Training in Metacognitive, Affective and Social Learning Strategies of Writing: Its Effects in Improving Students' Use of the Strategies, the case of Hawassa University Students

By

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to examine the effects of training in metacognitive, affective and social learning strategies of writing in improving students' use of each of these learning strategies of writing. To this end, the selected Year-I students of Hawassa University were taught lessons of the Basic Writing Skills course with training in each of the three groups of the learning strategies of writing. Data were collected mainly through a pre and post-training five-point scale questionnaire. An interview was also held with selected participants. Paired-Samples T Test was computed to compare the pre and post-training mean scores of the students. The results showed that the training significantly improved the students' use of the learning strategies of writing (t-values $\geq$ -10.72, p-values =.000). Moreover, results of the interview revealed that the training made the students learn the importance of the strategies to improve their writing skills. Hence, they continued using the strategies appropriately in and outside the class to help them successfully accomplish their writing tasks. Based on the findings, recommendations have been made.

Key terms: writing skills, metacognitive, affective & social learning strategies of writing, student training

1. **Introduction**

   1.1 Background to the Study

Hawassa University is a public university found in the South Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Regional State of Ethiopia; it is a comprehensive university engaged in the provision of all-round education, research, training, and community service. The university has over 64 first degree programs, 43 second degree programs, and 4 PhD programs in various schools/colleges. Students of all the departments of Hawassa University, particularly in the undergraduate studies, as is the case with students of other universities across the nation, take English language courses such as Communicative English Skills-I, Communicative English Skills-II, Sophomore English, Basic Writing Skills, Advanced Writing-I, Advanced Writing-II and/or Report Writing.

The main objective of offering the English language courses to the students is to help them improve their proficiency as English is a medium of instruction and nearly all the teaching/learning and reference materials are written in it (Gebremedhin, 1986; Hailemichael, 1993). Written and oral communications as well as meetings within the university, usually, and communications with foreign learning institutions are always carried out in English. Moreover, formal as well as informal notices of the university usually appear in English. Thus, a great deal of information exchange mainly takes place in writing. It is also mainly writing that has been offered to the undergraduate program students of all the schools/colleges of the university.

"Student writing is at the center of teaching and learning in higher education, fulfilling a range of purposes according to the various contexts in which it occurs" (Coffin, et al., 2003, p. 2). In higher education, it is mainly writing that is used as a means to assess students. That is,

instructors ask students to write paragraphs or essays in or outside the class as well as make students take written examinations and write laboratory reports in order to evaluate students' achievement of course objectives. Thus, students' success usually depends on their writing skills. In this regard, McWhorter (1996, p. 357) says, "As a general rule, the further you progress in your education, the more writing you will be expected to do." Moreover, writing at tertiary education is used to facilitate learning. That is to say, instructors make students facilitate their learning through writing diaries, questions, problems, and suggestions on the process of teaching/learning and then, sharing these with someone else (instructors, peers, or others). This increases their reasoning and critique skills, and improves their learning.

Hawassa University curricula, as is the case with other universities across the nation, have not given room for the issue of training in language learning strategies in general and writing skills in particular. Learning strategies training has roots in cognitivism and humanism learning theories. Training in learning strategies of writing involves asking students to learn writing through receiving strategies training in which explanations are given to the students as to when (contexts), how, and why the strategies can be used (Oxford, 1990).

1.2 Objectives of the Study

A vast body of research literature on the topic confirms that training in learning strategies of writing improves students' use of the strategies since training makes students learn the role of the strategies to help them improve their writing skills. Hence, they continue using the strategies appropriately when they carry out writing tasks in and outside the class (Dujsik, 2008; Sasaki, 2000). However, so far, nobody has conducted a research at any level of learning in Ethiopian context in order to study this matter. The literature discusses that the perception and practice of training in learning strategies of writing change according to specific cultural and educational contexts. Thus, this study was intended to examine the effects of training in metacognitive, affective and social learning strategies of writing in improving students' use of each of these learning strategies of writing with particular reference to Hawassa University students.

