

SELF-REGULATED LEARNING IN IMPROVING 8-GRADE STUDENTS' WRITING COMPETENCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Hayitova Nigora Rahmatillayevna*; Xonboboyeva Shaira Rafikovna**

*Master Student,
Uzbek State World Languages University,
UZBEKISTAN

**Scientific supervisor: Head Teacher,
Uzbek State World Languages University,
UZBEKISTAN

Email id: mamatkulovaferuza11@gmail.com

DOI: **10.5958/2249-7137.2022.00667.X**

ABSTRACT

Writing competence provides students with communication and thinking skills, promotes their ability to describe and clarify their ideas to others, and allows them to communicate their thought with clearness and simplicity to a far greater audience. Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) can be used in order to equip students with effective writing skills by encouraging students' consciousness, motivation and knowledge about writing. This research attempts to explore whether SRL can improve learners' writing competence. It is a quasi-experimental research and the data was derived by using pre and post-tests in one group in secondary school. The results proved that learners' writing competence could be improved by using SRL in writing classes. The students gained better scores and results after they learned writing using SRL. It is suggested to stimulate learners' writing skills by introducing newest strategies that assist and involve students in learning writing.

KEYWORDS: *Self-Regulated Learning, Writing Competence, Strategy, Assessing*

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the government of Uzbekistan has been paying great attention to teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). Starting from the 2013/2014 academic year in Uzbekistan, the study of foreign languages, mainly English, gradually throughout the republic began with the first grades of secondary schools in the form of game lessons and speaking lessons, and starting from the second grade — with the assimilation of the alphabet, reading and grammar. Since the same academic year, teaching in higher educational institutions of the country of certain special subjects, especially in technical and international specialties, began to be conducted in foreign languages. It is worth noting the increasing attention to English teachers, in particular the gradual increase in their salaries and additional monetary rewards for those who achieve success in their work. This in turn increases the requirements for teachers in teaching English, the development of students' four skills, such as listening, reading, writing and speaking, the development of their critical thinking and creative abilities. This article is devoted to the development of independent writing skills among students, which is one of the most difficult skills for students to acquire.

Today's modern world requires students to master writing skills as it is essential for their future studies, jobs and daily life. Mastering writing skills allows students to express their opinion or ideas in written form that sometimes cannot be expressed through verbal communication [E. Özdemir and S. Aydın, 2015, I. Festas, A. L. Oliveira, J. A. Rebelo, M. H. Damião, K. Harris, and S. Graham, 2015]. In addition, writing can contribute to the development of learners' critical and creative thinking as they can communicate from various platforms and points of view [M. S. Bakry and H. A. Alsamadani, 2015]. Writing is a necessary tool for students to communicate, even though the internet and technologies are developed today, writing is still popular and needed.

Besides communication, writing has a significant role in the sphere of education. It has become irreplaceable skill in the learner transfer phase from high school into a university. In addition, writing is mobile and constant and makes students' ideas apparent, helps them express their personality. This skill helps students to maintain in the competitive school atmosphere.

Furthermore, students should follow several steps so as to get effective results from learning writing skills. These steps include planning, drafting, editing and final version. In the planning stage learners choose a topic for writing and think of an idea or a plan for their writing. In the next drafting step learners develop their ideas into writing by forming sentences. After drafting, learners are required to reread their writing and correct mistakes connected with punctuation, vocabulary usage and grammar. This editing step encourages learners to find and correct their problems. In the final step, learners revise their draft works and reach the final version of their writing.

Writing a composition assumes achieving certain components, and an assessment appears here as a significant tool to assist learners develop their writing skills [L. A. Lázaro, 2005]. Carrying an effective assessment will represent learners' work and their particular level of proficiency by which learners' skills and abilities will be evaluated. Assessment is a kind of criteria that should be revealed and implemented systematically to the learners' writing so as to ensure objectivity, decrease educators' prejudice and rise the value of writing [A. Muñoz, S. Gaviria, and M. Palacio, 2012].

