLY USED
1	SA	3.50	3.39	4.16	3.33	3.66	3.50	3.53	ComS
2	SB	4.00	4.07	3.33	3.25	3.50	3.25	3.51	CogS
3	SC	4.25	4.23	4.33	4.50	3.83	0	3.97	MetS
4	SD	3.25	3.53	4.16	4.16	3.83	3.25	3.77	ComS&MetS
5	SE	3.25	2.90	3.83	3.08	3.16	3.00	3.15	ComS
MEAN		3.65	3.62	3.96	3.66	3.59	2.60	3.58	ComS
THE MOST STRATEGY USED									

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the mean of the OLS is 3.58. It means that the students are the high strategy user. They usually applied all strategy categories from Oxford taxonomy in their argumentative writing. However, there is one strategy that they apply more often than other strategy. That is compensation strategy (M= 3.96). The second strategy is meta-cognitive strategy (M= 3.66), the third is memory strategy (M= 3.65), the fourth is cognitive strategy (M = 3.62), then affective strategy (M= 3.59) and the last is social strategy (M= 2.60).

Compensation strategy helps the students to compensate the missing knowledge in the target language due to lack of vocabulary. The

examples of this strategy are using dictionary, guessing word, using synonym, and using sources. All students used synonym when they did not know the exact word to convey their message. As stated by student E that he did this strategy when he was on a writing exam or any subject that did not allow me to open a dictionary. Four students also used some sources when they did not have enough idea to complete their composition. Sources can help them to develop their ideas. They cannot rely on the abilities or knowledge they have. As stated by student A that it was not possible from the capacity of their ideas, so he looked for other references because writing must be so critical and contains as much information. They used sources when the students did not have enough ideas to complete the composition.

Meta-cognitive strategy is a method that helps the students to find and control their own writing process. In order to check coherency among paragraphs, the students always paid attention to aspects such as thesis statements, topic and supporting sentences every time they do writing assignment. One of the students did this strategy when she wanted to move from paragraph 1 to paragraph 2 or wrote next paragraph. She would read the whole paragraph so that they knew if there were some mistakes. As stated by student E that every time he did any writing assignments, especially argumentative writing, he really paid attention to the supporting sentences of the topics and scientific statements to support the arguments. In arranging and planning process, only three students usually went back to the plan to consider the ideas they had written down and to reformulate them if they feel the composition are flawed. One student applied this example when he had many times while writing process. In evaluating process, all students did not have a set of priorities when revising their composition. They usually read the whole text when they finished writing. Commonly, there are two kinds of revising process. The first is revising ideas and organization and then grammar and spelling concerns. Each student had different characteristic of revising. Student A sometimes revised only spelling and grammar. Students B usually revised her organization. She revised spelling also but not often. Student C usually revised his spelling. Students D and student E only check their grammar.

Memory strategy describes how the students used their memory in order to write effectively. This strategy helps the students to memorize new information into long-term. Based on memory strategy's example, the students usually relate the topic to their background

knowledge. Whenever the lecturer gave them permission to choose their own topic, they would choose one topic that relate to their background knowledge to make writing process easily. Even though using free topic, the students still looked for some references to complete their composition. As stated by student E that whenever the lecturer gave a free topic he chose a topic that is in accordance with his knowledge so that he is easier while building each paragraph. In order to memorize new English word, there is no student who always memorized the new English word by writing them several times. Some of them usually write a new vocabulary in a note book or practicing them into a sentence. Instead of writing down a vocabulary, another student will say it several times. Thus, others student will only memorize into a brain without writing down a vocabulary.

