

**DEVELOPING WRITING PROFICIENCY FOR FRESHMEN COLLEGE
STUDENTS VIA STRATEGY- EMBEDDED LANGUAGE LEARNING
PROGRAM (SELLP)**

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ABSTRACT

This study recognizes the importance of developing writing proficiency for first-year college students employing Strategy-Embedded Language Learning Program (SELLP, researchers' designed program, 2015). The theories of Whole Language Approach (US Educators, 1980's cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2001); Language Learning Strategies (Oxford, 1990); Process Writing Approach (White and Arndt, 1991 & Weigle, 2014) are the theoretical anchors of this paper. Data were collected from Notre Dame College (NDC), Bangladesh. The researcher perceived the need to enhance writing proficiency in English to improve competency in career preparation. Using the qualitative-quantitative method, writing proficiency is examined on content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics for 87 randomly selected first-year students. Two survey questionnaires, Language Learning background and Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (SILL) (Oxford, 1990) were administered, and Pre-test Post-test were conducted using SELLP as intervention. Data were analyzed and interpreted using LLS, AMS, Mean, Standard Deviation. The result showed that more than half of the participants (55.17%) rated their proficiency as fair, 25.29% as good and 18.39% as poor; using more of metacognitive (Mean 4.2) and cognitive (Mean 3.8) strategies for language learning; however, over 98% of them had positive attitudes toward English learning. Results from t-test of Pre-test and Post-test showed significant impact of SELLP on developing writing skills.

Keywords: Writing proficiency, Strategy-embedded, Freshman students and Career building.

1. Introduction

Language learning and teaching are not static but dynamic. They fluctuate and shift over time. In every decade from the 1950s to the 1980s, a new methodology of language learning and teaching was introduced with varied interpretations as to the best way to teach and learn a Second or Foreign Language (SFL). The Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLTA) previously known as CLT (Duff, 2014) emphasizes the significant role of contextual and meaningful communication. Past classroom teaching practices are aimed primarily achieving learner accuracy in the use of the linguistic code. At present, new activities give more attention to the meaning being conveyed. This has led researchers to promote the development of a communicative approach, which places the students' authentic real world experiences and knowledge at the centre of learning activities (Todor, 1996). Therefore, communicative competence has become a main goal

of language learning (Oxford, 1990:9). Communicative competence inspired Oxford's (1990) claims that Language Learning Strategies (LLSs) operate in both *general* and *specific* ways to encourage learners to develop writing competence. As Oxford (1990) explains, cognitive strategies like analysis and recall are effective in the process of becoming competent language users. In this study, writing strategies serve as the central design element in Strategy-Embedded Language Learning Program (SELLP). It is hoped this program would help learners overcome linguistic knowledge gaps, repair communication in writing and continue to communicate in authentic contexts (Oxford, 1990).

Writing strategies help ESL or EFL learners achieve written expression of ideas with reasonable coherence and accuracy (Murcia, 2001). Exposure to different rhetorical devices will pave the learner's way to become more competent in writing. This is necessary for academic undertakings, functional needs, and professional work (Jaleco et al., 1999). The proper use of writing strategies will also help build learner autonomy in initiating oral production, solving problems in small groups, practicing language forms in pairs, and using the language outside the classrooms. Thus, writing strategies encourage learners to "take charge" of their own learning, to become "aware" of how they learn, and gradually achieve writing proficiency (Brown, 2007:130-131).

