

SELF-REGULATED WRITING (SRW) STRATEGIES IN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY WRITING

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Abstract: Self-regulated writing (SRW) strategies have been used to regulate students' writing in many aspects, especially writing an argumentative essay. Students often feel difficult to write an argumentative essay, so they need to apply SRW strategies to enhance their writing quality. This study was carried out to explore two research objectives; to find out the SRW strategy that is frequently used by EFL undergraduate students from three levels (e.g. high, middle, and low proficiency) and to examine the correlation between students' SRW and proficiency in writing argumentative essay. This study employed a quantitative approach using two research designs, descriptive quantitative and correlational designs. This current study involved 76 English Department students, and they were required to fill out a Self-Regulated Writing Argumentative Essay Questionnaire (SRWAEQ). The collected data were then analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics in the form of correlational analysis using Pearson Product Moment from the statistical formula of the SPSS 27.0 version. The results of this current study revealed that overall SRW is moderately used by students. Interestingly, all students (students with high, moderate, and low proficiency) prefer to use the social behavior dimension as their self-regulated writing strategies. The results of this current study revealed that overall SRW is moderately used by students. Interestingly, all students (students with high, moderate, and low proficiency) prefer to use the social behavior dimension as their self-regulated writing strategies. Regarding the correlation, this current study showed that there is no significant correlation between students' SRW and proficiency in writing an argumentative essay. It is implied that students' scores in argumentative essay writing were not influenced only by the SRW strategy.

Key Words: *Argumentative essay, self-regulated writing, writing strategies*

INTRODUCTION

Writing is essential and commonly used in daily life, whether it is individual such as in letter writing, or member of society such as in workplace issues (Iftanti, 2016). She also argued that writing has been learned in formal

education since it is important to have the good ability and skills to write. Competence in writing skills is divided into several parts, one of which is writing an essay (Deepublish, 2021). Oshima and Hogue (2000) argued that an essay is longer writing consisting of several paragraphs that discuss a particular topic. In addition, Rahayu (2007) stated that an essay is a type of writing that discusses a problem starting by presenting the problem, expressing imagination, and the personal opinion supported by facts and theories. Besides, writing essays is a regular activity for college students. (Mei, 2006). Discussing essay, Chriss (2022) classified essays into five types; expository essay, persuasive essay, descriptive essay, and argumentative essay. One of essays studied by students in higher education is an argumentative essay. An argumentative essay is the ordinary type of essay in which university students must compose (Mei, 2006). An argumentative essay has three elements of its structure in general. Hyland (1990) explained that there are three elements of the structure of the argumentative essay. First, a thesis, it introduces the debatable proposition. Second, the argument, it provides the discussion and the rationale for the thesis. Third, the conclusion, it summarizes the discussion and validates the thesis.

In writing an argumentative essay, students often find difficulties. For example, Mundriyah and Parmawati (2016) said that students often feel difficulty to arrange the sentences, Alisha et al., (2019) also reported that students have difficulty making good and correct sentences because of their lack of ability in grammar. Alisha et al., (2019) also showed that students who have limited vocabulary found difficulties in writing essay process. Other difficulties are students mostly difficulty expressing their argumentation (Latifi et al., 2021). There are some reasons why students feel difficult to express their argumentation; Firstly, some students are unaware of the characteristics of a good argumentative essay because they have limited of knowledge (Bacha, 2010). Secondly, although students are aware of the characteristics of a good argumentative essay, they might find difficulties to arrange the structures of argumentative essay when practicing writing argumentative essays (Valero Haro et al., 2019). Third, students frequently struggle to write these essays for different argumentation in various tasks (Noroozi et al., 2018). All of the difficulties indicate that students require extra help to compose an argumentative essay.

