



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***L2 WRITING SELF-EFFICACY, TASK-VALUE, AND STRATEGIES OF
MALAYSIAN UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS***

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By

SAEID RAOOFI

**Thesis Submitted to School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in
Fulfillment of the Requirements of for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

October 2014

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to

my mother, Toba Babaie,

my father, Mohammad Ali Raofi,

memory of my brother, Sadegh Raofi

my daughter, Shenia Roofi,

my brothers, Loghman and Reza Raofi,

and my sisters, Mahbobeh, Halaleh and Minoo Raooi



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment
of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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October 2014

Chairman: Professor Chan Swee Heng, PhD
Faculty: Modern Languages and Communication

This study seeks to investigate the relationship between self-efficacy, task value, strategy use and performance in ESL writing. There were four overarching purposes of the present study: (a) to determine and describe Malaysian undergraduates' ESL writing value, self-efficacy and strategies, (b) to determine how students ESL writing value (utility value, intrinsic value, attainment and cost) is related to their writing proficiency (c) to examine the types of writing strategies that enable ESL students to develop their writing ability, and (d) to investigate the interrelationships between ESL writing task value, self-efficacy, strategy use and performance.

The sample of the study consisted of 304 Malaysian undergraduate students learning English as a second language at Unveristi Putra Malaysia. Participants were drawn from a writing course. A mixed method design was used in this study. In the first phase, data was collected through questionnaires and writing performance tests. In the second phase, qualitative data was collected through interviews and focus group discussions to get a better insight into learners' strategies, values, beliefs and motivation about their ESL writing skill. With respect to data analysis, multiple regression, ANOVA and correlational analyses were used for the quantitative part. For the qualitative part, all the answers to the open-ended questions and interviews were carefully analyzed to detect codes and themes.

The results showed detailed description of ESL writing task value, self-efficacy and strategies of Malaysian undergraduates. Overall, the students had a medium level of ESL writing self-efficacy. It was found that students with higher writing abilities as measured by writing proficiency tests, had higher level of writing self-efficacy compared with those with intermediate and lower writing proficiency. The students placed high utility value and attainment value on their writing, while they attributed medium intrinsic value to their writing. Students in high proficiency group attributed significantly higher intrinsic value and attainment value than those in low proficiency group.

It was also found that Effort regulation writing strategy and metacognitive writing strategy were reported as the first and second most frequently used strategies respectively while social strategy was reported as the least frequently used category.

The results also showed that students with higher writing ability reported using significantly more metacognitive, cognitive, affective and effort regulation strategies than those with lower writing proficiency.

Regression analyses revealed that self-efficacy and utility value emerged as the best predictors of writing strategy use. Results of regression analyses also revealed that intrinsic value and self-efficacy contributed significantly to the prediction of writing performance. The qualitative findings supported quantitative results. The Qualitative findings also revealed that several factors such as mother tongue influence and grammatical knowledge of English language emerged as important determinants in writing self-efficacy. Implication of these results for future research and ESL teaching are discussed.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia Sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

PENGGUNAAN BAHASA KEDUA DALAM PENULISAN EFIKASI KENDIRI, NILAI TUGAS DAN STRATEGI PELAJAR SARJANA MUDA MALAYSIA

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Kajian ini bertujuan menyiasat perhubungan antara efikasi sendiri, nilai tugas, penggunaan strategi dan prestasi dalam penulisan bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa kedua (ESL). Empat tujuan menyeluruh kajian ini adalah untuk: a) mengenal pasti dan menggambarkan nilai penulisan bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa kedua, efikasi sendiri dan strategi di kalangan mahasiswa Malaysia, b) mengenal pasti bagaimana nilai penulisan (nilai utiliti, nilai intrinsik, pencapaian dan kos) pelajar-pelajar bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa kedua adalah berkaitan dengan penguasaan penulisan mereka, c) menyelidik jenis-jenis strategi penulisan yang membolehkan pelajar-pelajar bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa kedua memperkembang kebolehan menulis mereka, d) menyiasat saling hubungan antara nilai tugas penulisan ESL, efikasi sendiri, penggunaan strategi dan prestasi.