Numerous studies and researches have been conducted to help language learners become more creative, self-directed and independent in learning their target language. Since the 1980s, the research of learning strategies has shifted to the study of their relationship with language learning and language cognitive process (Politzer & McGroarty, 1985; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). An integrated system of LLS in classroom teaching is done by Felipe (2000). In her study, she compared the LLS used between the more proficient and less proficient groups of her respondents. She found that both groups are aware of LLS use and the less proficient group outperforms the more proficient group in using the affective strategies. Another research on the application of LLS instruction to teaching English writing to first year college students was conducted by Vidal (2005). Comparing the use of LLS before and after strategy-based instruction, the researcher has found that there is a significant increase in the LLS categories used, especially using cognitive strategies and social strategies. This action research has proven that the increase of use of the LLS leads to the improvement of students' English writing proficiency, as shown in the higher scores in their ESL writing profile. Other similar researches by Suarez (2006), Lee and Oxford's (2005), Querol (2010) and Park (2010) LLS is proven to be related to actual teaching practice and utilization, causing the difference between the two groups' linguistic skills, metacognitive, cognitive level and affective control.

In Bangladesh, a few studies (Rahman, 2005, & Quadir, 2005) have been conducted concerning language learning strategy use for EFL learning (Moriam, 2008). Moriam (2008) conducted a study on motivation and LLS use of 355 Bangladeshi University students to learn spoken English. In this study, to measure levels of learners' motivation Schmidt et al. (1996) and their strategy used modified version of SILL (1990). To understand the relationships between motivation and LLS use, Pearson correlation (two-tailed) was also examined. The study supported several pedagogical suggestions about motivation and strategy used by Bangladeshi university students who are learning spoken EAP. In another study, Khan (2012) investigated LLS from teacher and learner perspectives. The study discovered that the LLS use facilitated individual learners in their own learning. And it also showed a disarray of teachers' perception of the learners' use of

LLS. In a similar study, Paul (2012) explored the use of metacognitive strategies by 100 Bangladeshi English language learners, (50 at the high proficiency and 50 at the low proficiency level), who were studying English for Academic Purpose courses at the Centre for Languages (CfL), BRAC University. To investigate the pattern of metacognitive strategy use among participants, the metacognitive section of Oxford's (1990) SILL has been administered. The study discovered that students with high proficiency English language skills less frequently use metacognitive strategies than students with less proficiency skills, but students of both low and high proficiency are frequent users of metacognitive strategies. In sum, the literature reveals that LLS are used by language students at all levels (Chamot & Kupper, 1989), despite the learner's uncertainty with regard to correct use. Griffiths (2003) proved that course level and frequency of LLS use are correlated with advanced students more likely to employ learning strategy than the grade school students. Perhaps students need to be trained how to use those strategies. That is why a strategy-centered program is almost imperative in EFL context of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh faces a serious decline in the number of skilled users of English since the British Period or even since the Pakistan period in the 1950s. One of the possible causes is that domains of English use, such as education, mass media and government, are being taken over by the national language, Bangla (Kachru 1997). As a result, the use of English became limited and exposure to it is more and more elusive. With this situation Bangladeshi learners became less and less interested in learning English. Worse is the observation that they have acquired a negative attitude towards it. Consequently, they have lost confidence in using the English language. Thus, their dilemma needs to be addressed very soon if students are to be prepared to be globally (globally and locally) competitive. With English as a global language, the situation is eroding the competitiveness of the Bangladeshi workforce, the country's richest resource.

For the last two decades, English teachers have focused on effective teaching methods and research from the learners' point of view; however, very little research has been done on the strategy training of Bangladeshi English language learners. Restrictions in the education system, e.g. Bangla as a medium of classroom instruction, affect the development of foreign language learning. The English curriculum is characterized by prepared teaching syllabi issued and published by the Bangladesh Textbook Board under the Department of Education. It emphasizes communicative language teaching and the goal is the development of the students' ability to use English in speaking, listening, reading, vocabulary, grammar and writing in authentic or stimulated tasks (Islam et al. 2002; National Curriculum and Textbook Board, Bangladesh, 2001-2002). However, these skills are taught separately as single or discrete course in the tertiary level. Though the medium of instruction is English, language classes still subscribe to a misdirected use of the first language in learning the target language. Furthermore, the teaching method in the foreign language classroom is still conducted under the teacher-centered pedagogy in Bangladesh. Teachers who employ the teacher-controlled way of teaching find it hard to adapt to teaching integrated language skills. Moreover, students are required to pass the National Board Examination written in English. Therefore, both teachers and students focus their minds on studying techniques and skills to be used only in and for passing the examinations, without real or proper exposure to language learning and teaching, especially in writing proficiency. Consequently, English language ability, especially writing proficiency of Bangladeshi students remains weak even after studying English as a subject for ten years. Given the fact that writing is neglected even in the National Board

Examination (NBE), it becomes of paramount importance for college students to become more competitive in the global community where English is the prime language.

