



**AN ANALYSIS OF WRITING STRATEGY USE AMONG ENGLISH
EDUCATION STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITAS PGRI WIRANEGARA**

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Abstract

Writing is a crucial component of English language proficiency, particularly in academic contexts. The effective use of writing strategies can significantly enhance students' writing performance. This study aims to examine students' preferences for writing strategies to help lecturers better understand and align their instructional methods with the strategies students tend to employ. The research involved 69 students from the English Education Study Program at Universitas PGRI Wiranegara. Using a descriptive quantitative-qualitative design, data were collected through surveys and interview to identify the strategies students used most frequently. The findings indicate that most students are familiar with and regularly apply a variety of writing strategies. Of the 35 strategies drawn from three established theoretical frameworks, students reported using 33 strategies, though not consistently across all writing tasks. Overall, the results suggest that students rely on a wide range of strategies to support their writing processes.

Keywords: Learning Preferences; Strategies; Writing Skills

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INTRODUCTION

English plays an essential role in global communication. In Indonesia, it is taught from elementary school through university (Sriwardhani et al., 2022). Among the four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—writing holds particular importance in the context of English as a foreign language. According to Raoofi et al. (2017), writing is especially critical for university students because it promotes critical thinking, enables them to articulate knowledge and ideas, and facilitates the sharing of research with wider academic communities.

Maharani et al. (2018) argue that writing serves two primary purposes: it allows students to practice language elements and acts as a means of assessing their comprehension and proficiency. Aluemelai et al. (2020) add that writing is essential for expressing opinions, ideas, and emotions, making it central to both academic success and personal expression. Effective writing enables individuals to communicate persuasively and share their thoughts clearly, underscoring its importance as an indicator of English proficiency.

Writing strategies, as described by Listiyanto et al. (2020), encompass the planning, composing, and revising activities necessary to produce well-structured written work. Ibraimi (2016) further emphasizes that writing strategies function as tools or action plans that learners develop to achieve their goals in writing courses. These strategies guide learners in improving their writing performance and achieving their desired outcomes. Successful writers are distinguished not only by linguistic proficiency but also by their effective use of writing strategies (Listiyanto et al., 2020). Consequently, the careful selection and application of appropriate strategies is essential for producing quality writing.

Various scholars have proposed different models of the writing process, each with its own set of strategies. Tompkins (2019) outlines five stages: pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Panggabean (2019) proposes four stages: pre-writing, writing, revising, and editing. Harmer (2004) includes planning, drafting, editing, and producing the final version. Flower (1981) reduces the process to planning, translating, and reviewing, while Murray (1985) identifies five stages similar to Tompkins'. For this study, the researcher focused on the strategies proposed by Tompkins, Panggabean, and Harmer to analyze students' preferences in a structured manner.

Although these stages guide writers in producing coherent texts, teachers may not

always recognize that students cannot spontaneously produce well-structured writing without explicit strategic instruction. This study addresses that gap by investigating the writing strategies most frequently used by students in the English Language Education Program at Universitas PGRI Wiranegara. The findings are expected to help lecturers better understand students' strategic choices and to support students in selecting strategies that suit their learning preferences. This study is particularly significant because no previous research at Universitas PGRI Wiranegara has focused specifically on writing strategies.

This study builds upon earlier research in the field. Aluemalai and Maniam (2020) examined writing strategies used by successful and unsuccessful ESL undergraduates at Universitas Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) and identified three dominant strategy categories: pre-writing, while writing, and revising. Similarly, Dari, Rahmawati, and Akhriyah (2022) found that freshmen students most frequently used strategies during the writing stage, followed by pre-writing and revising. Syahriani and Madya (2019) reported that English majors at a private Islamic university in Kendari employed more strategies during the pre-writing and writing stages than during revision.

Given the crucial role of writing strategies in English language education at Universitas PGRI Wiranegara, this study seeks to identify which strategies students prefer most. The research focuses on students from the 2021, 2022, and 2023 cohorts in the English Education Study Program during the 2023/2024 academic year. This focus allows for the examination of patterns in writing strategy use across different year levels while maintaining a manageable research scope.

