Writing Strategy: an Analysis Of Successful Malahayati English Council Learners in Writing

Aiyub
Universitas Abulyatama, Aceh Besar, Indonesia
aiyubstudent@gmail.com

Putri Dini Meutia
Universitas Abulyatama, Aceh Besar, Indonesia
putridini_bhsinggris@abulytama.ac.id

Suryani
Universitas Abulyatama, Aceh Besar, Indonesia
suryani_b.inggris@abulyatama.ac.id

Ema Dauyah
Universitas Abulyatama, Aceh Besar, Indonesia
emadauyah_b.inggris@abulyatama.ac.id

Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menemukan jenis strategi pembelajaran apa yang digunakan oleh pembelajar yang sukses untuk meningkatkan keterampilan menulis mereka dalam bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini menggunakan *explanatory mixed method*. Instrumen pengumpulan data yang digunakan adalah kuisioner. Populasi dalam penelitian ini adalah siswa Malahayati English Council yang mengikuti kelas menulis, dan sampelnya adalah siswa yang memperoleh nilai A (86-100) pada ujian mata pelajaran Writing. Data dianalisis menggunakan statistik sederhana dan metode distribusi frekuensi kumulatif. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, dapat disimpulkan bahwa pertama, Menulis adalah proses berpikir, mengorganisasikan, memikirkan kembali, dan menata ulang secara berkelanjutan. Hal ini membutuhkan penguasaan kosa kata, ejaan, tata bahasa, tanda baca, konten yang tepat, dan pemilihan kata dan topik untuk pembaca. Seorang penulis harus mampu berpikir dan mengungkapkan gagasan dalam kalimat-kalimat yang tersusun rapi dengan

koherensi yang tinggi. Kedua, pembelajar yang sukses menggunakan strategi yang di rekomendasikan oleh para ahli untuk menyelesaikan semua masalah dan untuk mendapatkan hasil terbaik dalam menulis. Ketiga, strategi yang digunakan adalah membagi proses menulis menjadi empat tahap: *pra-writing, drafting, revising, editing.*

Kata kunci: Writing Strategy; English writing skill; Malahayati English Council

Abstract

Writing Strategy: an Analysis Of Successful Malahayati English Council Learners in Writing. The purpose of this study is to discover what kinds of learning strategies are used by successful learners to improve their English writing skills. This study employed an explanatory mixed method. A questionnaire is an instrument used to collect data. The population in this study was Malahayati English Council students enrolled in writing classes, and the sample consisted of students who earned an A (86-100) in the final writing subject. The data was analyzed using a simple statistic and the cumulative frequency distribution method. Based on the result of this study, it was concluded that first, Writing is a continuous process of thinking, organizing, rethinking, and reorganizing. It requires command of vocabulary, spelling, grammar, punctuation, appropriate content, and word selection for the audience, topic, and occasion. A writer must be able to think and express ideas in well-organized sentences with high coherence. Second, successful learners applied the writing strategies those are suggested by the expert. They used those strategies to solve all problems and to get the best results in writing. Third, the strategy employed is to divide the writing process into four stages: prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing.

Keywords: Writing Strategy; English writing skill; Malahayati English Council

Introduction

Writing is classified as one of the branches by Crebert (2011); when students are learning a second language, writing is a talent that they must develop in addition to the other four. Written communication is more stress-relieving for many students than oral communication because the audience for any errors is more selective; on the other hand, written work is concrete and can thus be more easily examined and corrected. According to Langan (2005), writing can be a form of communication. Modern life requires writing skills in many areas. Writing is crucial in many contexts, including the classroom. Students are expected to compose academic writing in a classroom. Graham (2008) says effective writing skills predict academic success and are essential for civic engagement and global education. Writing in any language helps the students learn about their interests and expand their worldview. Ahmed (2016) says writing is one of the hardest subjects to master.

When it comes to planning, students do not know how to write effectively. Drafting can be difficult for students who lose focus. Students have trouble deciding what to write about, how to develop a topic, producing original thoughts, expanding on ideas, using prior knowledge, thinking critically, and applying new and learned concepts to written assignments. So, they need a writing strategy. Asmari (2013) suggests that writing strategies play a significant role in determining the quality of writing.