It is important that educators, ELT professionals, and language teachers in Bangladesh focus on regaining the people's writing proficiency, established during the British period. There is a pressing necessity to revolutionize teaching approaches and methods of language teaching by adapting language-learning strategies which have been proven effective through experimental research. But learning English in Bangla language is very complicated for alphabetical and structural differences. Even though EFL learners take four or five one-hour classes a week, twelve weeks a term, twelve terms in high school and college and four terms in the university, the output or the English writing proficiency is still weak. Apparently, the college students of Bangladesh do not develop the necessary communicative competence or writing proficiency in English Language. Hence, English teachers have to think of effective ways of teaching writing in English and understand the relationship of writing strategies with the writing proficiency of Bangladeshi students. Moreover, identifying learners' differences and needs and using writing strategies are keys to unlocking the level of the learner's language acquisition and proficiency in writing (Ellis, 1987). Thus, it is necessary to pay attention to the students' awareness of writing strategies to encourage effective writing.

The theories of a) Whole Language Approach (US Educators, 1980's as cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2001); b) Language Learning Strategies (Oxford, 1990); c) Process Writing Approach (White and Arndt, 1991, Batin, 2000; Weigle, 2014); and d) SELLP (researcher's designed program, 2015), are the theoretical anchors of the current research paper.

Whole Language Learning Approach

Whole Language Learning was created in the 1980s by a group of U.S. educators advocating the key principles about language (language as a whole as opposed to discreteness of language) and learning (writing reading speaking and listening should be integrated in learning) (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Whole Language is supported by **humanistic approach** (authentic, personalized, self-directed, collaborative) and **constructivist approach** (social construct and team work). Instead of teachers transmitting expert knowledge to students, teachers facilitate learning by collaborating with students. Activities in Whole Language instruction are: individual and small group reading and writing, writing conferences, ungraded dialogue journals, student-made books, writing portfolios, story writing.

Language Learning Strategies

Oxford (1990) is one of the most prominent researchers and writers in the field of LLS. She conceptualizes strategy use in terms of *direct* and *indirect*. Direct strategies include: *memory*, *cognitive*, and *compensation*; Indirect strategies include: *metacognitive*, *affective* and *social*. O'Malley and Chamot (1994) proposed another popular conceptualization of strategy use. They defined strategy use in terms of: *metacognitive strategies* or thinking actions through planning, monitoring, evaluating, and organizing; *cognitive strategies* or doing actions through analysis, transformation, repetition, summarization, and imaging; and *socioaffective strategies* to maintain productive interactions or positive states of mind. However, Brown (2007:134) summarizes that typically LLS has three main categories of

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metacognitive, cognitive and socio-affective. *Metacognitive* refers to the processing of information with an administrative function of preparing for learning through planning, reflecting on learning process, and evaluating comprehension and use of language (Purpura, 1999). *Cognitive* involve learning tasks requiring control of the learning process and material. *Socioaffective* include interaction with others.

Oxford (1990) asserts Language Learning Strategies (LLS) can be considered as writing strategies as well. Oxford (1990) argues that LLS can be used not only for listening, speaking and reading but in writing as well. This is the essential role of Cognitive Learning Strategies (CLSs) in the process of language learning. Such strategies are a varied lot ranging from repetition to analysis to summarizing. The popular and varied CLSs share the language learning goal of manipulating and transforming the target language (Oxford, 1990).

