

Study on English Writing Self-Regulation Strategy Among Chinese College Students

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Abstract: English Writing is laid great importance in universities and vocational colleges in China. It is found that English writing self-regulation strategy has an impact on the efficiency of English writing. The study explored Chinese college students' English writing self-regulation strategy in terms of writing planning, goal-oriented monitoring, goal-oriented evaluating, emotional control, memorization strategies, and metacognitive judgment using descriptive research. Online surveys were conducted among 381 freshmen and sophomores from two universities and two vocational colleges in China. A preliminary test was performed, and the internal consistency reliability coefficients of the subscales and the entire questionnaire were found to be acceptable. After data collection, descriptive statistics analysis and correlation analysis were conducted. The findings showed that Chinese college students employ a range of self-regulation strategies in English writing, although the frequency of application of strategies varies. When it comes to profile differences, males have a greater assessment of self-regulation strategy. Vocational college students have superior metacognitive judgment skills. It implied that students are more likely to employ efficient self-regulation strategies in English writing. If students had better self-regulation strategies, their writing performance would improve. The results led to the proposal of a language learning program aimed at improving Chinese college students' English writing skills.

Keywords: English writing, writing self-regulation strategy, Chinese college students.

1. Introduction

Writing is a challenging task. Students are required to have a higher ability to use the language comprehensively. How to arouse students' enthusiasm for writing and improve their writing ability and achievement through effective strategies has become an important issue in academic circles. English self-regulation strategy can help students effectively use the corresponding skills to complete English writing. Self-regulated learning has become a research hotspot in the subjects of learning theory, which emphasizes the impact of different factors on students' effective learning from a holistic rather than isolated perspective, especially on writing learning which has received much more attention than in previous years.

In addition to regulating their behaviors and using relevant strategies to achieve self-set goals, learners can also change and adjust the selected strategies through their own cognitive, metacognitive, and reflective processes. Therefore, as for self-regulated learning, strategies are a fundamental part of it. Therefore, Zimmerman and Kitsantas concluded that the self-regulated learning process not only increases learning desire but also predicts high academic accomplishment in English writing [1].

Strategies can make learning more effective. Students employ inefficient writing strategies at times, and a variety of characteristics, including self-efficacy, motivation, gender, and learning style, may have an impact on how they employ these tactics. Zimmerman and Martinez-Pons argued that the use of a self-regulation strategy has a meaningful relationship with the learning outcomes of writing. Literature indicated that some subcategories of self-regulation strategy can also promote writing achievement [2].

Previous investigations on English self-regulation strategy have primarily involved university students as survey

respondents. Few studies have included vocational college students in the scope of this study, much less compared undergraduate and vocational college students. The current survey will be conducted among Chinese students from both universities and vocational institutions to fill in the blank.

The findings of this study will suggest that college English instructors may place a high priority on the cognitive growth of their students and offer the necessary support for them to develop their writing self-regulation strategies. This will enhance their students' writing abilities and produce high-quality writing output. The results of the research will also give students a hint that their self-regulation strategies will have an impact on how well they perform in English writing.

2. Methods

A descriptive research design was used in order to give a sufficient and precise interpretation of the results. By distributing survey questionnaires, the researcher aimed to collect data from the respondents. The effective gathering of data from respondents was facilitated by this descriptive study design. The study was carried out in China with two universities and two vocational colleges. 381 freshmen and sophomores participated in the study majoring in liberal arts and science. All these students are randomly selected as participants. They were elected to complete the questionnaires at random and voluntarily.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1. Analysis of employment of each strategy

Learners employ particular strategies at certain stages of the SRL process. For instance, during the pre-consideration stage, goal-setting and planning strategies are used; during the performance stage, text generation and self-monitoring strategies are used; and during the final stage of self-reflection,

self-evaluation techniques are used. The self-regulation strategies for writing in this study include six dimensions: writing planning, goal-oriented monitoring, goal-oriented evaluating, emotional control, memorization

strategies, and meta-cognitive judgment. The following is the actual usage and agreement of each strategy among Chinese university students according to the survey.

