

PROF NUR BING ATIK

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Submission date: 08-Jul-2020 03:26PM (UTC+0700)

Submission ID: 1354925514

File name: ATIK_UMAMAH_FULL_PAPER.docx (83.73K)

Word count: 5549

Character count: 32690

PARAGRAPH VS ESSAY: DO THEY REQUIRE THE SAME SELF-REGULATED WRITING (SRW) STRATEGIES?

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Abstract

This research was carried out in an attempt to scrutinize the employment of self-regulated writing (SRW) strategies by EFL university students. Specifically, it compared the strategies used by the students based on the complexity of the texts (paragraph and essay) and their writing achievement. The data were obtained from two sets of Self-Regulated Learning Strategy Questionnaire (SRLSQ) consisting of 60 items each responded by 94 English students (49 first-year students and 45 third-year students) of Universitas Islam Malang and from the students' writing scores. The data were analyzed using a descriptive statistics to examine the frequency of SRW strategy use and an independent sample test to compare the strategies in composing paragraphs and essays and to know whether there was a significant difference in the strategy employment based on the writing achievement. Overall, the use of all SRW strategies both in paragraph and essay writings was in high frequency. Social environment dimension had the highest mean score, while motive dimension obtained the lowest mean in both paragraph and essay writings. Further analysis showed no statistically significant difference in the use of SRW strategies in writing paragraphs and essays except in method dimension. The difference in strategy use based on achievement was also not significant.

Keywords: writing, paragraph, essay, self-regulated writing (SRW) strategies

Introduction

Writing is undeniably a complex skill; thus, most of the students are categorized as not capable writers (Harris & Graham, 2016). In EFL context, students generally have to struggle with difficulties in terms of content, linguistic, and lexical aspects (Al Seyabi & Tuzlukova, 2014; Ariyanti, 2016; Javid et al., 2013; Karim et al., 2017; Umamah et al., 2019). The difficulties are not limited to long written texts (e.g., essay), but they also occur at the more simple writing (e.g., paragraph). In essay writing, students are confronted with difficulties in content, grammatical, and lexical aspects (Sudirman & Tiasari, 2015). In paragraph writing, Karim et al. (2017) reveal that EFL students face difficulties in all stages of writing (writing, revising, and planning – in sequence) and in using idiomatic expressions and lexical aspect. Al Seyabi and

Tuzlukova (2014) unveil that both in paragraph and essay writings, EFL students generally deal with problems in lexical and content aspects. Thus, appropriate and effective learning strategies are strongly demanded to help students cope with the writing difficulties (Cohen & Macaro, 2007).

To deal with writing problems, a large body of research has convincingly proven that self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies are effective to help students improve their writing performance (Cer, 2019; Geres-Smith et al., 2019; Helsel & Greenberg, 2007; Kartika, 2015; Roderick, 2019; Teng & Huang, 2019, 2019; Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994). It is because these strategies involve self-planning, self-monitoring, and self-regulation which fit the nature of writing as a process, covering three stages: forethought phase which is done before writing (goal setting), performance phase conducted during writing (self-monitoring), and self-reflection phase which is performed after writing (self-evaluation) (Hughes et al., 2019). Employing self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies, students will be able to achieve linguistic development, cognitive improvement, and regulation to finally ameliorate their writing quality (Cer, 2019). To specifically address writing skill ⁵ some researchers (Brunstein & Glaser, 2011; Reynolds & Perin, 2009) replace the term self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies into self-regulated writing (SRW) strategies.

As stated earlier, EFL students experience difficulties in writing paragraphs and essays; therefore, they need to apply self-regulated writing (SRW) strategies. However, the previous studies on the employment of SRW strategies mainly put their focus on either essay writing (Abadikhah et al., 2018; Helsel & Greenberg, 2007; Kartika, 2015; L. S. Teng & Zhang, 2019; Teng & Huang, 2019, 2019) or paragraph writing (Bai & Guo, 2019; Geres-Smith et al., 2019; Hughes et al., 2019) separately. Thus, the different use of the strategies cannot be seen clearly. Moreover, Al Seyabi and Tuzlukova (2014) uncover that EFL students generally have similar problems in lexical and content aspects when writing paragraph and essay. This leads a question to arise whether the students also apply similar SRW strategies in writing the texts with different complexity. In addition, issues concerning SRW strategy use based on the writing achievement has not sufficiently investigated. A previous study reports a correlation