Process Approach

Process approach refers to writing instruction that provides student-writers adequate time and varied opportunities for invention techniques, planning and generating of ideas, pre-writing, composing, revising, and editing (White and Arndt, 1991; Batin, 2000). It gives special emphasis on the composing process and central importance to feedback and revision. According to Weigle (2014), the phases of the writing process are pre-writing, writing, revising, response, editing and evaluation. The modified version of Weigle's writing process was used in SELLP.

Strategy-Embedded Language Learning Program (SELLP)

In the last few decades or so of language teaching, there is proof that incorporating strategies into the acquisition process is useful. Two major movements have prevailed namely, Strategy-Based Language Teaching (originally Strategy-Based Instruction) and Content-Based Language Teaching (CBLT). According to Brown (2007), Strategies-Based Instruction (SBI) is conceived from classroom-based or textbook-embedded training which is effective for varied types of learners in different settings (Chamot, 2005; Anderson, 2005 as cited in Brown, 2007:136). But there is a need to identify the extent of facilitation or interference of cross-cultural variables with effective learner strategy use (McDonough, 1999; Oxford, 1996; Pemberton, 1996; Oxford & Anderson, 1995). However, MacIntyre and Noels (1996) found that students greatly benefit from SELLP if teachers and students understand its nature and practice, believe in its effectiveness and do not find difficulty in accomplishing tasks. Therefore, teachers are advised to teach some technical know-how when learning a language. The effective implementation and integration of strategy-embedded language learning program in language classrooms involves several steps and considerations. First, the learner's styles and potential writing strategies should be identified. Second, training in writing strategies should be incorporated. Lastly, outside classroom conferences should be provided for learners (Brown, 2007). For students at every level of proficiency, a strategy-embedded language-learning writing program would provide opportunities to learn and practice new language forms and structures, thus contributing to language learning (Weigle, 2014).

Snow (2014) observes that Content-Based Language Teaching (CBLT), which originated in North America in 1980s has become more popular recently in Europe as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). It aims to assist school children to become

multilingual to facilitate the integration of the European Union. Strategy-Embedded Language Learning Program (SELLP), as an integration of language teaching refers to the language learning program that integrates or embeds learning strategies to language curriculum for learning and teaching purposes (cognitive, metacognitive and socioaffective) while employing the communicative and process approaches of learning. However, SELLP is inspired, guided and designed by Strategy-Based Language Teaching (SBLT) and Content-Based Language Teaching (CBLT) with timeframe, course content, specific objectives, teaching techniques, embedded language learning strategies, learning task or activities and assessment task. In this study, the NDC students were trained in SELLP, especially language-learning and writing strategies, to develop written English proficiency in written discourses. Written discourses of SELLP writing refer to narration, exposition, description and argumentation.

In this study, Notre Dame College freshmen would produce narrative, expository and argumentative writings via SELLP, which would persuade the target reader to agree or conform. For SELLP students are to be trained by Olshtain's (2001) Specification for Writing Task (SWT), a detailed set of specification which would enable both NDC teachers and students to cope successfully with a practical writing task or emotive writing tasks. Task Description includes the expected output of the activity and its importance. Content Description includes topics to be covered in the completion of the writing activity. Audience Description includes the profile of the reader. Format Cues include the required written form and structure. Linguistic Cue includes suggested words and sentences in writing the output. Spelling/Punctuation includes mechanical considerations to produce an accurate output. For the output, the process approach is to be employed. With great emphasis put on the pre-writing to final output stages by the process approach it is believed that the necessary strategies required of students when writing arguments are developed and prompted by it. Outputs would be scored using Analytic Marking Scheme (Baetiong, 2004) and would serve as data in the quantitative analysis of this study.

This study aims to develop the writing proficiency of freshman students via Strategy-Embedded Language Learning Program (SELLP). Specifically, it seeks to gain valid and reliable answers on the following questions:

1. What is the English language learning background of Notre Dame College Freshman students?
2. What type of language learning strategies do they use based on Oxford's (1990) Strategies Inventory of Language Learning (SILL)?
3. Is there a significant difference in the writing proficiency of the students before and after learning the Strategy-Embedded Language Learning Program (SELLP) as revealed by the results of Pre-test and Post-test?