The findings of this study are expected to benefit English lecturers and future researchers. For lecturers, understanding students' preferred strategies may help refine instructional approaches and enhance students' engagement with writing tasks. For researchers, this study provides methodological insights and empirical evidence that may serve as a foundation for further investigation into writing strategies and learner preferences in academic settings. Ultimately, this study aims to deepen understanding of writing strategies and their impact on students' academic success.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teaching English Language Writing Skills

Writing is widely recognized as one of the most complex skills in English language learning, particularly in EFL contexts such as Indonesia. It requires learners to integrate linguistic knowledge, cognitive processes, and communicative competence simultaneously.

Raoofi et al. (2017) emphasize that writing plays a crucial role in higher education because it supports critical thinking, academic communication, and knowledge construction. As a result, teaching writing is not limited to grammatical accuracy but also involves helping students generate ideas, organize content, and convey meaning effectively.

In Indonesian EFL classrooms, students often face challenges in writing, especially in developing and organizing ideas. Aprilia et al. (2020) found that university students struggled significantly with idea development in basic writing courses, indicating the need for systematic instructional support. These difficulties highlight the importance of explicit writing instruction that guides learners through the writing process rather than focusing solely on final products.

Several scholars advocate a process-based approach to teaching writing. Harmer (2004) argues that effective writing instruction should involve stages such as planning, drafting, editing, and producing a final version. Similarly, Tompkins (2019) proposes a balanced approach that integrates both process and product, allowing students to experience writing as a recursive and developmental activity. Through this approach, learners are encouraged to explore ideas freely, revise their drafts, and refine their language use.

Feedback is another essential component in teaching writing skills. Corrective feedback from teachers, peers, and self-assessment has been shown to significantly improve students' writing quality. Pitoyo et al. (2019) demonstrated that teacher, peer, and self-corrective feedback positively affected EFL students' writing performance. Supporting this view, Rosdiana (2014) and Setiyowati and Sundar (2021) highlight the effectiveness of written corrective feedback in improving accuracy, organization, and clarity in students' writing. Peer feedback and peer editing techniques also contribute to students' awareness of audience and text quality, as shown in the study by Yuniarti et al. (2023).

Overall, the literature suggests that teaching English writing skills requires a comprehensive approach that combines process-oriented instruction, strategic guidance, and constructive feedback. Such an approach is particularly important in EFL contexts, where students need explicit support to overcome linguistic and cognitive challenges in writing.

Writing Strategies

Writing strategies refer to the conscious actions, techniques, or plans that learners use to facilitate the writing process. According to Raoofi et al. (2017), writing strategies help students manage the cognitive demands of writing and improve their ability to plan, generate, and revise texts. These strategies are especially important for EFL learners, who

must cope with limited language proficiency while expressing complex ideas.

One of the most influential models of writing strategies is the cognitive process theory proposed by Flower and Hayes (1981). They describe writing as a recursive process consisting of planning, translating, and reviewing. This model emphasizes that writers continuously move back and forth between stages, adjusting their ideas and language as they write. Building on this perspective, Ibraimi (2016) explains that writing strategies function as action plans that learners develop to achieve specific writing goals in educational settings.

Different scholars categorize writing strategies in slightly different ways, but most agree on the importance of pre-writing, writing, and revising stages. Tompkins (2019) outlines five stages—pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing—while Harmer (2004) simplifies them into planning, drafting, editing, and finalizing. These frameworks provide practical guidance for both teachers and learners in organizing writing instruction and practice.

Empirical studies show that students' use of writing strategies varies depending on proficiency, experience, and context. Maharani et al. (2018) found that students' language proficiency and gender influenced their choice of writing strategies, with more proficient students using a wider range of strategies. Listiyanto et al. (2020) further note that successful writers are distinguished not only by their linguistic competence but also by their effective selection and application of writing strategies.

Several studies in Indonesian and regional EFL contexts have examined students' preferred writing strategies. Dari et al. (2022) reported that students most frequently employed strategies during the writing stage, followed by pre-writing and revising. Similarly, Syahriani and Madya (2019) found that English major students used more strategies in the pre-writing and writing stages than in revision. These findings suggest that while students are active in generating and developing ideas, they may pay less attention to revising and refining their texts.