between SRW strategies and writing achievement in general (Geres-Smith et al., 2019). Another research finds that the students' SRW strategy use is different depending on their proficiency levels with high achievers outperform the low achievers (Bai & Guo, 2019). Abadikhah et al. (2018) find that fourth-year students apply SRW strategies (i.e. ⁵method and social environment) more frequently than third-year students. These findings imply that students with different writing proficiency levels might also have different SRW strategy use, but it needs further investigation. Therefore, this research comes up to profile the use of SRW strategies in paragraph and essay writings and to examine whether there is a significant difference in the employment of SRW strategies based on different text complexities and writing achievement.

Self-Regulated Writing (SRW) Strategies: The Six Dimensions

The current issue in language learning strategy research is related to the notion of self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies. Self-regulated strategies according to Zimmerman and Risemberg (1997) can be defined as thoughts, feelings, and actions used to achieve ³different literary goals, including writing skill improvement and enhancement of written text quality. According to Pintrich and Groot (1990), self-regulated learning covers three components: metacognitive strategies (for planning, monitoring, and modifying their cognition), management and control of their effort, and actual cognitive strategies.

Self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies are applicable to be used in learning vocabulary (Khezrlou & Sadeghi, 2011; Sadeghi & Khezrlou, 2012), listening (Yabukoshi, 2018) and reading (Ayşe & Ali, 2016; Kavani & Amjadiparvar, 2018). In the last few years, these strategies are widely adopted in writing skill (Cer, 2019; Forbes, 2019; Geres-Smith et al., 2019; Helsel & Greenberg, 2007; Hu & Gao, 2017; Kartika, 2015; Roderick, 2019; Teng & Huang, 2019; Teng & Zhang, 2018; Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994; Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997). Along with the massive use of these strategies in ⁷writing context, the term self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies (SRL) is replaced with self-regulated writing (SRW) strategies.

The classification of self-regulated writing (SRW) strategies in this study adopts the theoretical framework of Zimmerman (1994, 1998), who proposes six dimensions of

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SRW strategies: motive, method, time, physical environment, social environment, and performance (as cited in Andrade & Bunker, 2009). Further, Andrade and Bunker (2009) explain how each dimension relates to the learning process. Motive dimension refers to the reasons (why) for learning involving goal-setting, self-talk, and emotion control. Method dimension deals with the ways (how) the learners learn such as making a summary, taking notes, asking questions, rehearsing, and making a visual representation. Time is related to time management (when) during the learning process. Physical environment dimension is the structure of the surrounding environment (where) which can support learning. Social environment dimension focuses on how learners ask for assistance (with whom) when dealing with learning difficulties. Performance dimension is (what) to learn by doing observation, reflection, judgements, comparison of current performance and the learning goals.

Self-Regulated Writing (SRW) Strategies and Writing Achievement

Graham et al. (2000) point out that one of the causes of writing difficulties is that students often fail to deploy effective strategies in the writing process. Currently, self-regulated writing (SRW) strategies are proposed to help the students cope with the complexities of writing. The essential role of self-regulated writing (SRW) strategies to enhance the quality of students' writing has been confirmed by several research findings in different levels of education such as in preschool (Kim & Nor, 2019), in elementary level (Geres-Smith et al., 2017; Helsel & Greenberg, 2007), in secondary schools (Rosário et al., 2019; Teng & Huang, 2019; Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994) and at university level (Kartika, 2015; Roderick, 2019; Teng & Zhang, 2018).

In preschool, Kim and Nor (2019) report that self-regulated writing strategies (SRW) have a significant effect not only on young learners' self-efficacy but also on their writing performance. Self-monitoring and controlling are the strong predictors for self-efficacy, while planning and goal setting can predict early writing performance. The students perceive that the use of planning and goal-setting, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation can promote their writing quality.