Sampel kajian terdiri daripada 304 mahasiswa Malaysia yang mempelajari bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa kedua di Universiti Putra Malaysia. Responden diperoleh daripada suatu kursus penulisan. Kajian ini menggunakan reka bentuk kaedah campuran sebagai metod kajian. Dalam fasa yang pertama, data dikumpul melalui soal selidik dan ujian pencapaian penulisan. Bagi fasa kedua, data kualitatif diperoleh berdasarkan temu bual dan perbincangan kumpulan fokus untuk mendapatkan maklumat wawasan strategi, nilai, kepercayaan dan motivasi pelajar-pelajar tentang kemahiran penulisan ESL mereka. Penganalisan data kuantitatif dilakukan dengan menggunakan kaedah regresi, ANOVA dan korelasi. Bagi bahagian kuantitatif, semua maklum balas dan jawapan responden dalam soalan terbuka dan temu bual dianalisis dengan teliti untuk penentuan kod dan tema.

Hasil kajian memaparkan gambaran yang terperinci tentang nilai tugas, efikasi sendiri dan strategi penulisan ESL mahasiswa Malaysia. Secara keseluruhannya, efikasi sendiri penulisan ESL pelajar-pelajar berada di tahap sederhana. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa pelajar yang mempunyai tahap pencapaian penulisan yang tinggi menonjolkan efikasi sendiri yang lebih tinggi berbanding dengan pelajar

yang berada di tahap pencapaian penulisan yang sederhana dan rendah. Pelajar-pelajar menetapkan nilai utiliti dan nilai pemerolehan yang tinggi dan memaparkan nilai intrinsik yang sederhana terhadap penulisan mereka. Pelajar-pelajar yang mempunyai tahap pencapaian penulisan yang tinggi menyumbangkan nilai intrinsik dan nilai pemerolehan lebih tinggi yang signifikan berbanding dengan kumpulan yang mempunyai tahap pencapaian yang rendah.

Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa strategi penulisan regulasi usaha adalah yang paling kerap digunakan dengan diikuti oleh strategi metakognitif manakala strategi sosial dilaporkan paling jarang digunakan. Daripada hasil kajian, didapati pelajar yang mempunyai tahap pencapaian penulisan yang tinggi memaparkan kekerapan penggunaan strategi metakognitif, kognitif, afektif dan regulasi usaha yang lebih tinggi dan menunjukkan perbezaan yang signifikan berbanding dengan pelajar yang mempunyai tahap penulisan yang rendah.

Analisis regresi mendedahkan bahawa efikasi sendiri dan nilai utiliti ialah peramal yang terbaik dalam penggunaan strategi penulisan. Keputusan analisis regresi juga menunjukkan bahawa nilai intrinsik dan efikasi sendiri menyumbang dengan signifikan dalam ramalan pencapaian penulisan pelajar. Hasil dapatan kualitatif menyokong hasil data kuantitatif. Berdasarkan data kualitatif, didapati faktor seperti pengaruh bahasa ibunda dan pengetahuan tatabahasa bahasa Inggeris merupakan determinan yang penting dalam efikasi sendiri penulisan. Implikasi hasil dapatan untuk kajian masa depan dan pengajaran ESL turut dibincangkan.

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 28 October 2014 to conduct the final examination of Saeid Raoofi on his thesis entitled "L2 Writing Self-Efficacy, Task-Value, and Strategies of Malaysian Undergraduate Students" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy.

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I hereby confirm that:

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
MUET	Malaysian University English Test
FL	Foreign Language
L2	Second Language
UPM	Universiti Putra Malaysia



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Writing plays a vital role in our literate community, and it is an indispensable part of our life as it is intertwined with various aspects of human life. Good writing skills are considered as the main privileges of an educated man and these skills have received great acclaim because they are needed for producing and disseminating of knowledge (MacArthur et al., 2006). Writing skills enable us to communicate with people beyond the limits of time and distance. It is a valid mode of transmission of culture, knowledge and ideas from one generation to another and hence it directly deals with preserving and developing the sociocultural, educational and anthropological aspects of human life. In other words, writing is not only considered as criteria of getting knowledge as well as that of scientific works within a specific culture or society, but it is also an important means for disseminating and producing knowledge in any educational and cultural system (Tolchinsky, 2006).

