

STRATEGIES OF EFL UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AS GENERATION Z
IN ACADEMIC WRITING DURING THE PANDEMIC

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Abstract

The spread of Covid 19 has changed the educational learning system and learning strategies. The use of unlimited charge of internet, easiness of access, and the online classroom situation might change the students' strategies in learning. Thus, this study aimed to investigate types of writing strategies and factors underlying the strategies preferences by EFL as Z generations Muhammadiyah University of Metro Academic year 2022/2023.

The researcher conducted a descriptive qualitative study. The data were collected through 47 items of 5-Likert questionnaire and interview. The questionnaire consists of six strategies such as memory, metacognitive, compensation, cognitive, affective, and social. In regards to the first research question, the result revealed that the participants were medium strategy users with affective strategies to be the most dominant Nstrategies used. Then, followed by metacognitive, compensation, memory, and social strategies with cognitive to be the least strategies used.

To respond objectives related to the internal and external factors underlying the participants' preferences in selecting the strategies they chose, the researcher found internal factors consisting of self-motivation, self-confidence, lack of knowledge and feeling of under pressure. While external factors including the teacher's teaching style, classroom atmosphere, materials, and writing aspects.

Keywords: *Strategies, Z Generation, Academic Writing, Pandemic.*

INTRODUCTION

Writing is important because it is used extensively in higher education and in the workplace. If students don't know how to express themselves in writing, they will not be able to communicate well with professors, employers, peers, or just about anyone else. Much of professional communication is done in

writing: proposals, reports, applications, preliminary interviews, e-mails, and more are part of the daily life of a college student or successful graduate. Difficulties in writing can be devastating to the student's education and self-esteem.

Indonesian undergraduate students as EFL, especially students at Muhammadiyah University of Metro as EFL learners, the students still have difficulties in using learning strategies in writing classes during the pandemic. Based on the pre-study from the writing course lecturer at Muhammadiyah University of Metro, in Writing class some students get high score and some students get low score. It does not happen by accident. Probably, the students who get high score had special strategies to improve their knowledge in writing class so that they succeeded. But also the students who get low score had strategies to improve their knowledge in their writing class but they did not succeed to apply it. Therefore, learning strategies are very beneficial to reduce the difficulties in learning process.

In 2020 the emergence of Covid-19 which caused many problems in all sectors of life; social, political, economic, cultural and educational. Since the emergence of the coronavirus or Covid-19, various problems have arisen. Because the virus does not only attack humans, but also has an impact on the world economy, and affects social life in various countries. One of them is in the world of education in Indonesia, where previously learning was done face-to-face (Luring), but during this pandemic the learning system was changed to distance learning (Daring).

Based on the pre-study, the researcher found research problems on students in writing class at Muhammadiyah University of Metro is: (1) the problem is online learning does not use Spada (web-based), (2) the lecturer cannot control students during learning or when doing exercises (Online), (3) when giving feedback does not reach the students because not all students can focus,

(4) many students join and out of zoom, google meet during learning, because of problems with signals, (5) can not being able to detect who the students writing is done by, because they cannot see it face to face. The problems discussed in this study are formulated through the following questions:

1. What are the types of writing strategies of the students EFL generation Z during the pandemic at Muhammadiyah University of Metro Academic year 2022/2023?
2. What are the factors underlying the choice of writing strategies of the students EFL generation Z during the pandemic at Muhammadiyah University of Metro Academic year 2022/2023?

METHOD

This study is qualitative research, Latief (2014) summarize that qualitative research is a process of inquiry aimed at understanding human behavior by building complex, holistic picture of the social and cultural settings in which such behavior occurs.

The researcher uses analytical research because this research to find out the types and factors what are the types of writing strategies of the students EFL generation Z during the pandemic and what are the factors underlying the choice of writing strategies of the students EFL generation Z during the pandemic at Muhammadiyah University of Metro.

The subject of this research is 26 EFL students Generation Z by English language education students semester VI Academic Year 2022/2023 At Muhammadiyah University of Metro. While, the object of this research is Academic Writing Strategies During The Pandemic At Muhammadiyah University Of Metro Academic year 2022/2023.