Assessment rubric for writing includes content, an organization of the idea, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics [A. Muñoz, S. Gaviria, and M. Palacio, 2012]. Content is about developing an idea related to the topic. Effective content design will attract the readers more. The next component in writing rubric is an idea organization which is very significant, as learners should understand what they are writing about. An effective construction of ideas will make writing meaningful and contribute to generate nice writing initiated by introduction, main body and conclusion. If the ideas of the writer are well-organized, readers will find it easy to follow them. Correct grammar is also vital as not following grammar rules will make it difficult for readers to comprehend writers' work. In writing learners should think of selecting a suitable diction as well. Using a range of vocabulary not only helps students choose an appropriate diction, but at the same time will enrich literary and cultural values of the writing. Finally, according to the rubric learners will be assessed by their ability to use the rules of written language which are punctuation, spelling and capitalization.

It should be noted that acquiring writing skills, as a rule, requires more time and knowledge compared to others. Writing skill cannot be easily learned or improved which assumes that

learners should have step by step learning to be able to create an effective writing work. Many students claim that it is difficult to develop an idea before starting to write a composition. In order to master writing skills learners should read a lot of various types of texts which help them to develop ideas. Scholars state that there is a connection between reading and writing, and that reading a lot assists students to generate ideas while writing. Reading can contribute to enrich learners' vocabulary and background knowledge which is so necessary in achieving effective writing. In addition, educators do not provide the students with the guiding strategy on step by step passage writing. In majority of schools educators present a few topics and tell the learners to write an essay on one of them. Without teachers' guidance how to write, learners may lose their motivation to write as they think of it as the most difficult task. Learners may seek for the ways of learning writing themselves but it can be unsuccessful.

Educators can apply a variety of strategies in order to motivate students to write and help them develop their writing skills [H. Jeremy, 2007]. Self-Regulated learning (SRL) is one of the strategies that can be applied to help students in acquiring writing skills. SRL refers to a learning skill that combines the process of teaching how to learn writing. In the process of learning writing learners perform some activities aimed to build and enhance their writing skills. First, learners identify their objective and arrange their plan. They select topic for writing and search for the information related to the chosen topic. They can read books, articles, texts and other sources do develop an idea for their writing and try draft writing. Next comes self-assessment step where learners evaluate their writing themselves. Self-reinforcement is the last step of the learning writing process where learners become confident enough to present or publish the final version of their composition [I. Festas and others, 2015]. SRL also encourages consciousness of the quality of learners' mental ability, knowledge, encouragement and beliefs [M. Nückles, S. Hübner, and A. Renkl, 2009]. Three significant regulatory strategies can be distinguished: (1) Planning refers to choosing appropriate cognitive strategies on the basis of a particular task ;(2) Monitoring consists of the understanding and performance of the task; (3) Assessment includes the ability to evaluate the effectiveness of the learning process and the quality of learners' product [M. Nückles, S. Hübner, and A. Renkl, 2009].

Applying SRL requires educators to present easily accessible materials to the students. Educators encourage learners to be independent by guiding them how to get ideas and develop those ideas into draft writing. Writing lessons should be conducted in a way that creates a pleasant atmosphere where learners do not feel frightened and anxious. During conducive lessons learners can feel relaxed and generate ideas for writing. In the works of scholars it is noted that learners show active participation in using the materials presented by their educators. When SRL strategies are implemented in class, learners have greater level of encouragement and believe in their abilities to get success in writing. [D. H. Iwamoto, J. Hargis, R. Bordner, and I.Chandler, 2017].The learners can learn to organize information before drafting. Learners monitor and comprehend the learning atmosphere which helps them to gain higher score in final writing exam [S. Abadikhah, Z. Aliyan, and S. H. Talebi, 2018]. During applying SRL strategies learners' emotion, opinion and behavior are taken into account which makes learners comprehend the mental, emotional, and motivational elements of learning experience [M. S. Bakry and H. A. Alsamadani, 2015]. That is why, learners can create a better learning environment, develop good habits, enhance their skills, control and assess their abilities and increase their academic results. The fact that SRL lessons decrease learners stress and fear to do tasks is one of the important

ones [D. H. Iwamoto, J. Hargis, R. Bordner, and I. Chandler, 2017]. In addition, motivational factor can have great influence on students' learning outcomes [S. Zumbrunn, J. Tadlock, and E. Roberts, 2011].