Canagarajah (2002) ascribes the importance of writing to the five salient features of writing. First, writing both reflects and creates reality; second, writing is a social interactional activity between the writer and the reader within a specific space and time. Third, writing is created from the negotiation between writer and available resources in a context. Fourth, writing provides an opportunity for writers to present ideological beliefs, to express self and to give value to entities through the text. Fifth, writing is a historical dynamic process where the ideas, struggles, conflicts and concepts of the text are open to the readers and writers' comments and stance. Writing enables us to express our feelings, thoughts and ideas, to establish communication with others, to acquire information, to clarify knowledge, to delve into ideas, thoughts and feelings, to document and report our endeavors. In academic settings, students share their research findings with global readership, and it allows the students to place their thoughts and research in an international outlet if it is written in globally used languages. Writing plays an essential role in academic settings; it helps the students to do key assignments, enhance their performance and functioning, and extend their knowledge (Graham & Perin, 2007).

As students enter higher education, they better understand the importance of writing. In universities, they are required to learn the core components of academic writing, rhetorical structure, lexicon and conventions of writing in order to produce formal essays and reports at the university level. These writing skills enable the students to make headway into their specialized field because they can forge academic relationships within their disciplines through their academic writing ability (Hyland, 2004). In addition, at university, the assessment of students' educational achievement is more closely linked with their writing skill because instructors asked for reports, assignments, project papers and other writing tasks which can be used as an evidence for the students' understanding of the materials presented at courses. Mastery of writing ability is of principal importance for all of the students to successfully perform writing tasks and it is even more essential for L2 students such as ESL students since they write in English other than their native language.

Writing is an essential skill for students to communicate and to air out their ideas clearly and coherently in an internet-driven globalization. In many countries, writing

is one of the essential skills that university students must master in order to achieve their academic goals and get better job prospects. Indeed, good writing ability often indicates an ability of the individuals to attain professional development in their academic areas. In Malaysia, writing in English has been highlighted in national exams and assessments such as that of Lower Secondary School Certificate, Secondary Leaving School Certificate and Malaysian University English Test (MUET). In each of these examinations, there is a section assessing students' writing ability in English. English as a second language is a taught subject in Malaysia and is compulsory for students at all levels in schools.

Given the important role writing plays within the academic and educational settings and institutions, it seems essential to identify factors affecting the development of writing. Previous research has shown that factors such as motivation, attitude, and language strategy influence L2 learning. Although many studies have investigated the roles of strategies in the development of language learning, and how motivation affects the success in language learning, both motivation and language learning strategy have not been clearly defined in the literature of SLA. Furthermore, very few studies have focused on documenting the association among motivation, language strategies and language performance among foreign /second language learners (Phakiti et al., 2013; Wu et al, 2013). This study applies social cognitive theory and expectancy value theory to SLA and examines relationships among motivational constructs , language learning strategies, and L2 writing performance.

Background of the Study

Learning a foreign/second language is a complicated task and it involves the consideration of a broad range of aspects and factors. It is generally believed and accepted that language learning, to a large extent, is a matter of individual differences (Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003; Ehrman, et al., 2003). In the area of foreign/second language learning, there is a substantial body of research on individual differences. Research has supported that individuals learning a foreign/second language show some differences in their rate of learning and the ways they follow to develop their skills. In other words, learners' traits and characteristics affect their language learning, that is, a noticeable number of variations in language learning and performance relates to learners' traits and characteristics (Dörnyei, 2006).

Individual differences encompass a wide scope of domains including personality traits, learning styles, strategies, aptitude, age, motivation, beliefs and attitude (Ehrman et al., 2003; Dörnyei, 2005; Ellis, 1994). Successful second language learning is largely a matter of individual differences because each learner has unique characteristics in approaching and performing language tasks. More recently, SLA researchers have turned their attention towards the role of learner' characteristics and learner's variables in language learning processes. Over the past few decades, individual differences in personality, motivation, strategies, beliefs and attitudes have been investigated in relation to L2 learning. Although the importance of individual differences in L2 learning especially in L2 speaking has been extensively explored (Kormos & Trebits, 2012), there is little research on the role of individual differences in L2 writing (Kormos, 2012).