To cope with students' challenges in composing an argumentative essay, they require to apply writing strategies. Writing strategies can help students in process of writing in terms of planning, during writing, and revising. For example, students apply provision planning as their strategy (Setyowati et al., 2017). Besides, students apply collaborative writing strategies in writing an argumentative essay (Abbas and Herdi, 2018). They stated that students who used collaborative writing strategies were more engaged, imaginative, and enthusiastic in the process of learning. Since writing strategy can affect writing performance, students need to regulate themselves in using learning strategies (Cohen &

Macaro, 2009) as cited in (Umamah and Cahyono, 2020). Students should engage in multifaceted activities to develop self-regulation that includes emotional, behavioral, motivational, cognitive, and metacognitive actions to accomplish their learning goals (Kizilcec et al., 2017). From this, the writer assumed that all the strategies mentioned that students used by themselves can be categorized as self-regulated writing (SRW) strategies since students need to manage their way of writing. SRW strategy is consisting the metacognitive strategies dimension, the cognitive strategies dimension, the social behavior strategies dimension, and the motivational regulation strategies dimension (Teng and Zhang, 2016). In line with it, Zimmerman & Schunk (2011) mentioned that self-regulation strategies consist of cognition, metacognition, social behavior, and motivational regulation strategies.

Some previous studies gave evidence that self-regulated writing strategies are implemented by students in writing. In primary school, Hong Kong primary students applied self-regulation strategies before starting to write, in the process of writing as well as reviewing their writing (Bai et al., 2020). Hong Kong elementary school students applied e-learning tools as their SRW to improve their English writing (Bai et al., 2020). They also reported that there is a linear positive pattern between English writing proficiency and SRW strategies use. At the university level, SRW strategies have been implemented by Chinese University students (Xu, 2021). Also, SRW strategies significantly affected Chinese undergraduate students' writing performance (Teng and Zhang, 2018). Besides, Self-Regulation has been practiced by master students for their research writing (Santelmann et al., 2018). Recently investigators have examined SRW strategies as primary students writing strategies and undergraduate students' strategies in writing. Mostly the investigation was done in China, Hong Kong, and Malaysia, but in Indonesia was still a small number. In Indonesia, SRW has not been discussed except by Umamah and Cahyono (2020), who explored self-regulated writing strategies in writing expository essays. Umamah and Cahyono (2020) suggested a further study to explore the use of SRW across proficiency levels. Therefore, to close the research gaps, this current research explored the use of SRW by undergraduate students at low proficiency, middle proficiency, and high proficiency level. Furthermore, the present study analyzed the correlation between the Self-Regulated Writing (SRW) of undergraduate students and their English essay writing proficiency.

METHOD

This current study employed a quantitative approach using descriptive quantitative and correlational design to find out the research objectives. The researcher involved 76 participants using a convenience sampling technique from essay writing class in the third semester of English Education Department at University of Islam Malang. The participants were then grouped into three groups;

high, middle, and low proficiency students based on their scores in writing an argumentative essay. The classification of group participants is presented as follows.

Table 1: Group of Proficiency

Score	Classification
1-69	Low
70-79	Middle
80-100	High

The instruments of this study were an adapted self-regulated writing argumentative essay questionnaire (SRWAEQ) and English essay writing score. The total of SRWAEQ was 40 statement items. The SRWAEQ consisted of four dimensions: metacognition dimensions consist nine items, cognition dimensions consist nine items, social behavior dimensions consist seven items, and motivational regulation dimensions consist fifteen items. Each dimension also included some features. Exactly, metacognition dimensions involved idea planning, goal-oriented monitoring, and evaluating; cognition dimensions included text processing and course memory; social behavior dimensions covered peer learning and feedback handling; motivational regulation dimension consisted of interest enhancement, motivational self-talk, and emotional control. To avoid the ambiguous meaning of the statements' items in the questionnaire, the English was translated into Indonesian since the participants' first language was Indonesian so that they had an accurate understanding. Furthermore, the questionnaire was validated by an expert to test the accuracy of the meaning of each questionnaire item so that the questionnaire was valid and could be distributed. All the questionnaire items were on a 4-point Likert scale (1="Never"; 2="Rarely", 3="Often", 4="Always"). The present study also collected students' scores on an argumentative essay in essay writing class of English Education Department at the University of Islam Malang. Moreover, students' essay writing scores were obtained from the lecturer.

To collect the data, the researcher distributed the questionnaire to undergraduate students by using Google Forms. Students were asked to fill out the questionnaire for about 5-10 minutes. The researcher took approximately one month to collect participant responses. Then, the researcher calculated the frequency scale of the student responses. Next, the researcher contacted the essay writing lecturers to obtain the score for writing an English argumentative essay. To get the student scores, the researcher needed approximately one month. Lastly, the researcher calculated the correlation between students' SRW and their level of proficiency.

