
An Investigation into the English Language Writing Strategies Used by Uzbek EFL Secondary School Learners

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The present study is informed by the research in the L2 writing field (e.g., Skibiniewski and Skibiniewska, 1986; Kasper, 1997; Sengupta, 2000; Wolfersberger, 2003; Ferris et al, 2013) which show a positive correlation between the students' strategic awareness and their writing performance. These studies provided valuable insights into components of the writing process but they did not address the L2 writing from a comprehensive global perspective, instead they focused on individual aspects of the L2 writing process: for example, Skibiniewski and Skibiniewska (1986) in an experimental study established that better compositions were produced by Uzbek EFL learners who were aware of their writing process and their writing goals.

The study will also aim to fill the gap in the L2 writing research by providing a holistic description of the relationship between students' writing strategies and their writing performance in a culture-specific context. No previous research on English writing strategies of Uzbek secondary school students has been conducted. In the Uzbek context, the studies on L2 writing focused mostly on university level students and academia (Skibiniewski and Skibiniewska, 1986; Duszak, 2006; Lehman, 2013).

In addition, only Skibiniewski and Skibiniewska are concerned with writing strategies whereas the field of interest of Duszak and Lehman is contrastive rhetoric: they compare the Anglo-American and Uzbek rhetoric styles. Sociocultural theory, social-cognitive model and self-regulated learning. The theoretical framework for this research is Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of cognitive development Strategic Self-Regulation (S2R) Model of L2 learning, which is a continuation of Vygotsky's model of 'dialogic, self regulated learning' social-cognitive model of self regulated learning. These three models conceptualize learning characteristics of those language learners who are actively involved in and responsible for their own learning. This framework is consistent with the current language learning methodology (Cook, 2008; Ellis, 2012; Griffiths, 2008), which stresses the autonomy of learners who are viewed as agents of their own learning process. Vygotsky's theory introduces the concept of learning situated in the socio-cultural context. It views learning as a socially mediated process which enables a learner to make a steady progress with the help of a more competent individual. From this perspective, cognitive development is associated with "gaining symbolically mediated control over, or regulation of, strategic mental processes" (Lantolf and Appel, op. cit.: 11), which leads to self-regulation. However, it has been stressed that the achievement of the self regulation is "a relative phenomenon" (ibid.: 12) and it differs between individuals. What it means is that, for example, one student can achieve self-regulation in one type of tasks but not in another and also there can be differences between individual students in their self regulation; one student can be self-regulated in different types of tasks than another student.

In the current research, the relativity of self-regulation has been the factor which has necessitated the application of the qualitative approach to supplement the quantitative findings. The qualitative methodology consisted of the qualitative research tools: open ended questions in the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews and the qualitative analysis of the collected through these tools data. The grounded theory principles were used in the analysis and the aim was to understand the subjective nature of the L2 writing and to find the patterns which could provide some explanation on this phenomenon.

Another aspect of the self-regulation in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory is the fact that the cognitive development of an individual takes place in the zones of proximal development through the dialogic

scaffolding interactions with a more competent individual (ibid.) and since these interactions are part of the social and cultural context, the cognitive development is shaped by the same context.