One of the important and powerful factors affecting second language learning is motivation (Dornyi, 2001, 2005; Gardner, 1985; Gardner et al., 1997; Kormos & Csizér, 2008; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003) which encompasses a broad spectrum of motivational constructs and concepts. This spectrum includes self-efficacy, self-confidence, task-value, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, goal orientations and attributions.

With regard to motivation, one of the most significant motivational factors affecting language learning is self-efficacy beliefs. Self-efficacy is a motivational construct and it is as a key component of social cognitive theory. It refers to individuals' beliefs in their abilities to perform a task successfully (Bandura, 1986). Self-efficacy affects learners' choice of activities, their persistence in performing a given task and the extent of effort they put forth to do a task (Bandura, 1997; Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003; Schunk 1989). The development of self-efficacy depends on four factors: previous experience and task performance (experience mastery), models and peers' performance (vicarious experience), persuasion and encouragement from people who are significant for the learner (social persuasion), and learner's physiological and emotional states (physiological and emotional state). Social and environmental factors play an important role in sharpening one's self-efficacy beliefs. For example, a learner's writing self-efficacy is influenced by the positive or negative feedback that the learner get from others concerning his/her performance in a particular writing task or through vicarious experiences in which the learner observes others especially his peers doing writing tasks successfully.

Another motivational construct, which contributes to the successful learning and performance, is task value. Task value is an essential component of expectancy-value (Eccles & Wigfield, 1995; Wigfield & Cambria, 2010) which refers to the value that learners have for learning a specific task. For example, if learners believe that L2 writing is an important skill for their future job or essential to be an academic member, then they have a value for learning and developing their L2 writing. According to the expectancy value theory, value is an essential ingredient of human motivation, that is, people who put a high value on a particular task, will become motivated towards doing the task.

It seems reasonable to assume that the value individuals place on learning globally used languages such as English would be high. English today is an international language and serves as a lingua franca among many nations for different academic, social, and business purposes in the globalized and modern world (Dewey, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2005). Therefore, a new agenda of values and goals for learning English has emerged. Nowadays there are enormous goals and values associated with learning English language including interest in international or foreign communication, enthusiasm to go abroad for academic or professional development, willingness to get familiar and interact with individuals from other nationalities and cultures, and non-ethnic or non-racial attitude towards other nationalities and ethnicities. Many goals of language learning mainly touch upon the utility value of English language such as travel, intercultural friendship and the acquisition of knowledge (Yashima, 2002; Clément & Kruidenier, 1983). The utility value, which is one of main components of the task value (Eccles & Wigfield, 1995; Wigfield & Cambria, 2010), is an important factor affecting one's desire to do a task or learn a skill.

The value individuals hold for L2 writing may be affected by the value they place on L2 in general and the value they attribute to their L1 writing. Individuals learning to write in another language set their own goals for the L2 writing. The goal for learning to write in L2 are closely connected to their attitudes and beliefs about writing, the extent to which they need L2 writing, their level of interest in writing activities, and the perceived values of composing text in L2 language. Thus, L2 learners ascribing varying degrees of importance to writing differ in writing purposes and needs, their attitudes towards writing, their interest and enjoyment in writing tasks and in the perceived values they assign to writing (Kormos, 2012).

Beside motivation, language learning strategies have been shown to be highly influential in the success of language learning. The strategies are conscious techniques that individuals use to solve problems in the process of their second language learning (Brown, 2000). Researchers unanimously believe that good language learners use a wide variety of strategies and tactics to manage their learning tasks effectively in a given situation. Dörnyei (2005) stated that learners who are good at language learning tend to have a bigger repertoire of strategies than less proficient learners and they employ the strategies more effectively. Successful learners employ different strategies for different tasks; they select their strategies for a particular task based on the task requirements and specifications (Chamot, et al., 1988).

There are various categorizations of strategies (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Cohen, 1998), partly due to vague definition of language learning strategies. Although there is a rapidly growing body of research focusing on the various aspects of language learning strategies, there have been controversies among the researchers about the definition of language learning strategies;. Generally, learning strategies have not been clearly defined as there are many definitions for the writing strategies in the SLA literature. Some researchers have turned their attention to self-regulated or self-directed learning strategies. It is important to note that self-regulated strategies encompass a variety of strategies that involves learner conscious decision in exerting efforts to do different tasks. One of the most important self-regulated strategies is effort regulation strategies. One of the noteworthy differences between the language learning strategies used in this study with those in previous studies is that, effort regulation strategy is incorporated into the other types of strategies in this study. In other words, the items associated with cognitive, metacognitive, social, affective and effort regulation strategies are employed to assess L2 writing strategy use among Malaysian ESL undergraduate learners.