A majority of the students at Politeknik Pelayaran Malahayati are actively involved in English-language activities, which are organized by the Malahayati English Council (MEC). The Malahayati English Council is a department within Politeknik Pelayaran Malahayati that is responsible for the organization of English language learning activities. The students were required to learn how to write for academic purposes as part of their course requirements. There are a variety of reasons for learning English through writing. For example, it will aid them in the preparation of their final exams and, most importantly, the writing of their dissertations and theses. Furthermore, because Malahayati English Council students are required to learn English as a compulsory subject, they can, of course, mitigate the difficulties they face by developing their own learning strategies. Writing strategies for planning, drafting, and revising text are taught to students in order to help them improve their writing abilities.

It is believed that by employing the strategy of writing, students' writing difficulties can be mitigated to some extent. For example, by raising their awareness of the importance of effective writing skills for successful career development, and by organizing and offering effective writing skills training courses that will enable them to acquire knowledge and skills in efficient writing strategies to assist them in developing good writing skills, we can help them achieve their goals. Students are expected to improve their writing abilities in order to meet the demands of academics as well as the demands of writing in professional settings in the future (Ismail et al., 2021).

This study aimed to discover what kinds of learning strategies are used by successful learners of Malahayati English Council to improve their English writing skills. The successful learners are students who earned an A (86-100) in the final writing subject. It could be used to help other students improve their writing skills by implementing this successful learner strategy. The research question for this study is What kinds of learning strategies do successful learners in Malahayati

English Council use to improve their English writing skills? It is purposed to ascertain how successful learners at Malahayati English Council approach writing.

Literature Review

Definition of Writing

Writing, in the words of Randal (2004), is the skill of organizing words so that they have a higher truth value than the fact that they have been written. This suggests that the written work ought to be a genuinely accepted statement to the reader. In order for readers to benefit from the writing, it must also contain meaningful values. Meanwhile, Harmer (2014) describes writing as a means of producing language and expressing ideas, feelings, and opinions. Additionally, he states that writing is a process in which what people write is frequently heavily influenced by genre constraints, which must then be presented in learning activities.

Oshima and Hogue (2007) define writing as a progressive activity. This means that when you begin writing something, you have already considered what you will say and how you will say it. Then, once you've completed your writing, you read it over and make the necessary changes and corrections. It is a multi-step process". Furthermore, writing, according to Boardman (2002), is a continuous process of thinking, organizing, rethinking, and reorganizing. Writing requires command of vocabulary, spelling, grammar, punctuation, appropriate content, and appropriate word selection for the audience, topic, and occasion. Additionally, Riddell (2003) explains that writing is a unique skill. Someone converses with others, while another writes as if he is conversing with himself. Thus, when someone writes something in the manner described above, the writer considers the concept and the manner in which he writes it. Similarly, the concept is all about the content and organization of the writing, while the manner of expression includes some critical components such as language use, mechanics, and vocabulary.

Purpose of Writing

Across all areas of study and learning, the most difficult is writing, as Riddell (2003) explains, because it forces a very deep and powerful type of learning to occur. When you make an effort to apply the concepts of the subject you are studying to your own life, you can be said to be learning. The ideas become a functional part of your thought processes only when you can use them to

communicate with other people. According to Grenville (2001), writing serves three functions: to entertain, inform, and persuade.

Writing's Strategy

Mu' (2005) defined writing strategy as the deliberate choices made by writers in order to solve a writing problem. The user is fully aware when it comes to selecting the writing strategies that will be used. That is, it is up to the user to decide whether or not to employ a particular strategy. Additionally, they explain the purpose of using writing strategies, which is to solve a writing problem.

Moreover, writing technique the order in which a writer plans, composes, revises, and performs other writing-related tasks is referred to as the writing process (Penuelas, 2012). She believes that writing strategies are a collection of tasks rather than a single action. The process is divided into three separate phases: planning, writing, and revising the writing.

According to Richards and Renandya (2002), there are four stages to the writing process: prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. The four fundamental stages of writing are:

1) Prewriting is any classroom activity that encourages students to write. It generates ideas for getting started (Richards & Renandya, 2002).

2) Drafting, students are focused on writing fluency during the drafting stage and are not concerned with grammatical accuracy or the neatness of the draft. In this case, students begin writing down their ideas based on the composition of the primary ideas during the pre-writing stage, and they can also consult their ideas with the teacher for assistance in structuring the sentence (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Additionally, Carter (2007) explained that this stage is primarily concerned with meaning; that is, with putting ideas on paper. As a result, concerns about mechanics and surface structure, such as spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure, should be avoided. This stage is devoted to the capture of ideas.