1.3 Research Hypotheses

The following null and alternative hypotheses were formulated about the effects of the training:

Null Hypothesis (Ho): Training in metacognitive, affective and social learning strategies of writing does not significantly improve students' use of each of these learning strategies of writing.

Alternative Hypothesis (Ha): Training in metacognitive, affective and social learning strategies of writing significantly improves students' use of each of these learning strategies of writing.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The researcher believes that the findings of the present study have the following importance. In the first place, it adds value to the knowledge that training in metacognitive, affective and social learning strategies of writing has significant effects in improving students' use of each of these learning strategies of writing. Moreover, the present study may serve as a springboard for future researchers interested to fill in the gaps with regard to whether training in each of the three groups of learning strategies of writing makes significantly different effects on different ability groups of writing, user-groups of the strategies, gender, age, etc. regarding their use of the strategies.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study did not examine whether training makes significantly different effects on different ability groups of writing, user-groups of the strategies, gender, age, etc. regarding their use of the strategies. The aim was not also to investigate whether training in memory, cognitive and compensation learning strategies of writing significantly improves students' use of each of these learning strategies of writing.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Learning Strategies of Writing

According to Oxford (1990), an authority in the area, the metacognitive, affective and social learning strategies of writing are as follows.

2.1.1 Metacognitive Learning Strategies of Writing

The metacognitive strategies of writing are as follows. When students learn to write, they can overview comprehensively a key concept, principle, or set of materials of writing tasks and associate these with what they have already known. **Over viewing comprehensively** often comprises three steps: knowing why an activity is being done, including necessary vocabulary, and making associations with what have already been known. For instance, getting ready to carry out a writing task, students can write a kind of brainstorming. They can also brainstorm in groups or participate in debates to generate ideas. Moreover, before learners rush to write paragraphs or essays, they can write down their ideas on a paper, without worrying about the correctness of the grammar and order of ideas.

Paying attention as a metacognitive learning strategy of writing is useful to improve one's writing. It has two modes: directed attention and selective attention. Directed attention can be equivalent to concentration which implies deciding generally to pay attention to a writing task and avoid distracters. Selective attention involves deciding in advance to focus on particular aspects of writing such as content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, tone, etc. Students can also make efforts to find out how to improve their writing skills by reading books.

Before learners rush to carry out a piece of writing, they need to break up the given time into some minutes and allocate these to different tasks such as to write down the main ideas, draft, revise and edit a paragraph or an essay. **Setting goals and objectives** as a metacognitive strategy of writing includes striving to improve one's writing skills in order to succeed in his/her study, write letters or scientific articles, etc.

Identifying the purpose of a writing task involves identifying the general nature of a writing task, its specific requirements, resources available, and the need for further sources before learners start writing. For example, if students are asked to write an argumentative essay, first they note that they want to beat readers' ideas. Then, they need to find counter arguments for

each idea, adequately support each idea with evidences, and use appropriate language signposts to point out opposing arguments, state why the readers think like that, reach the turning point, and refute the opposing ideas. After checking if the learners have the necessary knowledge on these, they look for additional information from someone or somewhere.

Seeking practice opportunities, as a metacognitive strategy of writing, includes going to the target language cinema, attending a meeting where the language is spoken, communicating with pen-pals in the target language, etc. **Self-monitoring** involves identifying errors of one's own writing and determining which ones cause serious confusions and then tracking the sources and eliminating such errors. Learners can help each other to monitor their writing errors, without instructor's direct intervention, and read and comment on each other's paragraphs or essays. They may ask their instructor to mark up serious errors and then themselves figure out the correct forms by helping each other and using reference materials. The last metacognitive strategy of writing is **self-evaluation**. This strategy involves reviewing one's own paragraphs or essays by noting the style, content, language, etc. Students might also compare their paragraphs or essays with each other. Some important criteria for *self-evaluation* include sentence length, complexity of thoughts, power of arguments, organization, accuracy and social appropriateness.