Given the multifaceted nature of language learning, and the significant role of individual differences in language learning, it is important to understand to what extent Malaysian students' believe in their abilities in performing writing tasks, how they assign value to L2 writing, and how their writing value and self-efficacy beliefs are related to the strategies they employ for their writing. It is also essential to know how Malaysian students' performance in L2 writing is related to their writing strategies, values and self-efficacy beliefs.

L2 Writing

Writing is a difficult and challenging task because it involves both language knowledge and content knowledge (Bialystok, 1978; Makalela, 2004; Nunan 1989). For students who write in a second language or who are unfamiliar with the content area of writing, writing becomes much more difficult and demands a more focused endeavour (Tedick, 1990). Compared to the other skills of language, writing is the most complex one, and it is a skill that is considered to reflect the most advanced phase of language development. L2 learners usually face difficulties with writing, as Dixon et al (2002) stated that writing is a very complex skill for L2 learners to master.

It has been generally accepted that since students write in a language other than their first language, it is common that their writing have many issues associated with coherence, cohesion, grammar and word choice. However, according to Dixon et al (2002), some language researchers believe that students who have many difficulties in their writing are those who have learning disabilities and problems concerning their emotions and behaviors.

Lack of exposure to L1 writing experiences also poses problems for learners in their L2 writing endeavors. Having such awareness is conducive to the development of L2 writing ability; and there is a close link between L1 and L2 writing ability (Cumming, 1989; Schoonen et al., 2003; Sasaki & Hirose, 1996). To some extent, L2 students can benefit from their mother tongue writing ability and their potentials in writing if L1 writing strategies share some communalities with their L2 writing endeavors. However, this is often not the case. As such, for L2 learners, besides having to cope with subject knowledge, they need to develop a good command of language. Falling short of grasping an efficient command will then add complications to L2 writing process (Beckett et al., 2004). Indeed, as far the complexity of writing is concerned, students need to manage skillful coordination of various linguistic and cognitive resources required in the writing processes (Hayes, 1996; Kellogg, 1996) and they are required to take many issues into consideration when having to express purpose, content, audience, organization, syntactic and lexical resources.

Weigle (2005) asserted that L1 writers have automatic and quick access to grammatical and lexical repertoires while second language writers especially those with low level of language proficiency need to consciously focus on these processes since the strategies and language knowledge are not easily available to them when they attempt to write in their second language. Rao (1997) stated that, writing in L2 is a difficult task for the students because the writing task requires different linguistic and cognitive strategies which students are not certain about them.

The importance of L2 writing has received considerable attention in recent years. Scarcella and Oxford (1992) asserted that writing in second language provides opportunities for students to enhance their syntactic, sociolinguistic, lexical and strategic competences. L2 writing can be exploited as a strategic method by students to learn a target language as it has a potential role in the development of L2 learning. Manchón (2011) and Williams (2012) maintained that writing in L2 can foster and enhance the generic development of the L2, because L2 writing allows learner to

give attention to linguistic forms and internalize language knowledge. It also provides opportunities for language outputs, enhances the level of automatization, and consolidates monitoring of learning. Manchón & Roca de Larios (2011) stated convincingly that students' goal-setting and problem solving in L2 writing tasks, and the types of writing activities they engaged in, affect the benefits of L2 writing for second language learning.

Statement of the Problem

Taken together various related bodies of research, there had been useful insight about the importance of self-efficacy and task value on performance. Researchers from the areas of education and educational psychology have led the way in examining the role of task value and self-efficacy, and strategies in learning. Previous research indicates that self-efficacy, learning strategies and task value are positively related to students' learning and performance. In the areas other than language learning, a few studies have focused on the link between motivation, strategy use and performance (Greene et al., 2004; Metallidou & Vlachou, 2007; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Zusho et al., 2003). In the SIA literature, however, there is a general lack of research in establishing the relationship among L2 motivation (self-efficacy and task value), language strategies and performance. It is of principal importance to investigate these variables as all of them are connected and can be controlled, that is, teachers can undertake pedagogical interventions to enhance them.