Significance of the Study

The current study is significant primarily because it is a pioneering study on language learning strategies in Notre Dame College, Dhaka and is deemed to contribute to the field of research in teaching and learning English in educational settings in Bangladesh. This study would help Bangladeshi EFL learners effectively learn by using different learning strategies. Furthermore, it serves as empirical evidence on the advantage of principled language education from test-oriented education, especially in language learning. It would contribute to the field of research in teaching and learning English in Bangladesh and in Asia; provide basis to encourage the use of student-centered, learning strategy-centered

paradigm or effective learning strategies; provide curriculum planners and syllabus designers basis in meeting the student's actual writing needs in the college level English curricula and value the significance of LLS and to promote the autonomy of the language learners. Both teachers and students of NDC will likely benefit from a study emphasizing the value of effective learning strategies instruction and to explore more effective means of English language teaching. For the newly established Notre Dame University Bangladesh (NDUB), which seeks to reveal learner-centered, learning strategy-centered, self-directed and autonomous learning, a study on SELLP is timely research.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study is limited to 87 freshmen of Notre Dame College in Bangladesh. They are EFL learners studying at NDC, aged 16 to 17. They have typical Bengali upbringing and are randomly selected from all NDC freshmen. The respondents answered two survey questionnaires, namely; the English Language Background Questionnaire and Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) and Pre-test and Post-test for writing compositions. These determined the writing proficiency of the freshmen and effectiveness of SELLP. This study has no intent to investigate the quality of English teaching at NDC or the English foundations from their elementary or high schools. SELLP was employed to enhance language proficiency or competency in English for the freshmen, especially writing skills. Moreover, the study focused on the students' learning writing strategies and their use of such strategies. Other factors and areas like listening, speaking, reading and viewing skills for effective and meaningful learning are not directly dealt with in this study. These other variables suggest future investigations and research.

2. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In this study, a pre-experimental descriptive research design (Creswell, 2014) was employed. The 87 respondents were willing participants in the experiments. These participants had undergone SELLP for three months. It was expected to significantly promote writing proficiency among freshmen. The English Language Background Questionnaire, Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) and Pre-test and Post-test were administered to determine the effectiveness of an independent variable Strategy-Embedded Language Learning Program (SELLP) over the dependent variable (writing proficiency of NDC freshmen). All these provided the quantitative and qualitative data for this study.

Research Instruments

Language Learning Background (LLB, Oxford, 1990) and Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL, Oxford, 1990) were employed to determine the language-learning background and strategies that were employed by 87 participants in the English language learning classroom. The LLB questionnaire consists of 12 indicators with options A, B, C, and D. SILL questionnaire consists of 50 indicators each with a likert scale of five points. Each item in this questionnaire has equivalent score from one to five. The end points of scale are anchored with the phrases never, usually, somewhat, or always true. For better comprehension a modified version of LLB and SILL were used for NDC freshmen and the items were scored in terms of level of agreement from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

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Pre-test and Post-test were used to determine the writing ability of the freshmen. They were designed following the Specifications for Writing Task (SWT) adapted from Olshtain (2001). They contained a detailed set of specifications assumed to help students cope with the writing tasks. These tests were administered before and after the SELLP training to yield the data needed for quantitative analysis of the study. These instruments were validated by three English teachers of Notre Dame College. The outputs of this study were measured by Analytic Marking Scheme (AMS), an instrument adapted from the rubric used by Baetiong (2004) in her study. It is a five-criterion analytic marking scheme which include content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics. This instrument was used by Basilio (2010) as a major instrument for the study of cognitive learning strategies and writing proficiency. This instrument was used to provide quantitative data necessary in determining the effect of writing strategies in developing writing proficiency among the participants.