In elementary schools, Geres-Smith et al. (2019) uncover that self-regulated writing (SRW) strategies can improve primary school students' writing quality, writing duration, and self-efficacy in composing persuasive text. Based on this research, there is a large change in students' self-efficacy after the intervention of self-regulated strategies development (SRSD). This study further implies that (SRW) strategies and self-efficacy are closely associated though it still needs further investigation. Similarly, using self-regulated strategy intervention, Helsel and Greenberg (2007) report SRW strategies can help struggling writers to tackle the difficulties in the writing process.

In the secondary level, Rosário et al. (2019) report an improvement in students' writing quality after the implementation of self-regulated learning development (SRSD) and SRSD plus story-tool interventions compared with the use of ⁷ week journal activities. Teng and Huang (2019) confirm the promising benefit of self-regulated writing (SRW) strategies to enhance students' writing outcomes with goal-oriented monitoring and evaluating as the most crucial SRW strategies. Further analysis indicates that more proficient students achieve better writing outcomes. Previously, ⁵ Zimmerman and Bandura (1994) report that self-regulatory efficacy for writing beliefs are directly correlated with the students' perceived efficacy of writing course attainment and indirectly with their final grades.

In university level, Kartika (2015) reports a significant increase in the students' writing scores after a self-regulated writing strategy intervention. Investigating graduate students' self-regulation and rhetorical problem solving, Roderick (2019), find that the more proficient students make a narrative of progress and use writing problems to find possible solutions and set goals. Conducting experimental research, Teng and Zhang (2019) uncover that students in the self-regulated strategy intervention group perform better and apply ¹ the strategies more actively than those who do not get involved in the intervention. Abadikhah et al. (2018) find that the frequency of use of SRW strategies is moderate to slightly high level. Strategies in method dimension are reported to be the most frequently used by EFL university students. In addition, fourth-year students use of SRW strategies more intensively than third-year students do. It implies that proficiency level might affect the strategy use.

Given the ⁷ aforementioned review, this research is conducted out in an attempt to investigate what self-regulated writing (SRW) strategies are applied by EFL university students in composing paragraph and essay. Further, this research comes up to examine whether ² there is a significant difference in the use of self-regulated writing (SRW) strategies based on ² the text the students produce and their writing achievement. The research ⁷ questions are formulated in the following.

1. What self-regulated writing (SRW) strategies applied by EFL university students in ² writing paragraph and essay?
2. Is there any significant difference in the use of self-regulated writing (SRW) strategies in ² writing paragraph and essay?
3. Do high and low achievers differ in the use of self-regulated writing (SRW) strategies in writing paragraph and essay?

Method

Research Design

This research adopted a quantitative approach to address the three research questions. The first question was answered through descriptive statistical analysis to know the most used self-regulated writing (SRW) strategies and independent sample t-tests were performed ⁶ to answer the second and the third research questions to investigate the significant difference in the use of SRW strategies based on ² the text the students produce and their writing achievement.

Participants

A total of 94 English students of Universitas Islam Malang (49 first-year students and 45 third-year students) got involved in this research to respond to the questionnaire. The first-year students have got a paragraph writing material and the third year students have passed an essay writing course. They were selected on the basis of convenient sampling.

Instruments

1 This research drew on in-depth data from two sets of the questionnaire of Self-Regulated Learning Strategy Questionnaire (SRLSQ) adopted from Abadikhah et al. (2018). Each set consists of 60 items with a 5-point Likert scale. This first set of the questionnaire was specifically addressed to elicit data related to self-regulated learning in writing a paragraph, and the other one was for essay writing. The questionnaires were required to gather profound information and generate ideas related to the strategies used in six dimensions (motive, method, time, performance, physical environment, and social environment) in writing the two different written texts. Some adjustment was made in four statements (Item 9, 10, 13, 15) in motive dimension. The adjustment was by changing the context from an essay into the paragraph. Detailed information about the questionnaire is in Table 1.

Table 1 Distribution of Self-Regulated Learning Strategy Questionnaire (SRLSQ)

Dimensions	Descriptions	Number of items
Motive	Setting learning goals and self-efficacy	14
Method	Applying strategies for task accomplishment	10
Time	Managing the time to learn and how long	8
Physical environment	Setting surrounding environment	5
Social environment	Finding assistance	6
Performance	Making self-evaluation, self-consequence	17
Total		60

The first part of the questionnaire was about respondents' demographic information such as full name, gender, and interest in writing. The main part was the 60-item questionnaire with 5-Likert scale (strongly disagree '1' to strongly agree '5'). The questionnaire was ready to use and has high reliability (0.95). However, to ensure that the respondents fully understood each item and to avoid bias, the questionnaire was translated into Indonesian. One writing lecturer from the English department and one English student were asked to read the translated items to make sure that each statement in the questionnaire was clear and understandable.