Table 1. Descriptive analysis on English Writing Self-Regulation Strategy

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Writing Planning	3.20	Agree	3.5
2. Goal-Oriented Monitoring	3.20	Agree	3.5
3. Goal-Oriented Evaluating	3.19	Agree	5.5
4. Emotional Control	3.19	Agree	5.5
5. Memorization strategies	3.21	Agree	2
6. Metacognitive Judgment	3.26	Agree	1
Composite Mean	3.21	Agree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 - 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

From the data shown, metacognitive judgment ranked first with the highest weighted mean 3.26, compared with the other five aspects, the respondents were more inclined to adopt this strategy. The next was memorization strategies with a weighted mean of 3.21 and followed by writing planning and goal-oriented monitoring with the same mean score of 3.20. The last ones were goal-oriented evaluating and emotional control, also with the same weighted mean of 3.19.

Metacognitive judgment has the highest weighted mean rank of 3.26, indicating strong agreement among participants. Metacognitive judgment involves thinking about one's thinking process. In the process of learning to write, metacognitive judgment investigated students' apparent capacity to use metacognitive judgment. It evaluated students' efforts to learn to write, their belief in their linguistic understanding, and their writing techniques. Writers with strong metacognitive skills are more likely to improve their writing abilities over time.

Memorization strategies ranked second among the six strategies. The use of new vocabulary, grammatical concepts, or writing tactics to improve writing quality are some examples of memorization techniques. It was noted by Li et al. that memory methods are being used less frequently [3]. Particularly recently, China has increased its demands for English instruction and for education in practical application abilities. Gradually more is expected from students in terms of speaking and listening skills, rather than only memorization of words and syntax. Additionally, this study demonstrates that students continue to positively use memorization strategies.

Goal-oriented evaluating and emotional control both got the lowest place with the same score. To pinpoint the writing's strengths and potential improvement areas, self-evaluation and reflection are necessary. Bruning and Horn have the significance of secondary school students' self-reflection on their learning-to-write process, which is also an important component of learner metacognition, and the function of reflection or evaluation as a primary motivation to enhance learning outcomes [4]. Emotional control entails controlling feelings of stress or annoyance while writing. Writers who have emotional self-control are more likely to remain inspired and involved in their writing projects. According to Teng and Zhan, emotional control is essential for EFL writing since it shows students' motivational control and inclination to write without distractions [5].

3.2. Analysis of different responses on each strategy in terms of profile

The study revealed variations in the application of self-regulation strategies among Chinese university students based on their gender, majors, grades, and types of schools.

Table 2 displays the comparison of responses on English writing self-regulation strategy when grouped according to profile. It was observed that there was a significant difference when grouped according to sex since the obtained p-values less than the alpha level. This means that the responses differ statistically and based on the test conducted, it was found out that males have better assessments than females. This study refutes specific results from earlier studies that suggested there was no difference or a little difference between male and female students' writing self-regulation strategies.

Male students exhibit gender advantages in conceptual work, which can accurately correlate to the traits of English self-regulated learning processes. According to research, male students show strong rational thinking and are result-oriented. They are thought to develop and apply these tactics with clearer brains and more logical thinking. The result differs from Wightman's hypothesis that females do better than males when it comes to time, environment, and resource-searching tactics for learning [6].

Male students are better at making plans than female students. Males are strong planners who have a solid sense of the big picture and accomplish goals in logical steps. They pay closer attention to the planning and goal-setting process than female students do. This tactic highlights the need for students to monitor their writing processes on a regular basis. The performance gap between men and women may be explained by the fact that men find it easier to keep to their own learning objectives and find it harder to adapt to their surroundings, whilst women are more susceptible to outside influences. The desire to learn English may be another factor. Zhang asserts that motivation is a key factor in students' willingness to engage in in-class activities [7]. Male students perform well in monitoring and evaluation while writing in English with a lot of motivation. The results supported Al-Khresheh's claim that male students had more sophisticated understanding and learning strategies than female students, including planning and monitoring [8].