2.1.2 Affective Learning Strategies of Writing

Affective strategies of writing include using one's own progressive relaxation, deep breathing, listening to music, using laughter, making positive statements about one's own writing performance, taking risks wisely, rewarding oneself, listening to one's own body, using a checklist, writing a diary, and discussing one's feelings with someone else. **Progressive relaxation** involves tensing and relaxing all the main muscle groups one at a time. **Deep breathing** involves breathing low from the diaphragm. When students relax using *progressive relaxation* or *deep breathing*, they reduce anxiety and thus successfully accomplish their writing tasks. **Listening to music** before learners start to carry out especially a difficult writing task can put them in a positive mood. **Using laughter**, for example by using classroom activities such as

role-plays, games, active exercises, jokes or watching movies, gives pleasure to learners and thus it helps them successfully accomplish their writing tasks.

Making positive statements to themselves about their performance before they start to carry out writing tasks can help learners feel more confident and thus do the tasks effectively. When they perform the tasks with confidence, their performance will be improved. **Taking risks wisely** involves a conscious decision to take risks regardless of the possibility of making errors or encountering difficulties while writing. When it is said wisely, it means not unnecessary risk, like saying anything at all regardless of its degree of relevance; risk taking must be tempered by a good judgment. After learners have successfully accomplished especially difficult writing tasks, to help them keep on writing well, they can reward themselves for their performances by telling themselves that they have done well and that they deserve a rest, an entertainment, etc.

Listening to one's own body while writing involves thinking about one's own emotions: if he/she feels tension, anxiety, or fear, or if he/she tries to avoid or minimize the problems by taking appropriate actions. This could help him/her to successfully accomplish the tasks.

Before they start writing paragraphs or essays, learners can also set criteria such as content, organization, grammar, vocabulary and mechanics in the form of a checklist to assess their own progress and this could make them work hard because in the end they are to see their performance against the criteria by showing the paragraphs or essays to their classmates, friends, parents or neighbors or by referring to the print or electronic resources.

Writing a diary involves recording one's own feelings, attitudes and motivations about his/her practicing of writing and information about strategies one finds useful in the process of learning writing. **Discussing one's feelings with someone else,** before and/or while writing, regarding his/her feelings about the writing and problems he/she may encounter (e.g., unable to use the

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correct grammar or mechanics) in the process of writing helps him/her improve his/her writing skills.

2.1.3 Social Learning Strategies of Writing

Social strategies of writing includes asking instructor, cooperating with peers, cooperating with proficient writers of the target language, developing cultural understanding, and becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings. When students carry out writing tasks, they can **ask their instructor for correction** of some errors. For example, they may ask their instructor to tell them if they are correctly ordering sentences to show how a story starts and ends. The instructor may say that no correction is needed. To help them successfully accomplish their writing tasks, learners can also **ask their instructor for clarification** on what to do, how to do, when to do, etc before/while doing the tasks.

Cooperating with peers involves a concerted effort to work together with other learners on a writing activity. Learners can ask and help each other how to improve their writing tasks. For instance, after they have completed writing, they can ask one another to read and correct their paragraphs or essays. **Cooperating with proficient writers of the target language** involves getting permanent or temporary persons who can help learners improve their writing skills. **Developing cultural understanding** involves learning about the culture of the target language people so that learners can know what is culturally appropriate to say in their writing.

With regard to **becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings**, before/while writing paragraphs or essays, learners need to think about the thoughts and feelings of their readers; they should think about what their readers may like and dislike (e.g., ideas, words/expressions, examples, etc). Learners should keep in mind the readers they are writing to and trying to meet their needs and as a result they may pay attention to the learners' ideas.

2.2 Approaches to Learning Strategies Training

2.2.1 Narrow Focus, Broad Focus, or Combination Approaches

Oxford (1990), an authority in the area, discusses that learning strategies training can be conducted by a narrow focus, broad focus, or combination approach. **A narrow focus approach** involves teaching students one or two learning strategies. This approach has the following benefits: first, it makes the trainer cover more learning strategies in short time as only one or two strategies are independently introduced at a time. Second, it minimizes the possibility of confusing students with different types of strategies because the strategies are introduced one by one. Third, a narrow focus allows the instructor to accurately evaluate the effectiveness of training because he/she teaches each strategy separately. However, the downside of this approach is that it does not promote students' language learning because the strategies are not integrated to interact with one another.