Research Procedure

The following preparations were made for the study: a) seeking permission from the principal of NDC to conduct the study; b) preparation of tests, research instruments, lesson plans and instructional materials; c) submission of tests, research instruments, and lesson plans to the research adviser for checking and approval; d) validation for field testing of research instruments by the English teachers of Notre Dame College, Dhaka, Bangladesh. As to the steps in gathering the data, a request letter was submitted and was approved by the principal of Notre Dame College to conduct the study. Negotiations were made to administer the questionnaire. The researcher himself administered the questionnaire.

In the first phase, the researcher explained the purpose and methodology of the study. The two sets of questionnaires were given to each respondent in scheduled days and time. One hour was given for answering each questionnaire. Upon completion, the respondents were requested to return the questionnaires. The researcher closely monitored the completion of the answer sheets to ascertain the reliability and validity of results.

In the second phase, in the light of Whole Language Approach, guided by LLS (Oxford, 1990), following the six-step procedure (Pre-writing, writing, revising, response, editing and evaluating) of Process Writing Approach (Weigle, 2014:227), the SELLP was designed for three-months time frame. To determine writing proficiency of NDC students and effectiveness of SELLP, the training was conducted for three months for the participants. In this program, English language learning was seen as an integrated whole and all the macro skills (listening, speaking, reading writing, and viewing) were integrated and were used in the SELLP training (writing strategy training in particular) and were embedded in existing language curriculum of Notre Dame College.

The procedure of SELLP training Weigle's Writing Process (2014) was employed for the freshmen. According to Weigle (2014), the phases of the writing process are pre-writing, writing, revising, response, editing and evaluation. The modified version of Weigle's writing process was used in SELLP.

Table 1. Phases of the Writing Process

Phase	Definition	Examples of Teaching and Learning Activities
Pre-writing	Activities to provide motivation, content, fluency, language practice	Structured language practice, readings, films, discussions, brainstorming, generating topics, activating schema or schemata, webbing, outlining, conferencing
Writing	First draft	Focus on content, organizing or getting ideas on paper
Revising	Reseeding or rethinking content; second draft	Reorganizing, adding details, adding supports for arguments, composition with specifications (format cues, linguistic cues, grammar logs), conferencing and feeding back, collaborative learning
Response	Reaction of a reader or listener	Peer review, partners or small groups, teacher conferences, written feedback
Editing	Refinement and attention to writing conventions, including grammar and vocabulary; third draft	Checklist, grammar logs, exercises, proofreading practice
Evaluating	How teacher and or students assess student writing	Rubrics, conferences, self-evaluation, critical reflection and portfolios

(Source: Weigle, 2014:227)

In the third phase, following this six-step procedure, SELLP lesson plans were created and executed for three months for the writing strategy training of NDC students, which was the intention of the study. Prior to the intervention of SELLP training a Pre-test (researcher's design) was conducted and after the intervention a Post-test was administered by the researcher. Outputs were preserved, secured and evaluated by three internal raters (English teachers) from NDC, who were trained to evaluate the answer scripts according to the Analytic Marking Scheme (AMS, Baetiong, 2004). Then data were subjected to statistical analysis.

Finally, the Analysis Phase included inspecting and encoding of answer sheets using AMS and Statistical Package for Social Science Version (SPSS 17.0). The data were subjected to statistical analysis. To address the earlier statement of the problem, the data was encoded and entered in MS Excel 2007 and all of these statistical procedures were performed using SPSS version 17.0. Frequency and percentage were used to describe profile of the respondents of the study. Mean and Standard Deviation were computed to describe the English learning background profile of the respondents. Computation of mean scores and standard deviation values were used to describe the central tendency and dispersion of scores of the respondents of the study. Paired t-test were employed to show the difference between the Pre-test and Post-test. The results of the statistical analysis served as empirical bases in answering the research questions of the study.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. English Language Learning Background