Cognitive strategy helps students to understand the target language information or task. All students usually reread frequently in an attempt to find out what they wanted to say. This strategy applied when the students wanted to continue writing to the next paragraph. They often read the previous paragraph to make sure what they had written match with the plan and match with the next paragraph. Another student applied this strategy when suddenly he stopped writing causes of something, he would read the previous paragraph to find out what they wanted to discuss in the next paragraph. As stated by student D that he often read his writing repeatedly when he wanted to make sure what he write is appropriate with his plan or not. Thus, there was a student who did not choose words and expressions that were formal when she wrote formally and informal forms when she wrote informally. Sometimes when she wrote, it was going on directly without knowing what expression she used. She said that sometimes she could not distinguish between formal and informal sentences when she wrote composition because it's like walking around until she did not realized whether the sentence formal or informal. In other hand, four students always realized when they should write using formal and informal expression. They usually determined who their reader is so they can choose and can be consistence using either formal or informal expression.

Affective strategy is a technique to help the students control or manage their emotions, motivations, attitudes, interests, and values towards writing process. Some students apply this strategy in order to write fluently and to overcome some problems. Three students said

something to motivate them to keep writing by saying “come on”, “go on”, “you can do it”. This strategy applied when the students had no idea to develop a paragraph and when they were tired and lazy to continue writing. Student D said if she wrote and then giving up or having no material anymore she cannot think any further, so she will tell herself, motivate herself “come on you can, come on you can’t stop until here ”to encourage herself and she will be eager to write again. In order to overcome anxiety, usually the students gave rewards to themselves when they are given a good grade in a composition. They did that because they wanted to appreciate and support their self to write more composition.

In social strategy, most of the students rarely applied it in their argumentative writing. They sometimes asked a friend when they had difficulty through writing process. Two students asked their friends when they wanted to choose topic, asked about discussion or content of the text, or asked about grammar. Another student asked her friends when she got difficulty in arranging the words into good sentence and the content had been appropriate with the kind of text or not. As stated by student B that she rarely compared her text with her friends. She usually asked them about the differences between argumentative essay and narrative essay, actually it depends on the difficulty she had. She asked more about the ideas, whether the idea include argumentative or narrative essay.

DISCUSSION

In this part, the researcher will discuss about the finding in order to clarify the answer of research problem. Based on the theory used by (Oxford, 1996), there are 6 categories of writing strategy. In this research, the researcher found all of categories of writing strategy applied by the students in their argumentative writing. Compensation strategy was being the most strategy used (M= 3.96).

Compared with another previous study from (Raoofi et al., 2014) A Qualitative Study into L2 Writing Strategies of University Students in the University Putra Malaysia (UPM) the findings is different with the present study. The findings of the study revealed that the highly proficient student writers reported using more meta-cognitive strategies such as organizing ideas and revising content than less skilled ones. Other categories of writing strategies such as social and cognitive strategies emerged from the interviews. The results also showed that

ESL students reported to exert a great deal of effort to make their writing task longer. They tended to be productive, as much as they could, in their writing. The results also revealed that the students with poor writing ability could not effectively put their ideas into separate paragraphs and they believed that had problems in adding new ideas to their essays after writing two or three paragraphs. However, the findings of the present study showed that the students usually used compensation strategy in their argumentative writing.

Other findings of previous study from (Penuelas, 2012) *The Writing Strategies of American University Students: Focusing on Memory, Compensation, Social and Affective Strategies* is also different with the present study. The findings showed that the mean of overall strategy use was 3.07 out of 5.0 with more than 63% of students having a mean average of 3.07 or over, which may be considered as medium strategy user. The most strategy used by the students is metacognitive strategies ($M = 3.45$), cognitive strategies ($M = 3.36$), compensation strategies ($M = 3.16$), social strategies ($M = 2.98$), memory strategies ($M = 2.78$) and affective strategies ($M = 2.67$). In other hand, this research finding showed that the highest mean is compensation strategy ($M = 3.96$). Meta-cognitive strategy became the second strategy applied by the students. The students also indicated to be high strategy user as the overall mean is 3.58.