Table 2. Difference of Responses on English Writing Self-Regulation Strategy When Grouped According to Profile

Sex	F-value	p-value	Interpretation
Writing Planning	12.838	0.000	Significant
Goal-Oriented Monitoring	8.748	0.003	Significant
Goal-Oriented Evaluating	7.544	0.006	Significant
Emotional Control	9.731	0.002	Significant
Memorization strategies	4.393	0.037	Significant
Metacognitive Judgment	7.965	0.005	Significant
Major			
Writing Planning	1.097	0.296	Not Significant
Goal-Oriented Monitoring	3.176	0.076	Not Significant
Goal-Oriented Evaluating	2.770	0.097	Not Significant
Emotional Control	1.280	0.259	Not Significant
Memorization strategies	0.028	0.867	Not Significant
Metacognitive Judgment	1.867	0.173	Not Significant
Grade Level			
Writing Planning	0.517	0.473	Not Significant
Goal-Oriented Monitoring	1.047	0.307	Not Significant
Goal-Oriented Evaluating	0.273	0.601	Not Significant
Emotional Control	0.461	0.497	Not Significant
Memorization strategies	2.132	0.145	Not Significant
Metacognitive Judgment	2.010	0.157	Not Significant
School type			
Writing Planning	0.160	0.690	Not Significant
Goal-Oriented Monitoring	1.102	0.295	Not Significant
Goal-Oriented Evaluating	1.175	0.279	Not Significant
Emotional Control	0.981	0.323	Not Significant
Memorization strategies	0.903	0.343	Not Significant
Metacognitive Judgment	6.023	0.015	Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

In terms of emotional control, Male students demonstrated a higher level of emotional regulation than female students. They are better able to maintain steady emotions and lessen negative attitudes and behaviors. This is so because male pupils are better able to overcome their fears and anxieties and build their confidence. Zhang asserts that how someone feels can have a significant impact on how effectively students understand language [9]. Males have a positive outlook on learning English and are capable of overcoming greater difficulties and pressure associated with learning to write in English. EFL students who have a positive attitude toward their emotions can actively apply their self-regulation skills in their English learning, according to Wang and Guan's [10] research. Male students, according to Yang, are better at handling internal or external influences and are less likely to follow others' lead [11].

In various areas of learning psychology, Males and females think differently, have different interests, and have different types of memories. According to Maha, male students are more logical in their argumentative writing [12]. Male students think more actively, reason more effectively, and generalize knowledge better than female students, all of which are related to memorization. Although some studies claim that men are better at remembering things than women, this study concluded that men could memorize. Several various study findings are noteworthy. For instance, Xu discovered that more female students than male students employ memorizing techniques [13].

There are some significant and basic variations between male and female pupils in terms of their personalities and metacognitive processes. Males in particular are more

accepting of learning English, which indicates that they have more developed metacognitive judgment. They have confidence in their command of the English language and their writing abilities. Strong metacognitive talents increase the likelihood that writers will gradually advance in their craft. In other words, if one can keep somewhat independent thinking and judgment, his approach to learning English will be rarely influenced by outside variables and will be simple to develop.

Lastly, there was a significant difference in metacognitive judgment when grouped according to school type. This significant difference lies in those who are in vocational college. The following explanations for this outcome are possible.

People with strong metacognitive judgment abilities may appear very confident even if they are ordinary. Vocational college students are not excellent in learning achievement compared with university students, but they can discover and understand shortcomings in learning, which is beneficial for them to make timely adjustments. In that case, vocational college students, by knowing their limitations in English writing, have a clearer and more determined mind in learning and applying metacognitive writing skills. Besides, writing performance was better for students who received metacognition instruction in cooperative learning environments, probably because they were more conscious of their own metacognition. Students at vocational colleges are skilled communicators eager to share ideas and pick the brains of others.

Knight and York suggested USEM employability model is the most reliable model on the components of employability

[14]. The paradigm is divided into four sections: metacognition, self-efficacy, topic comprehension, and skills. Professional competence is a manifestation of metacognition. It is the core competency of vocational college students and the key that employers value. Vocational college students frequently believe that finding a career will be challenging, which makes sense for the development of excellent professional literacy. They did not achieve ideal results in the college entrance examination and did not exceed the undergraduate score line, so overall, vocational college students did not perform as well as undergraduate students in terms of academic performance. After entering university, they felt the pressure of studying and the pressure of future employment. The competition for employment in Chinese society is very fierce, and compared to undergraduate students, vocational students do not have much advantage in the job

market. In this situation, vocational college students could analyze the advantages and disadvantages of their learning. They are more mature in cognition, planning for future employment, and accumulating a foundation of language skills. Therefore, in this sense, the metacognitive judgment of vocational college students will continue to increase with the extension of the academic year.