Analysis of the frequencies of participants' answers gives a general description about the English learning background of the freshmen. Socio-economically, participants are from the middle and lower-middle class and typically have a Bengali upbringing, an age-range of 16-17, and have all studied English at least seven (32.18%) to nine years (66.67%) in primary and high schools. More than half the participants (55.17%) rated their own English proficiency as fair, 25.29% as good and 18.39% as poor; which was in line with their actual performance in the Class X Final English Examination. As their mean for Secondary School Certificate (National Board Examination) English score was 85.1%,

they are considered intermediate English learners. Over 98% of the students had positive attitudes toward English learning. As participants were from the EFL context, almost two-thirds of the subjects identified future career opportunities (48.28%) and interest in English for higher studies (28.74%) as reasons for learning English. Students had limited chances to use English in a comparatively real language context.

b. Typology of Language Learning Strategies Students Use on the Basis of Strategies Inventory of Language Learning (SILL)

The table 2 shows that Memory strategy and Affective strategy have a mean value of 3.43 and 3.18 respectively which indicates that the respondents neither disagree nor agree with the statements on typology of language learning strategies; which indicated that the freshmen were satisfactory with the use of those strategies.

Table 2: Typology of Language Learning Strategies according to SILL

Typology of Language Learning Strategies	Mean	Qualitative Description	Interpretation
1. Memory (Remembering more effectively)	3.43	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Satisfactory
2. Cognitive (Using all your mental process)	3.76	Agree	Good
3. Compensation (Compensation for missing knowledge)	3.51	Agree	Good
4. Metacognitive (Organizing and evaluation your learning)	4.12	Agree	Good
5. Affective (Managing your emotions)	3.18	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Satisfactory
6. Social (Learning with others)	3.64	Agree	Good
Over-all Mean	3.61	Agree	Good

(Legend: 4.51-5.00 Strongly Agree/Excellent; 3.51-4.50 Agree/Good; 2.51-3.50 Neither Disagree nor Agree/Satisfactory; 1.51-2.50 Disagree/Fair; 1.00-1.50 Strongly Disagree/Poor)

Also, Cognitive, Compensation, Metacognitive and Social strategies have mean values of 3.76, 3.51, 4.12, and 3.64 respectively indicating they agree with those statements, meaning they make good use of those language strategies. It also indicated that freshmen use a higher percentage of Cognitive (3.76) and Metacognitive (4.12) strategies for language learning, perhaps in developing their writing proficiency as well. The over-all mean value of 3.61 indicates that the student respondents have agreed on the typology of language learning strategies ("Good") revealing that these students have good use of language strategies in language learning.

c. Differences in the Students' Writing Proficiency Before and After using SELLP

As shown in Table 3, in terms of content, organization, vocabulary and language use the mean score obtained by the student respondents in their Pre-test are 2.71, 2.63, 2.33 and 2.41 with standard deviation of 0.46, 0.51, 0.47 and 0.50; while the Post-test had a mean score of 2.93, 2.98, 2.57 and 2.79 with the standard deviation of 0.37, 0.40, 0.5 and 0.46.

Table 3. Differences in Writing Proficiency before and after SELLP Training.

Variables	Tests	Mean Score	SD	t-value	Sig	Interpretation
Content	Pre-test	2.71	0.46	4.9	0.00	Significant
	Post test	2.93	0.37			
Organization	Pre-test	2.63	0.51	6.13	0.00	Significant
	Post test	2.98	0.40			
Vocabulary	Pre-test	2.33	0.47	5.23	0.00	Significant
	Post test	2.57	0.5			
Language	Pre-test	2.41	0.50	6.63	0.00	Significant
	Post test	2.79	0.46			
Mechanics	Pre-test	2.59	0.62	0.34	0.73	Not Significant
	Post test	2.61	0.56			
Over-all	Pre-test	63.6	6.57	22.3	0.00	Significant
	Post test	69.4	5.93			

(Set 0.05 level of significance)

