

An Analysis of Direct Language Learning Strategies in Writing Skill Used by English Education Department Students

Wahyuni Lidya Putri

¹English Language Education of Graduate Program in Padang State University

*Corresponding Author, email: putryayu2110@gmail.com

Received: November,14, 2023

Revised: December, 14, 2023

Accepted: December, 30, 2023

Abstract

For students, studying English as a foreign language is a challenge. Students' achievement while learning English is influenced by effective language learning strategies, particularly when it comes to writing. Students benefit from direct strategies since they help in the storing and retrieval of knowledge. The aim of this study is to identify the different types of direct language learning strategies that English language education students use when writing analytical exposition texts, as well as the extent to which these strategies are applied. This study is qualitative research. Data were gathered via interviews and questionnaires. There are three different strategies categorized. Based on Oxford (1990) classified direct strategies into three categories: memory, cognitive, and compensatory. These strategies are applied directly. The second-year English Education Department students of Bung Hatta University in Padang are the focus of this study. There were 28 students involved in this research. The findings demonstrated that most students used memory strategies. The majority of the time, the students employed memory strategies to commit terms from analytical exposition texts to memory. The compensation strategies that are classified as often utilized come next. In order to keep creating analytical exposition texts, students employ compensatory strategies. They swap out challenging terms for synonyms or more comparable ones. The next kind of cognitive strategies are those that are utilized sometimes. As a result, students employ memory strategies the most frequently. Through the use of several direct strategies, students can develop their writing fluency in analytical exposition texts.

Keywords: Direct Learning Strategy, Writing Analytical Exposition, English Education Department Students

Introduction

Language acquisition has been the focus of ongoing research and development, particularly in academic settings. One of the most crucial abilities for students is writing, particularly for those majoring in English. Despite the fact that writing classes aim to help students develop their writing abilities, the majority of students still find it difficult to write well. There are challenges with how students breakdown ideas when they write. According to Alisha et al. (2019), people who don't often write in English require assistance while composing texts. They struggle to put sentences into paragraphs.

Every learner has a unique method for achieving the objectives of studying English as a second language, especially mastering writing abilities. One of them is a learning strategy, which is employed by students. Language learning strategies, according to Brown (2001), are tactics that a student employs to attain learning success. Academic writing proficiency is frequently considered to be one of the most crucial components of language proficiency for successful academic performance. Students may thus use language learning techniques when writing in order to improve the quality of their writing assignments (Mutiatun, 2017). The instructional strategies utilised by language learners are defined as the approaches they take in order to enhance their language proficiency and aptitude (Tran-Hoang-Thu, 2009).

Learning strategies are significant because they assist students more easily achieve their goals in the learning process, as stated in the preceding statement about Learning Strategy. As a result, students

will find it simpler to succeed in learning, particularly English, if they can select the best learning tactics to use.

Language learning strategies, according to Oxford (1990), are distinct behaviours or cognitive processes that learners utilise to improve their language acquisition. Direct language acquisition procedures, which engage the target language directly, such as memorising vocabulary, comprehending grammatical rules, or engaging in writing practises, are crucial (Chamot, 2004). Writing is more than just word building for students in a specialised subject like the English Education Department; it embodies the articulation of ideas, the formation of arguments, and the ability to convince (Hyland, 2013). Furthermore, students want assistance in developing analytical exposition text. They want clarification on how to properly produce analytical exposition language. According to Septiani et al. (2020), students require assistance in creating analytical exposition texts that are relevant to the general structure and linguistic aspects. Students are also having difficulty determining the best way to build their writing analytical exposition text. Several students employ incorrect grammar when writing the material. Furthermore, Septiani et al (2020) said that many students must pay attention to word spelling when writing the text. Internal elements of writing challenges include difficulty in developing content that is suited to general structures, a lack of right terms, and a misuse of correct syntax. As a result, the students' analytical exposition text must be modified.

According to O'Malley & Chamot (1990: 1), "Learning strategies are defined as the unique ideas or practises people employ to understand, process, or retain new knowledge. According to Oxford (1990), strategies for learning were further categorised into direct and indirect classifications. Direct strategies are employed directly and can be categorised as memory, cognitive, or compensatory based on Oxford (1990). In contrast, the categorisation of split indirect strategies encompasses three distinct groups, namely social, emotional, and metacognitive.

Oxford's LLS model (1990) clarified that memory strategies centred on mental imagery creation, application of pictures and sounds, and thorough examination include direct methods. Additionally, practising, sending and receiving signals, analysing and reasoning, and structuring input and output are all associated with cognitive strategies. Next, compensatory tactics concentrate on making educated guesses and getting past speech and writing barriers related to metacognition..