A trainer who uses **a broad focus approach** introduces more learning strategies from all the classification groups. This approach requires a trainer to conduct the training through integrating different types of language learning strategies of each category so that learners notice how the strategies interact with each other. **A broad focus approach** also improves learners' belief about language learning. According to Oxford (1990), "However, this broad focus does not allow precise assessment of training effectiveness in reference to any specific strategy" (p. 205).

A combination approach is an amalgamation of broad focus and narrow focus approaches. This approach involves some procedures. First, the trainer provides students with all language learning strategies of all the classification groups and asks them to rate the role of the strategies. Second, among strategies reported by students as useful, the trainer chooses strategies that are not too familiar and too strange. Then, a separate or an integrated and an implicit or an explicit training is conducted on the strategies. "This is an excellent way to approach strategy training. It gives learners the "big picture" at first, and then moves into specific strategies which the learners have chosen themselves. The element of learner choice in instructing structuring training is very

important, since learning strategies are the epitome of learner choice and self-direction" (Oxford, 1990, p. 205).

2.2.2 Separate versus Integrated Approaches

Learning strategies training can be carried out by a separate or an integrated approach. It is worth noting that a **separate approach** involves teaching learning strategies without incorporating them into the language lessons. According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990), "Arguments in favor of separate training programs advance the notion that strategies are generalizable to many contexts…and that students will learn strategies better if they can focus all their attention on developing strategic processing skills rather than try to learn content at the same time…" (p. 152). However, according to some scholars such as Oxford (1990), this approach does not enhance students' language learning since students do not receive training on how and when to use strategies and on how to evaluate their learning as well as the success of strategies.

Wenden (1991), O'Malley and Chamot (1990), and Oxford (1990) believe that an **integrated approach**, unlike a separate approach, requires the trainer to teach strategies by including them into appropriate tasks of a language course. Students are shown when and how to use strategies and how to evaluate the importance of the strategies. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) state, "Those in favor of integrated strategy instruction programs, on the other hand, argue that learning in context is more effective than learning separate skills whose immediate applicability may not be evident to the learner…and that practicing strategies on authentic academic and language tasks facilitates the transfer of strategies to similar tasks encountered in other classes…". (p. 152).

2.2.3 Implicit versus Explicit Approaches

Learning strategies training can be conducted by choosing an implicit or an explicit approach. An **implicit approach** is an embedded approach. The trainer who chooses this approach sets language tasks intended to make students use learning strategies to help them successfully accomplish the tasks but the trainer does not inform students about the role of the strategies and when and how to use the strategies (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Wenden, 1991;

Wenden & Rubin, 1987). This approach, according to O'Malley and Chamot (1990) and Oxford (1990), has two merits: first, as the strategies are embedded, it minimizes the risk learners may oppose the training. Second, "An advantage cited for strategy training embedded in instructional materials is that little teacher training is required….As students work on exercises and activities, they learn to use the strategies that are cued by the textbook" (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 153). On the other hand, this approach has some drawbacks. According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990), it does not make students take on more responsibility for their own learning. Moreover, it does not make learners use strategies flexibly in a variety of contexts and maintain strategies overtime (Wenden & Rubin, 1987).

An **explicit approach**, unlike an implicit approach, requires the trainer to apply the following procedures: identify language learning strategies by name, explain/describe the importance of the strategies, demonstrate (through actual language tasks) in which contexts to use and how to use the strategies, and how to transfer the strategies into other contexts, make students practice the strategies, and ask students to evaluate the importance of the strategies in improving their language performance. With regard to this approach, Chamot (2005, p. 123) writes, "Explicit instruction includes the development of students' awareness of their strategies, teacher modeling of strategic thinking, identifying the strategies by name, providing opportunities for practice and self-evaluation." According to Wenden and Rubin (1987), an **explicit approach** helps learners maintain strategies over time for a variety of learning contexts; this approach also makes students take on more responsibility for their own learning. In Oxford's (1990, p. 201) language, "the general goals of such training are to make language learning more meaningful, to encourage a collaborative spirit between learner and teacher, to learn about options for language learning, to learn and practice strategies that facilitate self-reliance."