In addition, to measure the students' writing achievement and to group the students into high and low achievers, the students from paragraph writing group (first-year students) were assigned to write a descriptive paragraph describing their bedroom, while

the students from essay writing group (third year students) were asked to compose an argumentative essay. The compositions were rated only by the writing lecturer of each group. The students were grouped based on the criterion that those who obtained ≥ 80 are grouped into high achievers, while those whose score is < 80 are categorized as low achievers.

Procedures

The first thing to do was to send a letter of consent to the head of the English department of Universitas Islam Malang to allow¹ their students to participate in this research as respondents. Next, to explore what self-regulated writing (SRW) strategies applied in writing paragraphs and essays, the students were asked to respond to the Self-Regulated Learning Strategy Questionnaire (SRLSQ) distributed via Google Form. The form was sent to the writing teachers. The teachers then sent the link to the captain of the class to be shared to all members of the class. The respondents at first were asked to read the first section of the questionnaire containing the purpose of distributing the questionnaire, a brief explanation of self-regulated writing (SRW) strategies, and the content of questionnaire to make sure that their response was valid. Then they responded to the demographic information questions and the SRW questionnaire. After questionnaire distribution, the first-year students were assigned to write a short descriptive paragraph, while the third year students wrote a-five paragraph expository essay. Based on the score obtained from the tests, the students were grouped into high and low achievers.

Data analysis

The quantitative data from the questionnaire were analyzed based on the computation of descriptive statistics. The analysis of mean score was done for each dimension (a total of six dimensions) as well as each item in each dimension. The frequency use of the SRW strategies is considered high if the mean score is between 3.45 and 5.00, moderate if it is between 2.45 and 3.44, and categorized low if it is between 1.00 and 2.44 (Oxford, 1990). Meanwhile, to see the difference in the

preference of SRW strategies based on the text produced by the students and writing achievement, independent sample t-tests were performed.

Findings

The Use of Self-Regulated Writing (SRW) Strategies in Writing Paragraph and Essay

Analysis of descriptive statistics (Table 2) unveils that, in writing a paragraph, EFL university students' use SRW strategies is at a high level (3.62) with strategies in social environment dimension as the most frequently used (4.10). Meanwhile, the least used strategies are in the motive dimension (3.04).

Table 2 The Use of Self-Regulated Writing (SRW) Strategies in Writing Paragraph

Strategy Dimensions	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
Social Environment	49	4.10	.63	1 (High)
Performance	49	3.87	.55	2 (High)
Physical Environment	49	3.75	.72	3 (High)
Method	49	3.65	.582	4 (High)
Time	49	3.32	.52	5 (Moderate)
Motive	49	3.04	.53	6 (Moderate)
Overall		3.62		High

Table 3 shows that the overall use of SRW strategies in essay writing is also at a high level of frequency (3.72). The most dominant strategies are those in the social environment dimension (4.22), while the least used strategies are those in the motive dimension (3.08).

Table 3 The Use of Self-Regulated Writing (SRW) Strategies in Writing Essay

Strategy Dimensions	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
Social Environment	45	4.22	.53	1 (high)
Physical Environment	45	3.92	.87	2 (high)
Performance	45	3.89	.63	3 (high)
Methods	45	3.89	.60	4 (high)
Time	45	3.32	.55	5 (moderate)
Motive	45	3.08	.64	6 (moderate)
Overall		3.72		High

Based on the findings above, it can be said that EFL students apply self-regulated writing (SRW) strategies at a high level of frequency both in writing

Commented [MPA1]: Ini harus pake kah? Kalo gak perlu bisa dihapus aja, nanti di tarok buat kata2nya di paragraph

paragraph and in writing an essay. Interestingly, social environment dimension obtains the highest mean score in both paragraph and essay writings, while motive gains the lowest mean score.