Based on Sugiyono (2015) in qualitative research, the researcher is the key instrument. From the statement we can understand that the main instrument of this research is the researcher itself. However, as supporting instruments, the researcher adopted a 5-Likert questionnaire created by Ana Belén Cabrejas Peñuelas (2012) which consists of 47 items in which researcher distributed to the research subjects. In addition, the researcher also conducted an interview after distributing the questionnaire to explain what they think or do before writing and what steps they used while working in writing class.

In analyzing the data, the researcher conducted a descriptive statistics analysis to find the mean of each strategy individually to find the frequent strategy used by the participants and with the following scoring table.

Table 1. Average Score Scale of SILL (Strategy Inventory Language Learning)

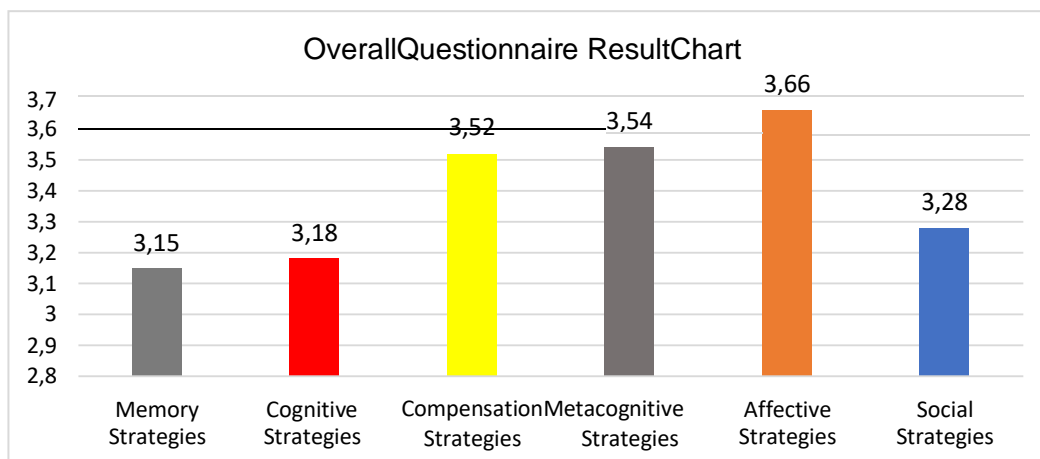
Frequency level	Description	Range of Score
High	Always or Almost Always Used	4.5 to 5.0
	Usually Used	3.5 to 4.4
Moderate	Sometimes Used	2.5 to 3.4
Low	Generally Not Used	1.5 to 2.4
	Never or Almost Never Used	1.0 to 1.4

Source: Oxford as cited in Dwiana (2018), SILL (Strategies Inventory Language Learning)

FINDINGS

After analyzing the data, the researcher obtained the data as follows.

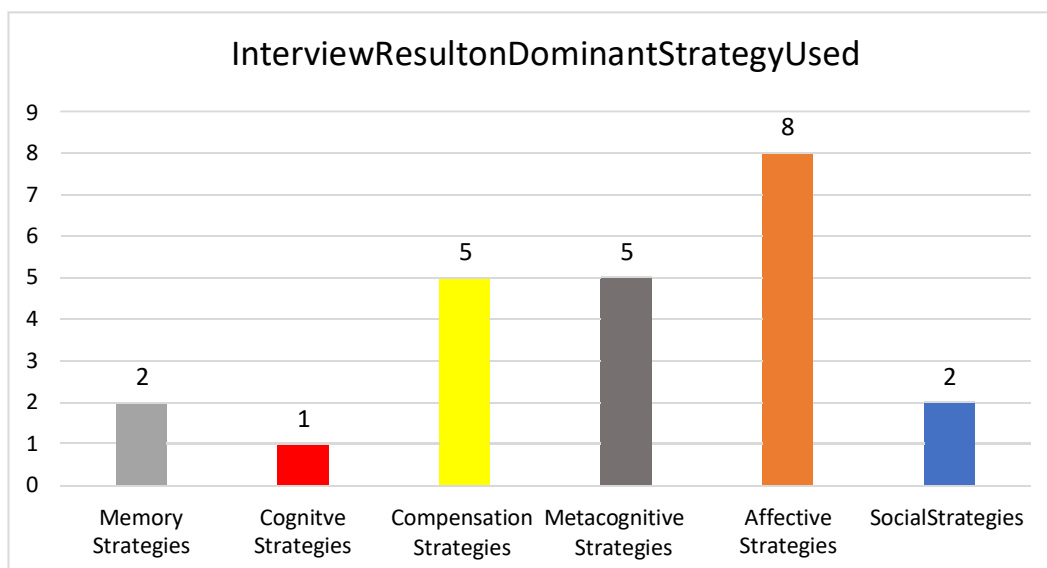
In accordance with the first research question that is to find the types of writing strategies by the EFL students as generation Z during the pandemic at Muhammadiyah University of Metro Academic year 2022/2023, the researcher presents the data as follows:



Picture 1. Overall Questionnaire Result

The chart on Picture 1 displays that in the usage of Memory strategies, the students are moderate users with mean 3,15 which means that the students sometimes use the strategies. The similar result found on Cognitive strategies at moderate use with mean 3,18. The opposite result found on Compensation Strategies, Metacognitive Strategies, and Affective Strategies which are found to be at the high use that the students usually use with mean 3,52, 3,54, and 3,66, respectively. In addition, Social Strategies shows to be at moderate use with mean of 3,28.

In regard with the second research question, the researcher conducted interview to the participants in order to discover further information related to factors underlying the choice of writing strategies used by the students. The researcher presented the result on which strategy was used the most by students in the form of chart below.



Picture2. InterviewResult onDominantStrategyUsed

The chart displays affective strategies are on the most dominant strategies used by the students with 8 students. Then, followed by metacognitive and compensation strategies preferred by 5 students respectively to help them in the writing process. In addition, the researcher discovered 2 students chose to use memory strategies which also can be seen on social strategies whereas only 2 students preferred to use in the writing process. Lastly, the researcher found only 1 student preferred cognitive strategies than the other strategies.

As to have a deeper comprehension, the researcher compiled the following interview responses as per strategy the participants preferred:

In the affective strategies, some reasons were stated by the 8 respondents which one of those was the class situation whereas it sometimes got boring that the students could only listen to the teachers without having any active interactions. Not only that, the respondents also stated that the difficult material could also put them in a stressful situation that they had no idea what to write. The reasons previously mentioned are external factors of how initially the students prefer affective strategy. Thus, in order to control the emotions during the class, most learners used progressive relaxation, deep breathing, or meditation.

In the other side, the researcher also discovered internal factor in the form of "encouraging yourself". This part consists of three sub-strategies. Mostly learners used the first and the second sub-strategies which are making positive

statements and taking risks wisely to encourage themselves in learning English. By using the second part sub-strategies of affective strategies, they believed that when they used those techniques they would be confident and motivated to learn a new language. This factor can be initially seen from the feeling of nervousness, fear, and doubt from the respondents.

In 5 responses of metacognitive strategies, the researcher identified internal factors and that is the various writing difficulties that the respondents faced such as lack of understanding in vocabulary and grammar. The respondents would sometimes check their spelling or vocabulary after completing the writing. However, these obstacles also contribute to external factors of why the respondents employed the strategies. This can be seen that the respondents prioritized the readers especially the teacher to understand his/her writing.

The researcher also found the factors behind 5 students choosing compensation strategies. These strategies consist of several activities such as using online dictionaries, using other sources, taking a short pause during the writing process, and using synonyms when the students cannot find the words or sentences she/he tries to express. All of these activities were already mentioned by the 5 users of these strategies. The factors affected students to use compensation strategies were the students' background knowledge. Thus, the researcher categorized this factor into internal factor.

The researcher analyzed that the factors underlying the respondents employing social strategies was included in external factors. Firstly, the limited connections that disconnected either the lecturer with the class or an individual with the class cause the lack of understanding towards the materials for these respondents. As a result, they interact with their classmates who master the writing or the material they inquire to discuss the material or ask about the assignment. Second, teacher-oriented situation in the online class. From this situation, students automatically become lazy and less-concentrated on writing which cause them to be uncomfortable in class. Student's discomfort in the class cause them to get demotivated.