In addition, rewriting and revising are essential strategies for improving writing quality. Harris (2006) emphasizes that rewriting allows writers to rethink ideas, reorganize arguments, and enhance clarity by engaging critically with their own texts. When supported by feedback and guided instruction, revising strategies can significantly contribute to students' writing development.

The literature underscores that writing strategies are central to effective writing

instruction and learning. Understanding students' preferred strategies provides valuable insights for lecturers to design more responsive teaching practices and to support students in developing strategic, independent, and successful writing skills.

METHOD

This study employed a survey research design, a quantitative approach used to gather data from a population to understand their attitudes, opinions, behaviors, and characteristics (Creswell, 2014). Survey research is widely utilized in practical theology and education because it enables researchers to collect information efficiently and analyze it using appropriate statistical techniques (Neuman, 2014). In this study, the survey design was used to investigate students' preferences regarding the writing strategies they apply in the English Education Study Program at Universitas PGRI Wiranegara.

Sample

The population consisted of 69 students from the 2021, 2022, and 2023 cohorts enrolled in the English Education Study Program during the 2023/2024 academic year. These students were selected because they were actively taking writing courses, making them relevant respondents for examining writing strategy use. Following the guideline that populations of fewer than 100 individuals should be studied in full (Arikunto, 2014), the researcher used saturation sampling, which involves including the entire population as the sample. This approach ensured full representation and eliminated potential sampling bias.

Instruments

Data were collected using a questionnaire as the primary instrument. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended items designed to identify the writing strategies most frequently used by students. A five-point Likert scale was used, ranging from "always" to "never," which is effective for measuring behavioral tendencies and preferences in educational research (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010). To enrich the quantitative findings, unstructured interviews were conducted. Interviews are commonly used alongside surveys to gain deeper insight into participants' experiences and perspectives (Gill et al., 2008). The unstructured format allowed the researcher to explore students' opinions more freely and naturally without adhering to a fixed set of questions.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection took place in June 2024. The questionnaire was administered on June 4 via Google Forms, which facilitated efficient distribution and automatic data recording. Interviews were conducted on June 24 with selected respondents who voluntarily

participated to provide further insight into their strategy preferences.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the questionnaire were analyzed using Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistics—including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation—were calculated to summarize students' responses, following standard procedures for quantitative educational research (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). The results were presented through tables and descriptive summaries for clarity and accessibility. Interview data were used to support and explain the quantitative trends, providing a more comprehensive understanding of students' writing strategy preferences.

RESULTS

The results of the study are presented in two parts: (1) descriptive statistics of writing strategy use and (2) percentage-based distribution across the three theoretical frameworks. These findings describe the extent to which English Education students at Universitas PGRI Wiranegara applied 35 writing strategies proposed by Tompkins (2019), Panggabean (2019), and Harmer (2004).

Descriptive Statistics of Writing Strategy Use

Table 4.2 summarizes the minimum scores, maximum scores, mean values, and standard deviations for each writing strategy. Overall, students demonstrated frequent use of most strategies, with mean scores ranging from 2.68 to 4.40. Strategies with higher mean values indicate more consistent use, while lower values reflect strategies used infrequently.

Across all items, the highest mean score was recorded for the choosing a topic ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 0.791$), showing that students commonly begin their writing process by determining a topic. This finding aligns with the percentage data, in which 88 percent of respondents reported regularly using this strategy.

Conversely, the lowest mean score was found for Publishing written results on the internet ($M = 2.68$, $SD = 1.131$). This indicates that students seldom publish their writing online unless required for academic tasks. Similarly low usage was observed for sharing written results on the internet (Harmer's strategies), which received a mean of 2.73.

Most strategies related to prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing scored between 3.50 and 4.26, demonstrating that students actively engage with the core elements of the writing process. Strategies such as reading the writing again ($M = 4.26$), determining the topic ($M = 4.24$), planning ideas and topics ($M = 4.18$), and collecting supporting information ($M = 4.11$) also showed high levels of use.

