

Available online at [www.sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com)**SciVerse ScienceDirect**

Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 47 (2012) 614 – 618

**Procedia**  
Social and Behavioral Sciences

CY-ICER 2012

# The relationship between self-regulation approaches and learning approaches in English writing tasks on English foreign language students

Yaghoob Nami <sup>a\*</sup>, Taraneh Enayati <sup>b</sup>, Maral Ashouri <sup>c</sup><sup>a</sup>*M.A. in Educational Research, Sari Branch, Islamic Azad University, Sari, Iran*<sup>b</sup>*Department of Educational Management, Sari Branch, Islamic Azad University, Sari, Iran*<sup>c</sup>*Department of Education, P.O. Box 49918-69351, Shahrak farhangyan, Kalaleh, Iran*

## Abstract

It is hypothesized in the present study that when learners are tasked to write a composition in English language, they use particular learning approaches and eventually undergo self-regulatory processes. The present study tested a model showing the direction from process to effect in writing (Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 2002) by evaluating the path from learning approaches to self-regulation (using path analysis) as used in composition writing in English. The Academic Self-Regulated Learning Scale (A-SRL-S) and the Revised-Learning Process Questionnaire (R-LPQ-2F) were participated 123 college students major in English literature, Teaching, and Translating from different universities in Golestan Province in Iran. The results showed that: Learning approaches significantly correlated with the factors of self-regulation aspects: Memory Strategy, Goal-setting, Self-evaluation, Seeking Assistance, Environmental Structure, Responsibility and Organizing.

© 2012 Published by Elsevier Ltd. Selection and/or peer review under responsibility of Prof. Dr. Hüseyin Uzunboylu

Open access under [CC BY-NC-ND license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).

*Keywords: Self-Regulation, learning approaches, English writing;*

## 1. Introduction

Individuals use a different kind of learning skills and approaches when they take part in a writing task. Learning strategies used in writing such as planning, idea creating, self-evaluating, self-monitoring, and reflecting. When individuals start to write essays and other English discourses they understand deeply what they are writing about, whether the task interested or not them looking for further information, become motivated about the content, plan and organize his/her thoughts. This shows that strategies and learning approaches are used in the same time when writing tasks on going (Lienemann & Reid, 2008; Magno, 2009). Learning approaches are used in the composing or writing process and fitted by the student according to the type of learning task interested (Marton & Saljo, 1976a; Magno, 2009). If the learning task is writing, writers become aware that the task needs organization of thoughts and planning. In the same way, when self-regulation is used in composition writing, specific strategies are used in the writing process. Writing in English is a good context to study the relationship between self-regulation and learning approaches because the specific approaches and strategies in learning are made apparent (Hayes, Hayes, & Hayes, 1981; Kellogg, & Raulerson, 2007; Olive, 2004). Choosing composition writing as the context in the study is based

\* Yaghoob Nami. Tel.: +98-174-424-3719

E-mail address: [Olkamn@yahoo.com](mailto:Olkamn@yahoo.com)

on the following reasons: (1) The components of self-regulation and learning approaches are showed clearly in the composition process (Hayes, Hayes, & Hayes, 1981; Kellogg, & Raulerson, 2007; Olive, 2004; Magno, 2009). (2) The process in composition writing goes along with the self-regulation and learning approaches processes (Magno, 2009). (3) Writing in a target language such as English makes the individual exert effort in the use of cognitive strategies such as self-regulation and learning approaches (Magno, 2009a).

Learning approaches were defined as the approaches in which place the students actively and mentally keep attention and interest themselves with the study material and supposed to be the result of intrinsic motivation, self-regulation and awareness of one's learning capacity. It is the aim in extract meaning, produces active learning processes (relating ideas, seeking patterns, etc.) and monitoring the development of one's own understanding. Several studies showed learning approaches positively correlated with academic tasks (August-Brady, 2005; Chun-Heung & French, 1997; Guthrie, Wigfield & VonSecker, 2000; Magno, 2009a). More recently, the studies of Magno (2009b, 2009) showed that learning approaches increases the use of metacognitive strategies that reflects regulation of cognition.

A person who is self-regulated is characterized to be an active problem solver and aims to improve his/her performance and abilities (Graham & Harris, 1994; Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997). Individuals who self-regulate achieve tasks successfully because they make attempts to close the gap between their present status and goals (Leventhal & Cameron, 1987). According to Zimmerman (1986) self-regulation focuses on how students personally activate, change, and maintain their learning practices in specific context. There are several studies where self-regulation was applied in a specific context or made domain specific such as in language acquisition. Previous studies have identified self-regulation as a useful strategy to acquire and become proficient in learning a language (Graham & Harris, 1994; Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997; Magno, 2009). Aside from language acquisition, it is also useful in the process of writing.

The observation and emulation process in writing was studied by Zimmerman and Kitsantas (2002) and they found that students improved their writing techniques using language approaches. As the student writer progress, they develop their own strategies in writing such as planning and self-monitoring which is already a stage of self-control.