The researcher conducted further analysis to discover the factors behind the respondents choosing the strategies. As according to the characteristics, memory strategies involve the users' memory whereas it is like a tool that serve to improve the storage of new information, and how the information retained in

memory to be recalled. Thus, as relevant to the responses by R4 and R9 where they stated that they used memorizing because they had problems with their memory and would forget the materials easily. With this, the researcher classified the reasons into internal factors.

According to the researcher's objective, the researcher also analyzed the factor of why the respondent chose the strategies. Although it is unclear whether the respondent also used different activities in the strategies, the respondent conveyed that she/he preferred using the strategies because it eased the writing process. Also, it was because she/he has difficulties during the writing process. Thus, the researcher grouped this factor into internal factors.

DISCUSSIONS

As the result of current research reported, the researcher discovered affective strategies, metacognitive strategies, and compensation strategies to be the most dominant used by the participants. This result is congruent with the study conducted by (Winarsih, Salam, & Riyanti, 2021) on English Department students in academic writing where metacognitive strategies and affective strategies to be the most used strategies by the students. In addition, (Awla, 2014) on her study to discover learning strategies applied by the students majoring Computer Science in writing text also found that metacognitive strategies and compensation strategies to be the most dominant strategies used by the students. Moreover, study conducted by (Maharani, Fauziati, & Supriyadi, 2018) also revealed that undergraduate English students employed metacognitive strategies, compensation strategies, and affective strategies.

The dominant use of affective and compensation strategies show that the participants are less proficient writers. As Endang (2014) stated that compensation strategies compensate for deficient in the writer's limited knowledge base. In this case, less proficient also used compensation strategies to overcome their limitation in writing since learning L2 is not easy especially in writing skills which required many aspects to conduct good composition. However, since the result also shows that metacognitive strategies to be one of the most dominant strategy used by the respondents, it means that there can be a few or some students who have high self-esteem students. All the students who belonged in the category of high self-esteem level mentioned that they would re-

read their essay(s) after it was finished to find if there were the problem(s) in it (Javed, 2013).

According to the result of this study, the researcher analyzed that both of internal and external factors influence the choice for the students selecting the strategies. Included in internal factors were self-motivation, self confidence, lack of knowledge and feeling of under pressure. While external factors were the teacher's teaching style, classroom atmosphere, materials, and writing aspects. The detailed explanation about the factors is elaborated below.

The researcher found students who had internal factors in which they encountered various difficulties in writing academically. From the internal factors, there were four things that affected students' performance in writing academically such as self-motivation, self-confidence, lack of knowledge, and feeling under pressure. Grammar was found as the major factor encountered by the student respondents. Students could spend so much time checking whether the grammar was correct or not. This problem influenced their motivation in writing. This process however occurs because writing is a thinking process, drafting, and revising, a person must know what to write and how to write (Herliana, 2011).

CONCLUSIONS

Collecting data from 23 respondents, the researcher comprehended that the types of writing strategies of the students EFL generation Z during the pandemic at Muhammadiyah University of Metro is Affective strategies. Based on the result questionnaire, of the six strategies, Writing strategies may occur in students in writing are caused by some factors but lack of Grammar is the dominant factor, the students only chose one strategy which they thought was appropriate, but some students also said that in learning in the writing class, it was not enough to only use one strategy. Sometimes they use several strategies depending on the material and conditions in learning. Writing strategies is mostly used to cover their ability in writing class.

SUGGESTIONS

For the teacher, this can help the teacher to implement an important role in providing feedback in students writing strategies, to evaluate and develop material in teaching and learning process. Can be additional material when conducting the teaching on Academic Writing subjects.

For the next researcher, the researcher suggests the next researcher to develop this research. In this study, according to students' answers, the strategy used by the students is not appropriate and most of students answer with the same sentence as their friends because the researcher asked the same question. The researcher also suggests that interviews be conducted individually, because when group interviews are conducted, students' answers will be dominantly the same.

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