Percentage Distribution of Strategy Use

Percentage data further reinforced these trends. Under Tompkins' prewriting strategies, choosing a topic recorded the highest percentage (88 percent), followed by Collecting and organizing ideas (80 percent). Panggabean's strategies exhibited a similar pattern, with Determining the topic at 85 percent and collecting supporting information at 82 percent.

In Harmer's framework, writing ideas about the topic reached 80 percent, indicating that students routinely generate written content during the drafting stage. Additionally, Re-reading the draft (81 percent) showed that students are attentive to improving clarity and coherence. However, publishing-related strategies consistently received the lowest percentages across all frameworks. Only 54 percent of students reported ever publishing online under Tompkins' model, and 55 percent under Harmer's model.

The results reveal that students predominantly use strategies from the prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing stages. Strategies involving topic selection, planning, and rereading were the most widely applied. Meanwhile, strategies related to publishing were the least utilized, suggesting that students may need more exposure and encouragement to share their writing with wider audiences.

From the result of the research above, it was found that Tompkins's strategies (2019) were the dominant used strategy. All strategies had mean score over 2,60 and strategy "Choosing a topic" was the most dominant used. The data from Microsoft Excel showed the mean 4,40 which was the highest score than others. Besides, the data from the diagram showed 59,4% of students always do that strategy and 21,7% of students often do the strategy. It was also espoused by Likert scale calculation that showed a percentage 88% located in the fourth interval which means that "The students often choosing a topic" could be conclude that this strategy was usually done by students in their writing activities.

However, other Tompkins's (2019) strategies were least used. There was strategy had mean scores under 3.00 and from Likert scores under 55% and this strategy "Publishing written results on the internet" was the most least used strategy. The diagram showed only 8,7% of students who always do this, and 10,1% of students do it usually. These percentages were the lowest compared to the others. Furthermore, Microsoft Excel data showed the mean 2.68 which was the lowest score. Thus, data were carried out by Likert scale calculation showed a percentage 54% located in the third interval which means that "The students sometimes publishing written results on the internet". So, it could be said that this

strategy was rarely applied by students.

Based on interviews with students, several themes emerged as follows:

Students' Limited Use of Publishing Strategies

The interviews support the quantitative finding that *publishing written results on the internet* is the least preferred strategy from Tompkins's framework. Most students stated that they published their writing only when it was required as part of a course assignment. For example, AF_2021 explained that publication on *Storial* occurred solely because it was mandated in a class project. Similarly, NM_2022 reported publishing on *Storial.co* exclusively for assignment purposes, while DRA_2023 noted using *Penzu* only when a lecturer required it. One student, YM_2023, mentioned never publishing formally online and instead sharing brief excerpts on social media for personal enjoyment. These responses reflect that students generally do not publish their writing voluntarily, and online publication is not a habitual writing practice.

Students' Low Preference for Determining Target Readers

Interview data also confirmed that *determining the target reader*, a strategy from Panggabean's model, was among the least applied by students. Although students reported using this strategy only occasionally, they acknowledged its importance. YM_2023 explained that identifying a target audience helps adjust the structure and coherence of the writing, such as differentiating between texts for general readers or children. This suggests that while students recognize the benefit of this strategy, they do not consistently apply it unless prompted by instructional tasks.

Frequent Use of Planning Ideas and Topics

In contrast, Harmer's strategy of *planning ideas and determining topics* emerged as highly preferred. Students described this stage as essential for organizing their writing and clarifying direction. AF_2021 mentioned frequently doubting the appropriateness of chosen topics, which made planning important for confidence. YM_2023 shared that planning occurred after initial reflection on suitable topics, emphasizing that idea-generation depends on topic clarity. NM_2022 stressed that deciding on a topic first prevents disorganized writing and allows ideas to flow logically. These responses reinforce the survey finding that planning is foundational to students' writing processes.