Comparison of Self-Regulated Writing (SRW) Strategy Use in Writing Paragraph and Essay 4

The result from independent sample t-test (Table 5) shows that generally no statistical significant difference in the use of self-regulated writing (SRW) strategies in writing paragraph and essay except in method dimension (.051). As can be seen in Table 4, the mean score of the method dimension in the essay writing (3.89) is higher than in paragraph writing (3.65).

Table 4 Difference in the Use of Self-Regulated Writing (SRW) Strategy Use in Writing Paragraph and Essay

Strategy Dimensions	Text Type	Mean	Std. Deviation
Time	Essay	3.32	.55
	Paragraph	3.32	.52
Motive	Essay	3.08	.64
	Paragraph	3.04	.53
Method	Essay	3.89	.60
	Paragraph	3.65	.58
Performance	Essay	3.89	.63
	Paragraph	3.87	.55
Social Environment	Essay	4.22	.53
	Paragraph	4.10	.63
Physical Environment	Essay	3.92	.87
	Paragraph	3.75	.72

Table 5 Difference in the Use of Self-Regulated Writing (SRW) Strategy Use in Writing Paragraph and Essay

Categories	t	df	Significance (2-tailed)
Time	.028	92	.978
Motive	.345	92	.731
Method	1.981	92	.051
Performance	.154	92	.878
Social Environment	.972	92	.334
Physical Environment	1.032	92	.305

The findings above indicate that when writing an essay, EFL university students apply the strategies in method dimension more frequently than when writing a paragraph. It implies different ways in accomplishing writing task with different levels of complexity.

3 Comparison in the Use of Self-Regulated Writing (SRW) Strategies Based on Writing Achievement

4 Based on the analysis using an independent sample t-test, it is found that the difference in the use of SRW strategies based on the students' writing achievement in paragraph writing is not significant. As can be seen in Table 7, all of the *P*values are more than 0.05.

6 Commented [MPA2]: Pake *P*values aja bing

Table 6 Comparison of Strategy Use Based on Achievement (Paragraph)

	High		Low	
	M	SD	M	SD
Time	3.40	.453	3.36	.696
Motive	3.10	.458	3.14	.690
Method	3.71	.515	3.78	.661
Performance	3.91	.595	3.96	.617
Social Environment	4.15	.578	4.28	.690
Physical Environment	3.89	.778	3.65	.704

Table 7 Difference of Strategy Use Based on Achievement (Paragraph)

Categories	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Time	.160	25	.874
Motive	-.167	25	.869
Method	-.309	25	.760
Performance	-.218	25	.830
Social Environment	-.501	25	.621
Physical Environment	.842	25	.408

6 In essay writing, it is also revealed that there is no significant difference in the use of SRW 2 strategies based on the students' writing achievement as proven by all *P*values are higher than 0.05 (Table 9).

Table 8 Comparison of Strategy Use Based on Achievement (Essay)

	High	Low

	M	SD	M	SD
Time	3.36	.373	3.18	.645
Motive	3.11	.541	2.96	.705
Method	4.02	.579	3.80	.691
Performance	4.11	.518	3.74	.625
Social Environment	4.35	.505	4.29	.401
Physical Environment	4.20	.665	3.77	.974

Table 9 Difference of Strategy Use Based on Achievement (Essay)

Categories	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Time	.964	30	.343
Motive	.683	30	.500
Method	.970	30	.340
Performance	1.792	30	.083
Social Environment	.388	30	.701
Physical Environment	1.441	30	.160

2

Based on the findings, it is clear that no significant difference in the use of self-regulated writing (SRW) strategies by high and low achievers in both paragraph and essay writings. In other words, high and low achievers basically apply self-regulated writing (SRW) strategies in their writing process. All of them have an awareness of using all of the six dimensions in SRW strategies. Effectiveness might be the factor making a difference.

Discussions

The finding of the descriptive statistics shows that EFL students employ self-regulated writing (SRW) strategies at a high level of frequency both in writing paragraph and in writing an essay. This finding is in line with the report of previous studies (Bai & Guo, 2019; Umamah & Cahyono, 2020). This indicates that the students have a high awareness of the importance of SRW strategies. Confirming the finding of Umamah and Cahyono (2020), this study reports that social environment dimension obtains the highest mean score in both paragraph and essay writings. It means that in an EFL context students generally need social support to accomplish their writing task (Yot-

Domínguez & Marcelo, 2017) by seeking for help. The help can be obtained from their peers through peer feedback (Kusumaningrum et al., 2019) and from available resources (e.g., Internet) (Hughes et al., 2019).