This yielded a computed t-value of 4.9, 6.13, 5.23 and 6.63. All these variables show that a significant value of 0.00 which is lower than the set 0.05 level of significance, indicating significant difference in the results of Pre-test and Post-test of student respondents in terms of content, organization, vocabulary and language use. This means that the freshmen of NDC had significant development in writing composition after the intervention of Strategy-Embedded Language Learning Program (SELLP). The t-test also revealed that students are better in organization and language use although quite in need of further training in processing content and vocabulary. But the result still indicates that SELLP was effective for content, organization, vocabulary and language use of NDC freshmen. In terms of Mechanics, the mean score obtained by the students in their Pre-test is 2.59 with standard deviation of 0.62 while the Post-test had a mean score of 2.61 with the standard deviation of 0.56. This gave a computed t-value of 0.34 and a significance value of 0.73 which is higher than the set 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that there is no significant difference in the results of Pre-test and Post-test of student respondents in terms of Mechanics. This means that NDC students need to develop mechanics. It seems that this aspect of writing was deemed of least importance by the learners.

The overall mean score obtained from their Pre-test is 63.6 with the standard deviation of 6.57 while the Post-test had a mean score of 69.4 with the standard deviation of 5.93. This yielded a computed t-value of 22.3 and a significance value of 0.00 which is lower than the set 0.05 level of significance; which simply means that no significant difference exists between the Pre-test and Post-test of the respondents in their writing proficiency. This indicates that SELLP has a positive effect to the student learners and that it helps them improve their writing proficiency. This effectiveness of SELLP can be shown in **Cohen's *d*** as well.

Rule for Cohen’s d:

- d* value between 0 to 0.3 → Small Effect Size
- d* value between 0.3 to 0.6 → Moderate Effect Size
- d* value bigger than 0.6 → Large Effect Size

Computation:

$$\text{Cohen's } d = \frac{\text{Mean Difference}}{\text{Standard Deviation}} = \frac{5.77}{2.41}$$

Cohen’s d = 2.39

Interpretation: 2.39 is larger than 0.6 so it can be concluded that there is a **large difference** which means that this program, SELLP, evidently helped the learners to improve their performance in writing.

4. CONCLUSION

This study explored developing writing proficiency of freshmen college students via Strategy-Embedded Language Learning Program (SELLP). On the basis of statistical analysis and findings, the following conclusions were reached: As participants were from the EFL context, over 98% of the students had positive attitudes toward English learning and almost two third of the subjects identified future career opportunities (48.28%) and interest in higher studies (28.74%) as the reasons for learning English. However, they had limited chances to use English in a comparatively real context. Students did use language learning strategies even before the onset of the study but they were not aware of this; thus, after having being introduced to different writing strategies of SELLP, students reported using other strategies (dictionary, thesaurus, asking questions, retrospection, etc.), recombining, reasoning deductively, transferring besides repeating, summarizing, reasoning, elaborating and translating. Among writing strategies, Cognitive (3.76) and Metacognitive (4.12) strategies were most helpful and often used strategy by the students in coping with writing task. It seemed to be the easiest way for students to be able to express their ideas in written English. Others strategies were also helpful. Repeating strategy (or revising in the process approach) gave students the opportunity to detect and rectify (some of) their errors on specific aspects of composition writing as content, organization, vocabulary and language use but less on mechanics; based on the criteria in AMS, students common weakness was in mechanics (grammar) and strengths were in language use and organization. Thus, all writing strategies helped in improving students writing proficiency in terms of content, organization, vocabulary and language use; yet less improvement in mechanics. Students need to be made more aware of the functions and importance of mechanics (Capitalization, punctuation, hyphenation, spelling, indention, emphasis etc.) in effective written composition. The neglect of conventions for writing somehow intervened although the overall result of SEELP showed significant improvement of the NDC learners' writing proficiency on four writing competencies. Hence, a principled writing program like the SELLP is empirically a solid approach for EFL learners in developing higher levels of written literacy.

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