When the writer can adapt his/her own strategies according to some requirements such as changing tasks, audience, and intrapersonal states, they become self-regulated Magno (2009). Each stage in the writing composition stage requires the individual motivation in task and processes as well as specific self-regulation components such as memory strategy, goal-setting, self-evaluation, seeking assistance, environmental structuring, responsibility, and organizing Magno (2009). These components of self-regulation that can be useful in any task such as writing were identified in the studies of Zimmerman and Martinez-Pons (1986; 1988; 1990). The self-regulated strategy shift to learning processes and strategies to outcomes makes the results of learning more positive. This theory suggests that learning approaches as processes can be used to help writers become self-regulated. There are several reviews indicating a host of process to outcome shift or from learning approach to self-regulation. Lenski (1998) showed that writing involves planning, translating, executing, evaluating, and revising. The steps on planning, translating, and executing reflects learning approaches since it involves generating ideas, converting ideas into words, and writing the content. Writing well in another language would require more and higher cognitive skills to be able to write well. Kellogg (2001) explained that the process would involve a test of a person's memory, language repertoire and thinking ability all at once. Before writing task is regulated through strategies, the writer needs to have a deep understanding of the conceptualization of what write about. The present study would like to establish the direction of learning approaches to self-regulation approaches in the context of composition writing in English. Specifically, a path model showing the relation of learning approaches on each seven self-regulation components is tested.

## **2. Methodology**

### *2.1. Research Design*

The research design for this study is correlational research. The study aims are test the theory showing the direction of learning approaches in self-regulation as it operates in a domain specific context of composition writing in English.

## 2.2. Participants

The participants in this study were 123 college students who were upper than second semester, their major in English, Teaching, Literature and Translating. These participants are college level students from different Golestan province Universities in Iran offering courses on English. The courses deal with several activities involving composition writing in English. The criteria for inclusion in the sample includes taking the above courses namely English, Teaching, Literature and Translating. All of the participants should have written essays, research papers within college.

## 2.3. Instruments

The Revised Learning Process Questionnaire (R-LPQ). The R-LPQ was developed by Kember, Biggs, Leung (2004); Magno (2009) that measures multi measurement of learning approaches. Twenty-two item questionnaire that concerns one's learning approach scores. It has five point Likert scale ranging from always or almost always true of me to never or rarely only true for me. The validity has been tested with adequate goodness of fit values of CFI=0.86. The revised learning process questionnaire was revised through changing the sentences to fit writing and not studying alone.

Academic Self-regulated Learning Scale (A-SRL-S). The A-SRL-S was derived by Magno (2009c) based on the model of Zimmerman and Martinez-Pons (1986; 1988). It has 55 item questions that measure students' academic self-regulation under seven subscales: Memory strategy, goal setting, self-evaluation, seeking assistance, environmental structure, responsibility, and organizing.

## 2.4. Data Analysis

All of the means for the Academic Self-Regulated Learning Scale (A-SRL-S) and Revised Learning Process Questionnaire Two Factorial (R-LPQ-2F) were calculated. The factors of self-regulation and learning approaches were correlated to determine if they significantly increase with each other, this was done using the Pearson Correlation. Path analysis was used to test the path of learning approaches in seven components of self-regulation. Goodness of fit in the model was indicated using the Pearson Correlation.

## 3. Results

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviation of Self-regulation and Learning Approaches

	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
Learning Approaches	123	3.5	.505
Memory Strategy	123	3.22	.864
Goal-setting	123	3.26	.923
Self-evaluation	123	3.72	.685
Seeking Assistance	123	3.65	.827
Environmental Structure	123	4.14	.736
Responsibility	123	3.99	.736
Organizing	123	4.22	.616

The mean score for 123 participants was obtained for leaning approaches and resulted in which indicated that the scores obtained were near to each other. The mean of organizing scored the highest among the factors of self-regulation. The factors of self-regulation showed high internal consistencies.

Table 2. Correlations among Factors of Self-regulation and Learning Approaches

	r
Learning Approaches	.146
Memory Strategy	.482
Goal-setting	.527
Self-evaluation	.474
Seeking Assistance	.352
Environmental Structure	.160
Responsibility	.643
Organizing	.574

P<0.05

The self-regulation factors correlated significantly with Learning Approaches. The relationship among the factors of self-regulation learning approaches, significant, were moderate with values .482 for memory strategy, .527 for goal setting, .474 for self-evaluation, .352 for seeking assistance and .160 and environmental structure .643 for responsibility and .574 for organizing. All of the factors of learning approaches had high correlation with self-regulation. In addition, self-regulation factors were all significantly correlated with each other. Learning approaches were significantly correlated with each other a .146 correlation.

#### 4. Discussion

The present study tested the relationship of learning approaches on seven components of self-regulation. When the relationship between learning approaches and self-regulation was established, learning approaches were significantly correlated to all components of self-regulation. The results of the path analysis is likely similar with the pattern of correlations. The results of this study were very close to other reviews such as: Cantwell & Moore (1996), Evan, Kirby & Fabrigar (2003), Winne (1989) and Magno (2009b).