3.3. Proposed Program

Based on the results of the study, the researcher puts forward the following language learning program to improve both the teaching and learning of English writing for Chinese college students. Over this program, Chinese college students' choice of English writing self-regulation strategy will be optimized, and both teaching and learning in English writing will be lifted gradually.

Table 3 Proposed Language Learning Program to Enhance English Writing Self-Regulation Strategy of Chinese College Students

Key Result Area/ Program Objectives	Strategies / Activities	Success Indicators	Persons Involved
<p>1. Goal-Oriented Evaluating</p> <p>-put all the words written wrong together for further review</p> <p>Objective: To enhance students' ability to achieve goals and evaluation (e.g. boosting word spelling accuracy)</p> <p>-ask someone else to read it and give feedback</p> <p>Objective: To get positive feedback</p>	<p><u>Building criteria for writing evaluation</u></p> <p>-make writing evaluation criteria clear to students -encourage students to keep to the writing evaluation criteria -engage students in the evaluation of their accomplishment of goals -familiarize students with the criteria through group discussion on writings</p> <p><u>Improving goals accomplishment skills</u></p> <p>-help students separate larger goals into smaller actions, e.g., finishing a 100-word review by revising 20 words every day in five days. -employ certain strategies, e.g., using context to learn words while memorizing them -note the daily progress of task accomplishment -supervise students to achieve goals</p> <p><u>Obtaining feedback</u></p> <p>-encourage students to invite others to read their essays and give feedback -provide detailed writing advice, such as how to organize the article or how to use transition words appropriately -establish peer support groups in which students engage in regular discussions and give constructive feedback on writing</p>	<p>90% of students can accomplish goals and evaluation in English writing, can spell words correctly, and get positive feedback.</p>	<p>Instructors, English teachers, Students, Peers</p>
<p>2. Emotional Control</p> <p>-calm down and finish the writing exercise even though do not want to</p> <p>Objective: To help students to enhance the awareness of the emotional control and develop the capacity to manage emotions in English writing.</p>	<p><u>Enhancing awareness of managing emotions</u></p> <p>-help students develop accurate emotional cognition and understand their feelings -provide students with a variety of roles and scenarios to role-play to help them grasp the significance of emotional regulation -remind students to express emotions during times of stress</p> <p><u>Developing emotional regulation ability</u></p> <p>-help students view issues from different perspectives so they can find positive aspects in them -teach students to employ the strategy of diversion to temporarily remove themselves from the emotionally draining situation -encourage students to express their feelings in healthy ways, such as by writing them down, engaging in mindful meditation, conducting positive thinking, taking deep breaths, interacting with people, seeking help from teachers, etc. -prepare students well before writing tasks and remind them to calm down when in trouble -lower students' writing reluctance by presenting them writing key points and engaging them actively -offer emotional support to students by smiling or casting reassuring eye contact</p>	<p>90% of students can improve the awareness of emotional control and are willing to finish English writing tasks.</p>	<p>Instructors, English teachers, Students, Peers</p>

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the research revealed that the respondents generally utilize various English self-regulation strategies well. They use the strategy of meta-cognitive judgment, memorization strategies, writing planning, and goal-oriented monitoring more than goal-oriented evaluating, and emotional control. Additionally, it was found that males have greater assessment than females on English writing self-regulation strategy in terms of all indicators (writing planning, goal-oriented monitoring, goal-oriented evaluating, emotional control, memorization strategies, and metacognitive judgment). As for school type, students from the vocational college have better truth-seeking disposition and metacognitive judgment ability. And it also showed that science majors have stronger analyticity.

Some suggestions may be given to enhance future English writing instruction in China universities and vocational colleges. English teachers may teach students about the importance of self-regulation strategy in English writing, teach a variety of writing techniques, and offer demonstrations, guided practice, and feedback to help them internalize, and apply the strategies and techniques in a supportive environment. Furthermore, future researchers may consult students on improving Chinese college students' writing competency by over-optimizing strategy use. They may also explore determining the significance of predicting English writing self-regulation strategy.

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