3) Revising is the process by which the writer reworks the rough material of the draft in order to shape it (Langan, 2005). Here, students revise their drafts in response to teacher feedback. Not only is revision used to check for grammatical errors in students' writing, but it is also used to improve the global content and organization of ideas so that the reader can grasp the writer's point.

4) Editing is the final step in the writing process. Langan (2005) suggests that during this process, the writer should correct any errors they made, particularly grammatical errors. The writer should edit multiple times to ensure that there are no errors. While students are not always expected to know where and how to correct every error, they should edit their work to the best of their ability prior to submitting it for evaluation

Method

This research method is an explanatory mixed method, as quantitative data collection is more prevalent than qualitative data collection. The research was carried out in-depth on a state or condition in a systematic way, starting from observation, data collection, analysis of information, and reporting of results. This research was conducted at Malahayati English Council, which is located in Durong, Aceh Besar, Aceh. The population consisted entirely of Malahayati English Council students enrolled in writing classes. They are 124 students. The sampling technique used in this study was purposive sampling. Indeed, 23 students who earn an A in the final writing subject will be chosen specifically for their writing ability.

The instrument used in this study is a questionnaire that consists of 24 items that cover a variety of topics related to writing and writing strategies. This questionnaire was adopted from Grenfell & Alnufaie (2012). These items are meant to obtain data regarding the frequency of strategies the students employ when writing in English. The rating scale of the self-report writing strategy questionnaire followed the Likert-scale of five responses: Always = 1, often = 2, sometimes = 3, rarely = 4 and almost never = 5. Then, the analysis of the questionnaire was processed by using the simple statistical formula with a cumulative frequency distribution method as stated by Sudjana (1992). The formula is follows:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} x 100\%$$

Remarks:
P   : percentages
F   : frequency of respondent
N   : number of sample
100%   : constant value

Result

The analysis of data obtained from the distribution of questionnaire can be explained as in following:

	QUESTION	5	4	3	2	1
	Pre-Writing					
1	Before I start writing, I read about the topic and collect information from different sources.	57%	30%	13%	0%	0%
2	Before writing, I create an outline for the whole content and organization	35%	22%	30%	13%	0%
3	Before I start writing about a topic, I do freewriting to get as many ideas as possible	35%	43%	22%	0%	0%
4	Before I start, I do brainstorming to generate ideas	22%	43%	22%	13%	0%
5	If the topic is not known to me, I stop writing	13%	13%	43%	13%	17%
6	Before writing, I list down words, phrases, and short notes related to the topic	22%	13%	22%	43%	0%
7	Before writing, I discuss the topic with others (e.g. my teacher, classmate, etc.)	13%	43%	30%	13%	0%
8	Before writing, I do mind mapping to generate and cluster my ideas	13%	22%	52%	13%	0%
9	If the topic is not known to me, I look at a model written by a native speaker or more proficient writer and try to imitate it	0%	43%	43%	13%	0%
B	**Drafting**					
10	I write sentences in Indonesia and then literally translate into English	0%	22%	22%	22%	35%
11	When I write, I think about the purpose of my writing	13%	35%	43%	0%	9%
12	When I write, I think about the reader of my writing	22%	22%	57%	0%	0%
13	I write bits of the text in Indonesia and then translate them into English	0%	13%	30%	22%	35%
14	When I do not know how to express my thoughts in English, I simplify what I want to write	0%	39%	61%	0%	0%
15	If I do not know the exact word in English, I use a similar English word that I know	43%	57%	0%	0%	0%
16	If I do not know a word in English, I stop writing and look up the word in a dictionary	65%	0%	0%	0%	35%
17	If I do not know a word in a sentence, I do not write that sentence	0%	0%	52%	35%	13%
18	I try not to change what I have written whether a sentence or a paragraph	0%	39%	61%	0%	0%
19	I stop after each sentence or paragraph to relate ideas together and get more new ideas	52%	35%	13%	0%	0%
20	While writing, I constantly check my grammar	43%	43%	13%	0%	0%
C	**Revising**					
21	I go back to my writing to revise the content and make my ideas clearer.	30%	61%	9%	0%	0%
22	I go back to my writing to revise and improve my organization.	52%	30%	9%	9%	0%

D	Editing					
23	I edit the draft Individually	9%	52%	39%	0%	0%
24	I edit the draft Collaboratively	0%	9%	61%	17%	13%

The process of strategy entails four stages: Pre-writing, Drafting, Revising, and Editing. The first stage is prewriting. It is the planning stage before writing. Referring to Statements 1 and 2, the majority of respondents read the topic and collected information from different sources, and created an outline for the whole content and organization before writing. This means that successful learners have a good plan before writing.