Oxford's LLS model (1990) clarified that memory strategies centred on mental imagery creation, application of pictures and sounds, and thorough examination include direct methods. Additionally, practising, sending and receiving signals, analysing and reasoning, and structuring input and output are all associated with cognitive strategies. Next, compensatory tactics concentrate on making educated guesses and getting past speech and writing barriers related to metacognition.

Zhang (2017) and other recent research emphasise the value of direct strategies in enhancing language writing abilities. However, owing to things like ignorance or academic stress, their uptake by students in the English Education Department is frequently restricted. Following the introduction of these tactics, Setiawan (2021) observed that class VII students at SMP PAB I Klumpang showed improved motivation, with their initially lukewarm reactions turning noticeably positive by the second cycle. Hapsari (2019) also highlighted the importance of direct strategies in improving linguistic accuracy and fluency.

This study is anchored in the need to bridge this observed gap. To truly prepare students for the challenges of global communication, it's paramount to ensure they are armed with efficient techniques and are utilizing them effectively. This involves not merely recognizing beneficial strategies but understanding their real-world application and potential hindrances (Thornbury, 2011).

The core objective of this research is to meticulously analyze the direct language learning strategies leveraged by English Education Department students in honing their writing skills. By offering a deep dive into current practices, highlighting areas for potential growth, and presenting actionable insights, this study aspires to furnish educators, curriculum planners, and students with a refined perspective on English writing education. Through this endeavor, the research aims to make a pioneering contribution that could reshape the paradigms of English writing pedagogy (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

As the study progresses, the objectives of the research are to ascertain the specific types of direct language learning strategies (LLS) utilised by students in the English Education Department during the production of analytical exposition texts. Additionally, the research aims to investigate the manner in which these strategies are implemented by the above-mentioned students. The ultimate aspiration is to

craft a holistic guide for stakeholders in English education, ensuring the most effective and impactful learning and teaching experiences in writing.

Methods

The present investigation was conducted utilising a qualitative methodology by the researcher as a descriptive study. The primary objective of the qualitative study was to examine the manner in which individuals articulated their experiences using metaphorical language to facilitate comprehension and interpretation of these experiences. Sentences are used to explain the study's findings. During the academic year 2023–2024, the study was carried out among Bung Hatta University's English Education Department students.

The focus of this study pertains to the class of third-semester students enrolled in the English Education Department. The researchers have employed purposive sampling as the designated sampling strategy. There were 28 students became participants in this study. twenty-eight (28) students filled out the items of the questionnaire. A questionnaire, modelled after the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), was administered to students in order to assess their utilisation of learning strategies. In this term, there were two types of learning strategies, namely direct and indirect. However, this study only looked at direct language learning strategies that students used, whether memory strategies, cognitive strategies or compensation strategies.

This study gained the data from primary data which were the result of the questionnaire that consisted of only direct strategies on the Strategy Inventory Language Learning (SILL) by Oxford (1990) and interview with the students. Ary (2006) stated the role of primary data was for the researcher to ask questions about some events, experiences, or social phenomena. The writer collected the data directly from the students.

The instruments of this research were interviews and questionnaires. The writer gave the students a questionnaire from Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) by Oxford (1990). These strategies consisted of 50 points divided into direct and indirect strategies. However, the writer only used 14 statements that were related to this study. In addition, structured interview was used to gain more information about the student's language learning strategies. The writer proposed the item of questions by considering language learning strategies.

This research only found the types of direct language learning. This study only used a direct language learning strategies questionnaire with 14 questions divided into memory strategies, cognitive strategies and compensation strategies. This research used a close- ended questionnaires, which uses a 5-point Likert scale. In this case, the students were presented with several statements and asked to score each on a multi-point scale. The scale utilised in this study consisted of five levels, with a value of 1 representing "strongly disagree," a value of 2 indicating "disagree," a value of 3 representing "neutral," a value of 4 indicating "agree," and a value of 5 representing "strongly agree". Moreover, the writer obtained the second data through interviews related to SILL designed by Oxford (1990). The research instrument from questionnaire was distributed online using google form. The time required to complete the questions is estimated to be around 30 to 40 minutes. In addition, the author conducted interviews with students utilising voice notes on the messaging platform WhatsApp.

Result and Discussion

Result

The findings from the questionnaire indicate varying degrees of strategy use by students in writing analytical exposition texts. Memory strategies were the most predominant with a score of 3.73, reflecting frequent utilization of techniques like associating new knowledge with prior knowledge, using sentences to reinforce new words, leveraging mental imagery, employing rhymes, utilizing flashcards, and recalling the spatial location of words. These strategies enable students to memorize words efficiently.

Cognitive strategies secured a score of 3.38, suggesting they were sometimes employed. Such strategies encompass repeated writing of analytical exposition texts, versatile use of known words, pattern identification in texts, avoiding verbatim translation, and summarizing texts in English.

Lastly, compensation strategies achieved a score of 3.65, signifying their general use. These involve inventing new words in the absence of the right English terms and substituting challenging words with synonymous terms.