Factors Influenced by Writing Strategy Use

Students also described several factors that are influenced by the implementation of writing strategies. AF_2021 highlighted *technology* as a significant influence because

digital tools can support grammar checking and information searching. DAR_2023 viewed strategies as affecting *all learning factors*, noting that they can make assignments more engaging and improve performance. YM_2023 pointed to the *classroom environment* as highly influential, explaining that noise levels and the behavior of seatmates directly impact concentration and writing fluency. NM_2022 indicated that writing strategies are also shaped by *subject-specific factors*, as understanding the content helps guide topic selection and idea development. These responses demonstrate that writing strategies do not operate in isolation; they interact with technological, environmental, pedagogical, and disciplinary conditions.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study show that students in the English Education Study Program at Universitas PGRI Wiranegara demonstrate strong engagement with core writing strategies across the stages of prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. These results reinforce the idea emphasized by Tompkins (2019) and Harmer (2004) that effective writing relies on intentional and strategic processes. The high mean scores in strategies such as choosing a topic, collecting ideas, rereading drafts, and planning content suggest that students understand the importance of preparation and reflection in producing coherent written work. This supports Listiyanto et al. (2020), who argue that successful writers use structured strategies to refine ideas and improve clarity.

Prewriting strategies emerged as the most frequently used, with choosing a topic recording the highest mean (4.40) and percentage score (88 percent). This aligns with Murray's (1985) view that topic selection is foundational because it guides the writer's purpose and direction. Similarly, the strong use of planning and information-gathering strategies is consistent with Tindal's (2017) assertion that generating and organizing ideas before drafting enhances effectiveness and reduces writer anxiety.

The results also highlight significant use of drafting strategies. Students commonly wrote down ideas, developed content, and prepared drafts. This mirrors Aprilia et al. (2020), who emphasize the role of brainstorming and elaboration in producing well-structured text. The high engagement with rereading drafts, indicated by a mean score of 4.26, also reflects Harris's (2006) claim that continuous self-review helps writers improve argument flow and linguistic accuracy.

Although revising and editing strategies were widely practiced, publishing-oriented strategies were used far less frequently. Both publishing written results online and sharing

work with broader audiences received the lowest mean and percentage scores. This trend echoes the findings of Syahriani and Madya (2019), who noted that students rarely publish their writing unless required by instructors. Factors such as low confidence, lack of digital

CONCLUSION

The study shows that English Education students at Universitas PGRI Wiranegara employ a wide range of writing strategies across the major stages of the writing process. Strategies related to prewriting and drafting, such as choosing a topic, planning ideas, gathering supporting information, and generating initial drafts, were used most frequently. These findings align with theoretical views from Tompkins (2019), Harmer (2004), and Panggabean (2019), who emphasize the central role of planning and idea development in producing coherent written work. High engagement with revising and editing strategies, including rereading drafts and correcting errors, further reflects students' awareness of writing as a recursive activity.

However, strategies related to publishing, such as sharing writing online or presenting it to broader audiences, were used the least. This suggests that students are comfortable with internal writing processes but have limited exposure to or confidence in external aspects of writing such as digital publication and public readership. Overall, the findings point to a strong foundation in core writing processes but highlight areas where further instructional support is needed.

IMPLICATIONS

The results carry several implications for teaching practice and curriculum design.

Strengthening Existing Strategy Use

Because students already demonstrate strong use of prewriting and drafting strategies, lecturers can build on these strengths by offering structured scaffolding, including guided brainstorming activities, planning templates, and genre-based instruction. This can help deepen students' strategic awareness and improve the coherence of their writing.

Enhancing Revising and Feedback Practices

Moderate use of peer discussion and feedback strategies suggests a need for more explicit instruction in collaborative revision techniques. Activities such as peer review sessions, guided feedback forms, and teacher-student conferences may help students engage more critically with revising and improve their metacognitive control over writing.

Promoting Digital Literacy and Publishing Skills

Given the low use of publishing strategies, integrating authentic digital writing experiences into coursework is essential. Class blogs, digital portfolios, online forums, or small-scale publication projects can encourage students to share their writing with real audiences, increasing motivation, confidence, and digital communication skills.

Curricular Integration of Real-World Writing Skills

Curriculum developers should consider embedding digital communication competencies and publication-oriented tasks into writing courses. This will help bridge the gap between academic writing and the expectations of digital communication outside the classroom.

These implications highlight the importance of not only supporting cognitive writing processes but also empowering students to view writing as a meaningful act of communication in both academic and public contexts.

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