There are numerous prewriting techniques, including free-writing, making a list (brainstorming), and clustering. Statement 3 reveals that all of the respondents engage in free writing before writing a topic. This relates to the findings in Statement 5, where students (69%) chose to continue writing despite not understanding the topic. This was done until they understood the subject and come up with as many ideas as they can.

Most of the respondents (87%) also chose to do brainstorming in the prewriting stage. This is revealed in Statement 4. In terms of brainstorming, they chose to discuss writing topics with other people, such as teachers and classmates (Statement 7), and some others (22%) sometimes also listed words, phrases, and short notes related to the topic (Statement 6).

In Statement 8, most of the students (87%) did mind mapping to generate and cluster ideas before writing. This goes into the clustering process. If they do not understand the topic, they (86%) try to find writings from native or expert writers to use as a model (Statement 9). Next, the discussion is about the stage of drafting. The majority of successful writing students write exclusively in English. This is evident from the results presented in Statement 10. It demonstrates that the majority of students did not compose sentences in Indonesian and then translate them literally into English. Even though there was little text, the majority of them rarely (13%) composed passages in Indonesian before translating them into English (Statement 13).

Moreover, the majority of respondents are then thinking about the reader and the purpose of their writing during the writing process. This is demonstrated by the results in Statements 11 and 12. It can be concluded that the two strategies described above are very effective in producing good writing because they maintain consistency and are in accordance with the reader's objective. There are a number of things that successful learners do when encountering difficulties. Among them, when students did not know how to express their thoughts in English, they (61%)

simplified what they want to write (Statement 14), then if students (57%) did not know the exact word in English, they used a similar English word that they knew (Statement 15). Then, if they did not know similar words in English, they (65%) stopped writing and look up the word in a dictionary (Statement 16), and students (52%) did not write a sentence just because they do not know a word in a sentence (Statement 17).

Most of the respondents try not to change what they have written, whether a sentence or a paragraph. This is as shown in Statement 18. Then the students mostly stopped after each sentence or paragraph to tie ideas together and get more new ideas (Statement 19), and all of the students constantly checked their grammar while writing (Statement 20).

Then the third stage is revising. At this stage, all of the students admitted that they revised the content and make the ideas clearer (Statement 21) then in the next Statement 22, most of them (52%) also went back to their writing to revise and improve the organization. We can say that a good revision strategy has to do with improving the content, making the ideas clearer, and making the writing better organized. The final stage of the writing strategy is editing. Statement 23 reveals that respondents edited the draft individually more often (52%) than collectively, whereas students (61%) sometimes edited the draft collectively (Statement 24) This indicates that students only engage in collaborative editing when they are unable to resolve issues independently.

Discussion

Writing is a very complex process that represents the highest level of communication; therefore, it is the last skill to be mastered when learning a language. Writing is a continuous process of thinking, organizing, rethinking, and reorganizing (Boardman, 2002). Writing requires a command of vocabulary, spelling, grammar, and punctuation, as well as appropriate content and word choice for the intended audience and purpose. To express the ideas in well-organized sentences with a high degree of coherence, the students must, however, be able to think and organize. Thus, it is strongly suggested that the student's writing is influenced by the writing strategies employed during the writing process. Indeed, students preferred writing strategies to assist them in improving their writing quality. Additionally, because their writing strategies and writing production are

connected, it allows for the possibility of demonstrating the actual differences in the writing strategies of high and low achievers.

Penuelas (2012) believes that writing strategies are a collection of tasks rather than a single action. Because of that, the strategy employed, according to Richards and Renandya (2002), is to divide the writing process into four stages: prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. These four stages are interconnected. The same thing was conveyed by Langan (2008). Writing is not a fast-paced activity. It takes time and effort. He divides the writing process into four stages: pre-writing, first-draft writing, revising, and editing.

The first stage is prewriting, which is the preparation phase before writing and is critical for making the writing process easier in the subsequent stages. According to this study, successful learners employed a variety of prewriting strategies, such as planning, free writing, brainstorming, and clustering. This process will give a writer a plethora of ideas as well as a good writing flow and outline.