Discussion

Memory strategies emerged as the top strategy, suggesting that students prioritize memorization techniques, especially when dealing with vocabulary in analytical exposition texts. The prominence of memory strategies might be linked to the nature of the questionnaire items, which emphasize tasks like relating new information with prior knowledge, the use of rhymes, or even spatial recognition of words. These techniques arguably provide a foundational knowledge base that supports the writing process.

Cognitive strategies, while used to a lesser extent, still play a significant role. Repeatedly writing analytical exposition texts, for example, mirrors the classic notion of "practice makes perfect." By avoiding direct translation and summarizing English texts, students also promote better comprehension and internalization of the language.

Compensation strategies' score indicates students' adaptability in their writing process. When confronted with vocabulary gaps, students creatively navigate these challenges, either by inventing new terms or leveraging synonyms. This adaptive approach not only aids in maintaining the flow of writing but also showcases resilience in the face of language barriers.

In summary, while memory strategies dominate, a blend of cognitive and compensation strategies ensures students achieve fluency in writing analytical exposition texts. This mix reflects a dynamic and multi-faceted approach to language learning and writing proficiency.

Conclusion

In line with the research objectives set out at the beginning, this study has shed light on the direct language learning strategies adopted by students of the English Education Department when writing analytical exposition texts. Predominantly, memory strategies were the most favored, signifying a strong inclination towards memorization techniques in vocabulary assimilation. Cognitive strategies, although used to a moderate extent, still played a crucial role, especially in refining the writing process and enhancing language comprehension. Compensation strategies, showcasing students' adaptability, were also frequently employed to overcome vocabulary challenges.

Regarding the implementation of these strategies, students creatively and resourcefully incorporated a blend of techniques. While memory strategies laid the foundation for vocabulary retention, cognitive strategies emphasized the importance of consistent practice and deeper understanding. Compensation strategies, on the other hand, showcased the students' resilience and adaptability in navigating language barriers.

In essence, students of the English Education Department employ a diverse array of direct language learning strategies, reflecting a comprehensive and adaptable approach to mastering the art of writing analytical exposition texts.

Acknowledgments (Times New Roman 12, Bold)

The author extends her deepest gratitude to God for His unwavering guidance, which enabled the timely completion of the paper titled "An Analysis of Direct Language Learning Strategies in Writing Skill Used by English Education Department Students" for the INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY (ICOLP 3). Special thanks are extended to Prof. Dr. M. Zaim, M.Hum., Head of Language Pedagogy at Universitas Negeri Padang, and Dr. Lely Refnita, M. Pd, a writing lecturer at Bung Hatta University. Additionally, appreciation is conveyed to the third semester students of English Language Education at Bung Hatta University for their invaluable contributions to the research data.

References

- Alisha, F., Safitri, N., & Santoso, I. (2019, January 20). Students' Difficulties in Writing EFL. *Professional Journal of English Education*, 2, 20-25.

- Ary, D. (2006). *Introduction to Research in Education*. New York: Wadsworth Thomson Learning.
- Setiyadi .B, *Language Learning Strategy Questionnaire (LLSQ) A Measurement to Identify Students' Learning Strategies and Prepare the Success of Learning English in the Indonesian Context (Empirical Evidence)*. 2016.
- Chamot, A. U. (2004). *Issue in Language Learning Strategy Research and Teaching*. Singapore: National University of Singapore.
- Hyland, K. (2003). On Second Language Writing. In *TESOL Quarterly* (Vol. 36, Issue 4). <https://doi.org/10.2307/3588251>
- Mutiatur, N. (2017). Language learning strategies, motivation, and writing achievement of Indonesian EFL. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ)*, 250- 263
- O'Malley, J.M., and Chamot, A.U. (1990). *Learning Strategies in Second Language Acquisition*. Cambridge University Press.
- Oxford, R. (1990). *Language Learning Strategies: What Every teacher Should Know*. United States of America: Heinle Publisher.
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
- Septiani, S., Prawati, A., & Eliwarti. (2020, JANUQRI-JUNI). An Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Writing Analytical Exposition Text by The Second Students of SMAN 13 Pekanbaru. *JOM-FKIP*, 7, 1-9.
- Thornbury, S. (2011). Writing. In G. Hall (Ed.), *Exploring English language teaching: Language in action* (pp. 95-111). Routledge.
- Tran-Hoang-Thu. (2009). *Learning strategies used by successful language learners*. Alliant International University.
- Wang, M., & Treffers-Daller, J. (2017). Exploring the role of strategy use in the acquisition of English as a foreign language among Chinese students. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 8(1), 27-52.
- Zhang, D. (2017). Direct strategies in L2 writing revision: A interplay of cognitive and metacognitive strategies. *Journal of Response to Writing*, 3(1), 57-93.