To analyze the data, the researcher applied two data analysis techniques. First, to find the frequencies of SRW applied by undergraduate students based on students' writing proficiency, the data from participants would be analyzed employing descriptive statistics to calculate the mean. Secondly, to examine whether there is a significant correlation between students' self-regulated writing and their writing proficiency, the researcher used inferential statistics in the form of correlation analysis using Pearson Product Moment. All the analysis techniques use the statistical formula of the SPSS 27.0 version.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The Frequency of SRW Used by Students based on Writing Proficiency

After collecting and computing the data, the results are presented below. The interpretation of the mean score use Taib's (1996) methods as cited in Phoong et al. (2021)., in which "1.00 – 2.00" belongs to the low level, "2.01 – 3.00" is in the moderate level, and "3.01 – 4.00" refers to the high level. To determine the SRW strategies frequently used by students, a descriptive statistical analysis was used. The table of the frequency is as follow.

Level of proficiency	Descriptive Statistics								
	High			Middle			Low		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
Metacognition Strategy	37	3.00	.36	34	3.01	.40	5	2.62	.46
Cognition Strategy	37	2.97	.35	34	2.95	.39	5	2.58	.54
Social Behavior Strategy	37	3.10	.44	34	3.26	.47	5	3.11	.61
Motivational Regulation Strategy	37	2.83	.36	34	2.84	.46	5	2.45	.42
Overall SRW	37	2.95	.29	34	2.98	.34	5	2.64	.43

Table 1: the frequency of SRW used by students based on writing proficiency

As can be seen from Table 1, the total number of students with high proficiency levels is 37, and the mean overall SRW used by high-proficiency students is 2.95, which is at the moderate grade. This indicates that students with high proficiency levels averagely apply SRW for writing an argumentative essay. Differently, the social behavior dimension (M=3.10) is in the high rank, which means that students with high proficiency levels frequently use those dimensions for writing an argumentative essay. Then, the metacognition (M=3.00), the cognition dimension (M=2.97), and the motivational regulation dimension

(M=2.83) are at a moderate level, which means students quite apply those strategies for writing an argumentative essay.

Next are students with middle proficiency. The total of students with middle proficiency levels is 34, and the mean overall SRW used by middle-proficiency students is 2.98, which is at the moderate level. This implies that students with middle proficiency averagely employ SRW in writing an argumentative essay. Differently, social behavior (M=3.26) and metacognition (M=3.01) dimensions are at a high level, which means that social behavior and metacognition dimensions are the most frequently used by students with middle proficiency. Then, the cognition dimension (M=2.95) and the motivational regulation dimension (M=2.84) are at the moderate level, which means students middlingly apply those strategies for writing an argumentative essay.

Last, the SRW strategy that often used by students with low proficiency levels. Unfortunately, students who are categorized as low proficiency students are a too small number, which is only five. Consequently, they were not analyzed.

The Relationship Among Students' SRW Strategy and Students' Writing Proficiency

To determine whether there is a correlation between the SRW strategy of undergraduate students and their writing proficiency, correlational analysis using Pearson Product Moment is applied for calculating the relationship. The table of correlation analysis is presented as follows.

Correlations			
		Score_Essay	Mean_SRW
Score_Essay	Pearson Correlation	1	.177
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.126
	N	76	76
Mean_SRW	Pearson Correlation	.177	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.126	
	N	76	76

Table 2: Correlation analysis between SRW strategy and students' proficiency

The result of the correlational analysis is presented in Table 2. It can be known that the r value is .177 which means the relationship among students' self-regulated writing and their writing proficiency is very low. Moreover, the p-value (Sig. 2-tailed) of the relationship among self-regulated writing (N=76) and their writing achievement (N=76) is .126 which is higher than the critical value (.05). It means that there is no significant relationship among students' self-regulated writing strategy and their writing proficiency in writing an argumentative essay.

From the results mentioned earlier, there are two possibilities for interpreting the research findings to determine the hypothesis of this study. First, when the p-value is < 0.05 , the null hypothesis (H_0) is refused, and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is received. If the p-value is > 0.05 , the null hypothesis (H_0) is received, and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is refused. Hence, according to the result from analysis using IBM Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 27 software (*see Table 4.3*), the p-value (Sig. 2-tailed) is .126 which is higher than 0.05. So, it can be confirmed that the null hypothesis (H_0) is received, and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is refused. Accordingly, there is no significant correlation between students' SRW strategy and writing proficiency in an argumentative essay.