Meanwhile, the least used strategy is in motive dimension showing that the students have not been able to set learning goals and to control their affective factors such as self-efficacy and anxiety. Setting goals is necessary to direct how students learn. When they have meaningful reasons in learning a language, they are likely to have more motivation to learn which can lead to a more successful acquisition (Andrade & Bunker, 2009). Meanwhile, affective factors influence students' writing performance (Erkan & Saban, 2011; Pajares & Valiante, 1997); thus, the failure in controlling emotion might affect the students' performance negatively. Therefore, there is a need to encourage the students to learn to make specific learning goals and to manage their affective factors.

The result from the independent sample t-test indicates that generally no ³ statistical significant difference in the use of self-regulated writing (SRW) strategies in writing paragraph and essay except in method dimension. This finding proves that regardless of the complexity of the text, EFL students have used all of the six dimensions in SRW strategies to help them cope with writing challenges. It is reasonable since EFL students generally deal with similar problems both in paragraph and essay writings (Al Seyabi & Tuzlukova, 2014). However, some of them might use the strategies less effectively (Graham et al., 2000); thus, they have lower achievement.

Meanwhile, the result that there is a significant difference in method dimension supports the finding of Abadikhah et al. (2018), reporting that fourth-year students employ SRW strategies more intensively than third-year counterparts. In this current research context, paragraph writing was given in the first year, while essay writing was taken in the third semester. This might be the reason why students in essay writing group outperform those in the paragraph writing group. The students in essay group have more learning experience which can affect the strategy use (Teng & Huang, 2019). Besides, the different use of strategies in method dimension reflects that when dealing with a more complex text, students tend to make use of their knowledge that writing requires multidimensional stages: forethought stage done before writing (goal setting),

performance stage conducted during writing(self-monitoring), and self-reflection performed after writing (self-evaluation) (Hughes et al., 2019). In other words, more complex text requires more effective SRW strategies to be able to organize the students' ideas cohesively in an iterative manner (Hughes et al., 2019). This research finding implies the need to emphasize the understanding that writing is a long-lasting process requiring self-monitoring and evaluation to improve writing quality since the students are in the early stage of writing.

3

Based on the writing achievement, the difference in the use of self-regulated writing (SRW) strategies in both paragraph and essay writing is not significant. In other words, regardless of their level of proficiency, all of the students both high and low achievers are not different in applying self-regulated writing (SRW) strategies. It is a contrast to previous research findings (Bai & Guo, 2019; Teng & Huang, 2019) reporting that high achievers employ SRW strategies more frequently than the low achievers. High achievers seem to use the strategies more effectively since they are aware of their own capability, beliefs, motivation, and cognition (Butler & Winne, 1995). Meanwhile, the low achievers still experience writing difficulties due to the ineffective use of strategies (Graham et al., 2000). Therefore, it is not surprising that students with good self-regulation gain better academic achievement than those with poor self-regulation (Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994). The different findings of this current study from the previous ones might be due to the sampling technique and the range score of high and low achievers which is not far different. The finding of this study reflects that teachers need to concern low achievers to make use of their SRW strategies more appropriately and effectively based on the writing tasks.

Conclusions

Self-regulated writing (SRW) strategies equip EFL students to overcome the complexities in writing task by regulating their learning process. In general, all of the students (high and low achievers) apply SRW strategies both in paragraph and essay writings. The thing that makes their achievement different lies in how effective they use the strategies. Therefore, to assist low achievers make use of the strategies more

effectively, the writing teachers are demanded to train them by implementing SRW strategy intervention. The findings of this research cannot be generalized due to some limitations. First, this research involved a small size of the sample from only one institution. Second, the writing test was rated by only one rater, so the validity of the score was not strong. Finally, it only compared the employment of SRW strategies based on the complexity of the text (paragraph and essay) and writing achievement involving only two groups: high and low achievers. Therefore, further studies are suggested to cover the limitations to provide more comprehensive results by involving larger sample size, various text genres, and moderate achievers.

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