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Approach

This study was meant to examine whether training in metacognitive, affective and social learning strategies of writing significantly improves students' use of each of these learning strategies of writing. To this end, the selected Year-I students of Hawassa University were taught lessons of the Basic Writing Skills course with training in each of the three groups of learning strategies of writing. The effects of the training were examined by hypothesis testing. An interview was also held with selected participants, and focus was given to explore students' feelings about the training in improving their use of the learning strategies of writing. Thus, this study employed a mixed-methods design.

3.2 Preparation of Teaching Material

Based on the course syllabus, a teaching material on Basic Writing Skills course was prepared by choosing **combination**, **integrated,** and **explicit approaches** discussed earlier. The teaching material was prepared by the model of Oxford (1990). First, her model was chosen because it is the most suitable model; it has been preferred by many researchers. Second, the model briefly discusses procedures that are easy to understand. In the teaching material, the students were asked to make use of the learning strategies of writing while rearranging jumbled sentences of a paragraph in logical orders, completing paragraphs by writing appropriate cohesive devices, completing essays by writing appropriate thesis statements of their own and concluding paragraphs, identifying parts of an essay: introduction, body and conclusion, rearranging jumbled paragraphs of an essay in logical orders, and writing argumentative essays. Comments were obtained from most senior colleagues of the researcher so as to validate the teaching material.

3.3 Selection of Study Setting, Department and Students

The researcher purposefully chose Hawassa University to which he is a member of staff. From the existing departments of the university, Management Department (a total of 82 students) was randomly selected by drawing lots. The researcher used a simple random sampling because it allows a department and a student to have equal chance of being selected. Thus, it is possible to be confident that the department and the students chosen represent all the departments and students of the university respectively.

3.4 Preparation of Questionnaire

A questionnaire was adapted from Oxford (1990) and included items where each item had five possible responses: always, usually, sometimes, rarely and never. The questionnaire was intended to collect data on students' use of metacognitive, affective and social learning strategies of writing. Most senior colleagues of the researcher were requested to comment on the questionnaire regarding content validity, face validity and clarity of the items. Cronbach's alpha was also computed on SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 20 to examine the reliability of the items of the questionnaire. The computation showed that the items of the questionnaire were reliable at above 0.71. Cronbach's alpha was chosen because the questionnaire was in a five-point scale.

3.5 Preparation of Interview

A semi-structured interview was prepared in English for the students. It was intended to investigate the students' feelings about the training in improving their use of the learning strategies of writing. A semi-structured form was chosen because, first, it has the characteristics of both structured and unstructured interview, each with its strengths. Second, data obtained through such interview are not difficult to categorize and interpret. Care was taken concerning language issues and sequencing of questions while preparing the interview.

3.6 Administration of Pre-training Questionnaire

Before the students were made to practice the writing tasks by receiving training on each of the three groups of learning strategies of writing, a questionnaire was administered to collect data on the students' use of the learning strategies of writing. The questionnaire was filled in by 37 students (out of 41) and collected back. Careful attempts were made to make the environment conducive to fill in the questionnaire.

3.7 Administration of Post-training Questionnaire

The same questionnaire was administered after conducting the training for half a semester (5 hours a week for 8 consecutive weeks). Careful attempts were made to make the environment conducive to fill in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was filled in by all the subjects (37) who

had filled in the pre-training questionnaire. The purpose of administering the questionnaire after the training was to gather data on the students' use of each of the three groups of learning strategies of writing so that it would be possible to examine if the training in the learning strategies of writing had significant effects in improving the students' use of the strategies.

3.8 Conducting Interview

After administering the post-training questionnaire, an interview was held with 10 selected participants in order to explore their feelings about the training in improving their use of the learning strategies of writing. Careful attempts were made to make the environment conducive for the interview. Furthermore, the researcher took care of his pronunciation and pace while interviewing the students. Moreover, the interview sessions were interactive as well as tape-recorded.