The issue of applying SRL in writing classes has previously been discussed by several scholars. According to the scholars SRL implementation in writing class helps students to comprehend better and motivates them to focus more. In a result, it enhances learners' English skills and enables them to get ready to perform more difficult tasks [S. Zumbrunn, J. Tadlock, and E. Roberts, 2011]. Findings of another research say that SRL significantly influenced learners' writing competence; in particular, favorable impact has been observed in learners' essay writing skills. The researches claim that 8-grade learners were favorably involved in essay writing lessons and were able to improve their writing skills because of great interest in SRL classes [I. Festas, A. L. Oliveira, J. A. Rebelo, M. H. Damião, K. Harris, and S. Graham, 2015]. Moreover, SRL can positively influence academic writing skills of university students. SRL is also helpful for teachers to increase learners' academic writing skills [S. Abadikhah, Z. Aliyan, and S. H. Talebi, 2018]. This research explores the applying of SRL to enhance 8-grade students writing skills, and attempts to answer the following research question: "Can SRL enhance 8-grade learners' writing skills in secondary school?" It is estimated that using SRL in secondary school classes will positively influence the students' writing skills, and will contribute to the quality of their final performance in their studies.

Methods

The goal of the research is to identify whether using SRL in writing class will contribute to the improvement of students' writing competence, increase their motivation and decrease their fear and anxiety while accomplishing a writing task. The researcher attempts to answer the research question using a quasi-experimental research design. There was one group consisting of 20 8-grade students of one of the private schools in Tashkent. This group was given pre and post-tests as well as treatment between the two tests.

If we discuss the procedure of the research, it can be said that there is one research group. Before providing this group with treatment the researcher gives pre-test to the students so as to identify the level of their writing competence. After that, treatment is provided to the learners during several lessons, and at the end learners are given post-test. Students' scores are calculated to see if there have been any improvements in their writing skills or not.

Learners are asked to write a descriptive text, so a written test is an instrument for this experiment. In addition, a writing rubric is used to evaluate learners' works. The setting is one of the private schools of Tashkent which is the capital city of Uzbekistan. Research participants are 8-grade students; all of them are girls and have almost similar level of English language comprehension.

As was mentioned above in the paper there are 3 steps in SRL: (1) preparation, (2) performance and (3) reflection stages [Zumbrunn S., Tadlock J., and Roberts E., 2011]. In the first stage, the educator gives learners a descriptive text, and students work with the text using a graphic organizer; learners categorize its title, identify and describe the language features. After getting the necessary information for group work, learners discuss the topic and present it to the class. Then students work individually and do the same tasks on their own.

In the next performance step learners become able to write a descriptive writing. They select a topic which is provided by their teacher, and then with the help of graphic organizer they make drafting of their topic and go on their writing.

In the last reflection stage students present their ready writings and the educator provides them with adequate feedback on the basis of a rubric. At the end students make revision, and their final writing can be evaluated by giving a mark. When the session comes to an end learners are given a post-test.

Results

DATA ANALYSIS DEMONSTRATES LEARNERS' WRITING COMPETENCE BETWEEN PRE AND POST-TESTS IN TABLE 1.