Compared with the last previous study from (Raofi et al., 2017) *An Investigation into Writing Strategies and Writing Proficiency of University Students*, it has different and similar findings. Its findings showed that Metacognitive strategy and effort regulation were the most used strategy. In other hand, social and affective strategies were the least used among the participants. The participants reported almost a high level of writing strategy users as the overall mean of writing strategy usage was 3.72. The results also showed that the proficiency groups differed in their overall use of strategies. That is, the higher the proficiency level, the greater was the strategy use.

Based on the previous study above, it can be seen that the finding among the present study and other previous studies are different. All of the previous studies mentioned that the most strategy used by the students was metacognitive strategy, which is in this research compensation strategy was the most strategy used by the students. However, in the third previous strategy mentioned that affective and

social strategy were the least strategies used by the students. This previous study was the same as the finding of the present study. In the second previous study by (Penuelas, 2012), the students were the medium strategy users (M= 3.07). Meanwhile, in this research the students were the high strategy users (M=3.58). This finding was in line with the third previous study by (Raofi et al., 2017).

The role of writing strategies from each student can be different. The skilled students will use more writing strategies in appropriate ways than the less skilled and less skilled students do not use more planning while composing the ideas. Skilled students spend more time during pre-writing process especially in planning and revising the outline freely whenever they get new ideas through writing process. On the other hand, less skilled students take a short time in prewriting process, rarely do revising, and rarely change the outline in writing process.

Through writing process, the researcher stands on theory by (Oshima & Hogue, 2000). Writing process is divided into 4 parts. The first is pre-writing, outlining, writing, and polishing draft. In this section, the researcher will relate writing process with the theory of SILL by (Oxford, 1996). Based on the data from questionnaire the most strategy used was compensation strategy which helped students due to lack of vocabulary through writing process. When the students found difficult words they used synonym or dictionary or guesses word to convey their ideas. Cognitive strategy also helped students through writing process. The students used sources to complete their composition. They also used reviewing and repeating process such as reading a whole text to make sure what they had written. Metacognitive strategy helped students in planning, revising, and writing process. However, all students rarely do revising process and only some students do pre-writing process. It can be concluded that from all the processes, all students do not always do that. While writing is the process that the students often do among others writing process. As compensation, cognitive, and metacognitive strategy are the strategies that they used the most.

According to (Han, 2017) each writing strategy could not be considered being solitary. To realize the purposes of effectiveness of writing strategy, the different situation of learners, teaching experience,

and techniques should be served as a priority. However, every strategy stands to its own capability in managing the writing process.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research finding and discussion that has been presented in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the fourth semester students usually used writing strategies in their argumentative writing (M= 3.58). Besides that, there is one strategy which the students applied the most. That is compensation strategy (M= 3.96). The second strategy is meta-cognitive strategy (M= 3.66), the third is memory strategy (M= 3.65), the fourth is cognitive strategy (M = 3.62), then affective strategy (M= 3.59) and the last is social strategy (M= 2.60). Some previous studies that mentioned before have no similarity with this research. Most of them used metacognitive as their first strategy used, however in this research compensation strategy is the most strategy used by the students.

The students applied those kinds of strategies in different way. The students applied compensation strategy when they needed to compensate their target language. They used synonym when they did not know the exact word to convey their message. The students also used some sources when they did not have any ideas to complete their composition. The second strategy is meta-cognitive strategy. The students applied this strategy when they wanted to move from paragraph 1 to paragraph 2 or go on to the next paragraph. Meta-cognitive strategy is a method that helps the students to find and control their own writing process. The third strategy is memory strategy. The students applied this strategy when they found new English word they would write it into a notebook or use it frequently. The fourth strategy is cognitive strategy. Cognitive strategy applied when the students wanted to continue writing to the next paragraph. They often read the previous paragraph to make sure what they had written match with the plan and match with the next paragraph. The fifth strategy is affective strategy. This strategy applied when the students needed motivation or reward for them-selves. The last strategy is social strategy. The students rarely did this strategy. They only asked their friend when they did not know about the content of the text or grammar.

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