4. Analysis and Discussion of Results

4.1 Analysis of the Results of the Questionnaire

Results of the questionnaire were analyzed by SPSS version 20 in order to examine if the training in metacognitive, affective and social learning strategies of writing significantly improved the students' use of each of the three groups of the learning strategies of writing. The procedures used by prominent social science researchers like Bartea, 2009; Evans, 2007; Hong et al., 2003; Knowles and Kerkman, 2007; Prokop et al., 2007, etc. were applied so as to analyze the data. First, the items of the questionnaire were categorized into the three groups of the learning strategies of writing.

Second, for the pre and post-training questionnaire separately, values 1 to 5 were given for never, rarely, sometimes, usually, and always respectively so that the minimum score a student would score was the number of the items of a group multiplied by 1, and the maximum score a student would score was the number of the items of a group multiplied by 5.

Third, histograms were produced for the students' pre and post-training scores on each of the three groups of the learning strategies of writing to see if the distributions had the shape of the cross-section of a bell where many of the scores were closer to the mean scores. In this regard, Connolly (2007, p. 46) says "Overall the histogram is a good chart to use when displaying the characteristics of a single scale variable as it is simple to understand and is able to display the shape and distribution of the data very clearly and accessibly".

Fourth, Paired-Samples T Test was computed on SPSS version 20 to examine if there was a significant difference between the students' pre and post-training use of each of the three groups of the learning strategies of writing. According to Voelker et al. (2001), "This t-test compares one set of measurements with a second set from the same sample. It is often used to compare "before" and "after" scores in experiments to determine whether significant change has occurred" (p. 88). The significance level was taken at .05. T Tests indicate that there is a significant difference (if any) but do not show the magnitude of the effects. For that reason, effect sizes were calculated. "There are a wide variety of effect size measures around but the one we use in conjunction with the t-test is called Cohen's d" (Muijs, 2004, p. 136). According to Cohen (1988), the following guidelines are suggested for determining the effect sizes: 0–0.20 = weak effect; 0.21–0.50 = modest effect; 0.51–1.00 = moderate effect; >1.00 = strong effect (as cited in Muijs, 2004, p. 139).

4.2 Analysis of the Interview Results

The following steps were used to analyze the interview results: first, the data were transcribed. Then, similar responses of each question of the interview were categorized together in themes. Lastly, the results were discussed and implications were drawn according to the views of the majority of the respondents.

4.3 Results of the Paired-Samples T Test

The following table shows the results of the Paired-Samples T Test.

	Pre-training			Post-training			DF	T-value	P-value	Significance
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation				
Metacognitive Strategies	37	21.45	4.69	37	32.16	4.05	36	-10.80	.000	Significant
Affective Strategies	37	13.02	2.59	37	19.56	3.08	36	-10.72	.000	Significant
Social Strategies	37	16.13	3.98	37	24.43	3.78	36	-10.80	.000	Significant

The above table shows that the pre-training has the mean score of 21.45, whereas the post-training has the mean score of 32.16 with regard to students' use of metacognitive strategies. The calculated standard deviation of the pre-training is shown as 4.69, but the calculated standard deviation of the post-training is shown as 4.05. The t-value is revealed as -10.80, and the p-value is shown as .000. This indicates that the difference between the pre and post-training mean scores of the students as to their use of metacognitive strategies is significant (t-value > table value, p-value < .05). To be precise, after the training, the students significantly improved their use of metacognitive strategies of writing. Cohen's $d = 2.45$; it shows the effect size is strong.

Moreover, the above table reveals that the mean score of the pre-training is 13.02, whereas the mean score of the post-training is 19.56 concerning the students' use of affective strategies. The calculated standard deviations are shown as 2.59 and 3.08 for the pre and post-trainings

respectively. The table indicates that the t-value is -10.72, and that of the p-value is .000. Therefore, there is a significant difference between the students' pre and post-training mean scores regarding their use of affective strategies. After the training, the students significantly improved their use of affective strategies of writing (t-value > table value, p-value < .05). Cohen's d = 2.31; it shows the effect size is strong.