Then, during the drafting stage, successful students focused on writing and all of the ways they improved their work in the subsequent stages: revising and editing. They were only concerned with the writing's purpose, the reader, and the outline created during the prewriting stage. The majority of them wrote entirely in English, with no translation. Even if they run into minor problems in the middle of the process, they came up with alternative words. This demonstrates that these successful students were also mastering English words. In addition, they returned to their writing to revise the content and clarify the ideas, before improving the writing organization. Finally, editing comes as the last step. The majority of editing was done on an individual basis, possibly to produce more original writing.

The researchers finally recognized that this research has a flaw. Consequently, this study needs constructive criticism and suggestions to improve its quality. The weakness of this writing, according to the researchers, is determining respondents, who are only concerned with their final score and not the writing process. The researchers hope that the issue will be resolved in subsequent research.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this study is that successful learners have strategies in writing to overcome all problems and achieve the best results in writing. This conclusion is based on the description of the data that has been reviewed and

evaluated in the previous chapter. In accordance with the purpose of this study, which is to find out what strategies are applied by successful learners, the series of strategies can be narrowed down into four stages of the writing process, namely pre-writing, compiling, revising, and editing.

If a student wants to be a good writer, they can apply this method. Understanding the process thoroughly allows for the implementation of strategies. A student, for example, must prepare thoroughly in the pre-writing stage before beginning a piece of writing. As an example, try free writing, brainstorming, or clustering. Only then they will be able to move right into the drafting stage, because they will have a clear idea of what they want to write and what writing structure they will employ. As a result, maximizing preparation during the pre-writing stage will reduce any problems that come during the drafting stage.

Then, students must review their writing by revising it so that any flawed ideas or writing frameworks can be corrected. Then simply edit a piece of writing to perfection. These strategies, of course, cannot be understood and applied instantly, necessitating ongoing practice in order for a writer to produce high-quality writing.

Suggestions

In order to improve in writing, the researcher recommends some suggestions. It might be useful for those concerned to consider the following:

1) Students need textual materials (books, articles, short stories, etc.) for writing practice. The more information they receive, the more they can write.

2) Students do free writing as exercise.

3) Student must always practice. They can practice writing everywhere and about everything.

4) Students should participated in writing community to keep spirit of writing. That can help them to improve writing also.

5) The student also have to master some of vocabularies to improve their ability in writing and never lose writing class.

References

Ahmed, A. M. (2016). *EFL Writing Instruction in an Egyptian University Classroom: An Emic View.* London: Palgrave Macmillan

Asmari, A.A. (2013). Investigation of Writing Strategies, Writing Apprehension, and Writing Achievement among Saudi EFL-Major Students*. Canadian Center of Science and Education, 6 (11), 130-143.*

Boardman, C. A. (2002). *Writing to Communicate.* New York: Pearson Education. Inc.

Peñuelas, A.B.C. (2012). The Writing Strategies Of American University Students: Focusing On Memory, Compensation, Social And Affective Strategies: *Estudios de lingüística inglesa aplicada 77-113.*

Carter, M. (2007). Ways of Knowing, Doing, and Writing in the Disciplines, *College Composition and Communication: National Council of Teachers of English 58 (3) 385-418*

Crebert, G. (2011). *Problem Solving Skills Toolkit 2nd Edition.* Queensland: Griffit University.

Graham, S. (2008). *Effective Writing Instruction for All Students, Renaissance Learning.* Wisconsin: Vanderbilt University

Grenfell, M., & Alnufaie, M. (2012) EFL Students' Writing Strategies in Saudi Arabian ESP Writing Classes: Perspectives on Learning Strategies in Self-access Language Learning: *SiSAL Journal 3(4), 407-422.*

Grenville, K. (2001). *Writing from Start to Finish: A Six Step Guides.* Sydney: Allen and Unwin.

Harmer, J. (2007). *How To Teach Writing.* New York: Longman.

Langan, J. (2005). *College Writing Skill With Reading,* New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc.

Langan, J. (2008). *Explore Writing: Sentences and Paragraphs.* New York: McGraw Hill.

Mu, C. (2005*)*. A taxonomy of ESL writing strategies*. In Proceedings Redesigning Pedagogy: Research, Policy, Practice, 1-10*.

Oshima, A, & Hogue, A (2007)*. An Introduction to Academic Writing,* New York: Pearson Education.

Randal, H. (2004)*. Literacy an Introduction.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press

Richard, J.C., & Renandya, W. A. (2002)*. Methodology in Language Teaching: An Anthology of Current Practice.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Riddel, D. (2003)*. Teaching English as a Second Language.* London: Hodder Headline.

Sudjana, N. (2006)*. Metode Statistik.* Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.