The writing activity as explained by Zimmerman and Kitsantas (2002) needs independent thinking and self-discipline. The effectiveness of learning approaches may also explain the pattern of outcome for the components of self-regulation. When individuals start to write, all approaches used as a process are functional such as high interest about the topic and at the same time being worried of not being able to do well in writing. Although in the consequence, individuals who have higher interest on the topic written and more able to use effective strategies that facilitate their writing process. On the other hand, being worried of not being able to write well could not resort to better strategies in writing. The present findings further clarify more specific patterns in learning approaches especially when use self-regulation approaches in a composition writing activity in English. It should be made clear that there is similarity in the function and usefulness of approaches in writing. This new pattern is made possible when a task involves writing as a function of a foreign language especially among Iranian learners.

#### References

- August-Brady, M. M. (2005). The effect of metacognitive intervention on approach to and self-regulation of learning in baccalaureate nursing students. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 44(7), 297-305.
- Cantwell, R. H., & Moore, P. J. (1996). The development of measures of individual differences in self-regulatory control and their relationship to academic performance. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 21, 500-517.
- Chun-Heung, L., & French, P. (1997). Education in the practicum: A study of the ward learning climate in Hong Kong. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 26, 455-462.
- Evans, C. J., Kirby, J. R., & Fabrigar, L. R. (2003). Approaches to learning, need for cognition, and strategic flexibility among university students. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 73(4), 507-529.

- Graham, S., & Harris, K. R. (1994). The role and development of self-regulation in the writing process.
- Guthrie, J., Wigfield, A., & VonSecker, C. (2000). Effects of integrated instruction on motivation and strategy use in reading. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 92(2), 331-341.
- H. Schunk & B. J. Zimmerman (Eds.), *Self-regulation of learning and performance: Issues and educational applications* (pp. 203-228). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Hayes, F., Hayes, L., & Hayes, J., (1981). A cognitive process theory of writing. *College Composition and Communication*, 32, 365-387.
- Kellogg, R. (2001). Long-term working memory in text production. *Memory and Cognition*, 29 43-52.
- Kellogg, R., & Raulerson, B. (2007). Improving the writing skills of college students. *Psychometric Bulletin and Review*, 14, 237-242.
- Biggs, J., & Leung, D. Y. P. (2004). Examining the multidimensionality of approaches to learning through the development of a revised version of the learning process questionnaire. *Educational Psychology Journals*, 74, 261-279.
- Lenski, S.D. (1998). Strategic knowledge when reading in order to write. *Reading Psychology*, 19, 287-315.
- Leventhal, H., & Cameron, L. (1987). Behavioral theories and the problem of compliance. *Patient Education and Counseling*, 10, 117-138.
- Lienenmann, T. O., & Reid, R. (2008). Using self-regulated strategy development to improve expository writing students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. *Reston*, 74(4), 471-86.
- Magno, C. (2009). Self-Regulation and Approaches to Learning in English Writing. *Philippine ESL Journal*, 1, 1-16.
- Magno, C. (2009a). How I learned to speak English: Factors involved in ESL acquisition among Filipinos. *Philippine ESL Journal*, 3, 127-141.
- Magno, C. (2009b). Investigating the effect of school ability on self-efficacy, learning approaches and metacognition. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, 18(2), 233-244.
- Magno, C. (2009c). Developing and assessing self-regulated learning. *The Assessment Handbook: Continuing Education Program*, 1, 26-42.
- Marton, F., & Saljo, R. (1976a). On qualitative differences in learning: I-Outcome and process. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 46, 4-11.
- Marton F., & Saljo, R. (1976b). On qualitative differences in learning: II-Outcome as a function of the learner's conception of the task. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 46, 115-127.
- Olive, T. (2004). Working memory in writing: Empirical evidence from the dual-task technique. *European Journal*, 9, 32-42.
- Winne, P.H. (1989). Internal details in self-regulated learning. *Educational Psychologists*, 30, 173-187.
- Zimmerman, B. (1986). Becoming a self-regulated learner: Which are the key subprocesses?. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 11, 307-313.
- Zimmerman, B. J. & Martinez-Pons, M. (1986). Development of a structured interview for assessing student use of self-regulated learning strategies. *American Educational Research Journal*, 23, 614-628.
- Zimmerman, B. J., & Martinez-Pons, M. (1988). Construct validation of a strategy of student self-regulatory learning. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 80(3), 284-290.
- Student differences in self-regulated learning: Relating grades, sex, and giftedness to self-efficacy and strategy use. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 82(1), 51-59.
- Zimmerman, B., & Kitsantas, A. (2002) Acquiring writing revision and self regulatory skill through observation and evaluation, *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 94, 660-668.
- Zimmerman, B. J., & Risemberg, R. (1997). Becoming a self-regulated writer: A social cognitive perspective. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 22, 73-101.