Furthermore, regarding the students' use of social strategies, the above table shows that the pre-training has the mean score of 16.13, whereas the post-training has the mean score of 24.43. The standard deviation of the pre-training is 3.98 but the standard deviation of the post-training is 3.78. It is revealed that the t-value is -10.80 and that of the p-value is .000. This shows that the pre and post-training mean scores as to the students' use of social strategies are significantly different (t-value > table value, p-value < .05). That is to say, the students significantly improved their use of social strategies of writing after they had received the training. Cohen's d = 2.14; it shows the effect size is strong.

The results of the Paired-Samples T Test correspond with the results of the interview in which the participants unanimously responded that learning the writing lessons through receiving training on the learning strategies of writing improved their use of the strategies. These results are in line with the findings of Dujsik (2008) and Sasaki (2000) who found that strategies-based instruction significantly improves students' use of the strategies.

4.4 Results of the Interview

The results of the interview are discussed as follows. First, the interviewees were asked if training in the learning strategies of writing made them learn about the importance of the strategies. Accordingly, all of them responded that the training helped them know about the importance of the strategies. The interviewees discussed this in terms of the benefits they got from learning the writing lessons in that way. First, they said that learning the lessons in the context of the training made them learn how the strategies were useful to improve their writing skills. Hence, they could

significantly improve their writing skills. Second, they reported that the training made them like to practice writing.

Afterward, the interviewees were asked if learning the writing lessons through receiving training on the learning strategies of writing made them know when and how to use the strategies. They responded that the training helped them know when and how to use the strategies. To be specific, they learned how to use the strategies whenever they faced problems while carrying out writing tasks such as paragraphs or essays, short messages, letters, assignments, class work, curriculum vitae, proposals, diary, etc. Moreover, they could be able to know how to use the strategies to help them successfully accomplish various writing tasks.

Furthermore, the participants were asked if training in the learning strategies of writing made them maintain the strategies overtime. All the interviewees replied that the training helped them practice using the strategies whenever they carried out various writing tasks in or outside the class. First, they could continue using the strategies because the training helped them learn how the strategies significantly improved their writing skills. Second, they would maintain the strategies overtime as the lessons were interesting in comparison with the methods used to teach them writing lessons so far.

Moreover, the participants were asked if they used the learning strategies of writing to help them successfully accomplish various writing tasks in or outside the class. The interviewees responded that they continued using the strategies when they did various writing tasks. They could learn when (situations) and how to use the strategies as well as appropriately used the strategies when they studied, did class works, home works, project works, and took tests/examinations. The participants could strive to do so because the training had made them improve their writing skills and attitude towards practicing writing.

To sum up, majority of the interviewees responded that learning the writing lessons through receiving training on the learning strategies of writing made them learn how the strategies were useful to improve their writing skills; they enjoyed learning the lessons in that way. Therefore, they continued making use of the strategies in various contexts appropriately in or outside the class in order to help them successfully accomplish their writing tasks. These results are in line with the results of the above questionnaire in which after learning the writing lessons through training in the learning strategies of writing, the students significantly improved their use of the strategies.

4.5 Major Findings of the Study

The Paired-Samples T Test was computed to compare the pre and post-training mean scores of the students with regard to using metacognitive, affective and social learning strategies of writing. It revealed that the learners significantly improved their use of each group of learning strategies of writing after the training (t-values > -10.72, p-values=.000). The results of the interview also indicated that the students thought that the training improved their use of the learning strategies of writing. As a result, they continued to use the strategies appropriately in and outside the class in order to help them successfully accomplish their writing tasks.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that training students in metacognitive, affective and social learning strategies of writing significantly improves their use of each group of learning strategies of writing since training increases students' awareness about the role of the strategies in improving their writing skills in and outside the class.

6. Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of this study:

- Writing lessons need to be presented in the context of training students in each of the three groups of learning strategies of writing. As a result, students can improve their use of the strategies to help them improve their writing skills.

- Studies have to be conducted to examine if training in each of the three groups of learning strategies of writing makes significantly different effects on different ability groups of writing, user-groups of the strategies, gender, age, etc. regarding their use of the strategies.

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