	Number	Mean
Pre-test	20	75
Post-test	20	87

Table 1 provides information about the mean, median and standard deviation difference of two tests. It is clear from the table that the mean of pre-test is 75 whereas the post-test mean is 87. Results show that the post-test mean is higher than that of the pre-test. It means that students show higher achievement results after being given a set of treatments and learning writing by using SRL. It is stated if students use SRL, they can achieve better academic results [Abadikhah S., Aliyan Z., and Talebi S. H., 2018]. The experiment has showed that by applying SRL the teacher could enhance the students' writing competence and create a favorable learning environment. In addition, the teacher motivated the students to accomplish writing tasks on their own by providing materials that were easily accessible and involving for the students. Scholars also claim that SRL can positively influence the subject of study [Festas I. and others, 2015]. Optimizing SRL prepares learners for more difficult tasks [Zumbrunn S., Tadlock J., and Roberts E., 2011]. All the above said shows that SRL can positively influence learners' writing skills.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of data has brought us to conclusion that using self-regulated learning can contribute to the improvement of learners' writing skills. Observations showed that students were very enthusiastic and motivated in the class after implementing SRL. The application of SRL engaged the students into learning process not letting them feel fear and anxiety during the lessons. Moreover, by using SRL educators can guide students and improve their motivation and learning achievements. Taking into account the results of observations and tests, it can be suggested that implementing SRL can be useful for both teachers and students, and educators should organize strong learning atmosphere and motivate learners to build their own learning experience.

REFERENCES

1. Abadikhah S., Aliyan Z., and Talebi S. H., "EFL Students' Attitudes Towards Self-Regulated Learning Strategies in Academic Writing," vol. 28, no. 1, pp. 1–17, 2018.
2. Bakry M. S. and Alsamadani H. A., "Improving the Persuasive Essay Writing of Students of Arabic as a Foreign Language (AFL): Effects of Self-Regulated Strategy Development," *Procedia - Soc. Behav. Sci.*, vol. 182, pp. 89–97, 2015.

3. Brown J. D., *Developing, Using, and Analyzing Rubrics in Language Assessment with Case Studies in Asian and Pacific Languages*. Honolulu, HI: National Foreign Languages Resource Center, 2012.
4. Festas I., Oliveira A. L., Rebelo J. A., Damião M. H., Harris K., and Graham S., "Professional Development in Self-Regulated Strategy Development: Effects on the Writing Performance of Eighth Grade Portuguese students," *Contemp.Educ. Psychol.*, vol. 40, pp. 17–27, 2015.
5. Fahimi Z. and Rahimi A., "On the Impact of Self-Assessment Practice on Writing Skill," *Procedia -Soc. Behav. Sci.*, vol. 192, pp. 730–736, 2015.
6. Iwamoto D. H., Hargis J., Bordner R., and Chandler I., "Self-Regulated Learning as a Critical Attribute for Successful Teaching and Learning," *Int. J. Scholarsh. Teach. Learn.*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2017.
7. Jeremy H., *How to Teach Writing*. 2nd ed. England: Pearson Education, 2007.
8. Lázaro L. A., "Teaching and Assessing Writing Skills," *Univ. Alcalá*, pp. 89–111, 2005.
9. Muñoz A., Gaviria S., and Palacio M., "Guidelines for Teaching and Assessing Writing," *Cuaderno*, 2012.
10. Nückles M., Hübner S., and Renkl A., "Enhancing Self-Regulated Learning by Writing Learning Protocols," *Learn. Instr.*, vol. 19, no. 3, pp. 259–271, 2009.
11. Özdemir E. and Aydın S., "The Effects of Wikis on Motivation in EFL Writing," *Procedia - Soc. Behav. Sci.*, vol. 191, pp. 2359–2363, 2015.
12. Pallant J., *SPSS Survival Manual: A Step by Step Guide to Data Analysis Using the SPSS Program*. 4th ed. Maidenhead: Open University Press/McGraw-Hill, 2010.
13. Zumbunn S., Tadlock J., and Roberts E., "Encouraging Self-Regulated Learning in the Classroom : A Review of the Literature," *Metropolitan Educational Research Consortium(MERC)*, 2011.