Discussion

This present research is conducted to investigate the frequency of SRW used by high-proficiency students, middle-proficiency students, and low-proficiency students. Also, this present research investigates the correlation between students' SRW and their proficiency in writing an argumentative essay. The result of the descriptive statistics analysis shows that overall SRW is moderately used by students. Furthermore, the highest mean of the SRW dimension is the social behavior, and the lowest mean is the motivational regulation dimension. After calculating students' SRW per group proficiency levels, the calculation of the statistical analysis result reveals that high-proficiency students frequently use the social behavior dimension in writing an argumentative essay, and students with middle proficiency often use both the social behavior dimension and metacognition dimension for their self-regulated writing strategies in writing an argumentative essay. Nevertheless, the highest mean of the SRW dimension per-group level proficiency is still the social behavior dimension. The social behavior dimension includes peer learning strategies and feedback-handling strategies. This implies that overall students brainstorm and discuss ideas with peers, accomplish assignments together with peers, seek help from peers to write an argumentative essay as well as receive feedback from teachers, peers, and resources to increase their writing in an argumentative essay.

The abovementioned result supports the previous study conducted by Umamah and Cahyono (2020). They stated that the social behavior dimension is frequently used by Indonesian undergraduate students. Umamah and Cahyono (2020) mentioned social environment dimension is the high frequency of SRW used. Students ask for assistance from colleagues, lecturers, elders, or resources such as a book, the Internet, or a computer to finish students writing assignments specifically in writing an essay. This result also supports the previous study conducted by (Bailey, 2019). Bailey (2019) reported that students prefer to use social behavior strategies in writing. Students frequently use automatic writing evaluation software (e.g., Grammarly) to check their writing. Students prefer using software because it consumes less time than peer feedback or teacher

feedback. In contrast to the previous study mentioned, this current finding is different from the study by Santelmann et al. (2018). Santelman et al. (2018) found that MA students use metacognition strategies for writing. Students read the clear instructions for making writing plans to set particular writing circumstances and material targets. Additionally, students prefer for setting up the formats and templates to assist them in organizing their plans in writing.

Regarding the correlation, the current study reveals that there is no significant relationship between students' SRW strategy and writing proficiency in writing an argumentative essay. The statistical analysis indicates that self-regulated writing strategies do not correlate with students' writing proficiency. This might be caused by students who have not been able to study autonomously while they work individually in an argumentative essay-writing test, this can be indicated by the high use of the social behavior dimension over other dimensions. The result of the present research is contrary with the previous research directed by Farsani et al. (2014). Farsani et al (2014) showed that there is a negative and weak correlation between SRW and writing achievement in Iranian EFL learners. It means that there is a significant correlation between SRW and students' writing achievement. This result shows that students who applied self-regulation writing properly get good writing scores and are more confident, independent, and autonomous. This current finding is also contrary to Sun and Wang (2020) who revealed a positive relationship between writing self-regulation strategy and students' writing proficiency. This finding reveals students applying writing self-regulation were more proactive. Students who are proactive find more writing chances and typically achieve higher scores on writing tests.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the findings and discussions, it is noted that self-regulated writing (SRW) strategies are moderately applied by high-proficiency students and middle-proficiency students. Additionally, the highest use of SRW dimensions is the social behavior strategy, and the lowest use of SRW dimensions is the motivational regulation strategy. It can be concluded that students from high and middle proficiency still prefer to share ideas and do assignments with peers, ask a peer for help as well as receive feedback from teachers, peers, and any resources. Also, it can be summarized that high-proficiency and middle-proficiency students rarely convince themselves about the importance of the lessons and having good scores, compete with others as well as manage their mood in writing an argumentative essay. Moreover, it is found that there is no significant correlation between students' self-regulated writing (SRW) and their writing proficiency. It can be said that students' scores in argumentative essay writing were not only influenced by the use of SRW strategies.

According to the finding of the present research, the following recommendations are made to teachers and future researchers. Teachers should inform students how to apply self-regulated writing strategies appropriately so that students can learn autonomously. Moreover, this study shows a small number of low-proficiency students, so the future researcher can use this information to compare the use of SRW strategies in an equal number of high-proficiency students and low-proficiency students using other research sampling techniques.

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