Learners' variables such as, attitudes, self-efficacy and motivation have been explored in the area of L1 writing, but there is a scarcity of research addressing individual differences such as self-efficacy and value in L2 writing research. In fact, there is hardly any attempt to examine the role of task value in the development of L2 writing, and generally little research has focused on the role of individual differences in L2 writing (Komos, 2012). This scarcity of research on the importance of learners' differences such as self-efficacy beliefs and task value in the field of L2 writing or generally in SLA literature is surprising because L2 writing is a complex activity that involves motivational and cognitive factors. Therefore it is deemed necessary to investigate how Malaysian students' writing values, self-efficacy and strategies affect their writing performance.

Another important issue addressed in this study concerns the Malaysian context of language learning, where English is used as a second language. This study attempts to investigate the interplay between L2 writing motivation, performance and strategies within the ESL context of Malaysia. Although, almost all of the students have Malaysian nationality, they do not share the same first language and ethnicity, education background and experiences. Therefore, the diversity in cultural and linguistic backgrounds may also affect the trajectory of learners' attitudes toward L2 writing. Indeed, one of the limitations of the previous research in the area of L2 writing concerns the homogeneity of the sample with regard to cultural, linguistic and educational contexts as most of previous studies were conducted on students who shared the same mother tongue and educational background (Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003). Another essential point to note is that the value of writing activities differs within different cultural and educational contexts (Durgunoglu & Verhoeven, 1998, , Kormos. 2012), and hence, further investigation is needed to

understand how Malaysian students place value on L2 writing because they are from various linguistic, ethnic, cultural, educational backgrounds.

In Malaysia, writing in English appears to be one of the most essential components of university learning because much of the learning is in English especially when they refer to learning resources which is mainly in English. The increasing demand of better English proficiency in the workplace has encouraged the Malaysian government to take essential steps to increase the use of English in the higher education contexts (Melor & Gan, 2011). In Malaysia, writing in English has been highlighted in national exams and assessments such as that of Lower Secondary School Certificate, Secondary Leaving School Certificate and Malaysian University English Test (MUET). In each of these examinations, there is a section assessing students' writing ability in English. In spite of considerable attention given to English particularly writing skill in Malaysia, still every year, a great number of Malaysian undergraduates are obliged to attend writing classes due to their low scores in English proficiency and writing. Chitravelu, Sithamparam and Teh (2005) stated that most of the Malaysian students are less skilled in their writing, and they do not know how to do their writing tasks satisfactorily. Similarly, Begum (2005) pointed out that, despite learning English as second language for many years, many of the Malaysian students remain weak in their ESL writing. Therefore, ESL writing performance of Malaysian students need further investigation. It is essential to understand how Malaysian undergraduate students' motivational and cognitive characteristics are related to their writing performance

There were several reasons for choosing the Malaysian context for this study. First, within Malaysian public universities such as UPM, there are writing courses followed by assignments and exams that pose a challenge to their writing ability in English. Consequently, it is essential to know to what extent students place value on ESL writing, to what extent they believe in their ability to write in English, and what strategies they use in their ESL writing. Second, Malaysia is an ESL context; not only is there a general lack of knowledge on how ESL/EFL students value their writing, but also little research has focused on the relationship between values, self-efficacy and strategy in both ESL and EFL contexts. Third, Malaysia, with a multi-cultural context in which the students have been raised, is a specific learning context with a diverse linguistic and ethnic background. It is important to know how students in such a context perceive the role of L2 writing and how they approach their L2 writing. Fourth, in ESL contexts such as Malaysia, students are better at ESL writing ability than those in EFL contexts. Most of the students within EFL context, except for those majoring in English, cannot write in English because it is not frequently used, that is; unlike EFL students, ESL students can create some writing. Thus, for the purposes of this study, ESL students were chosen as they were required to attempt two writing tasks.

With regard to L2 writing development, most of previous studies have evaluated the effects of pedagogical intervention or strategy instruction on writing performance. Although, there are a number of studies addressing L2 writing particularly investigation into L2 writing performance (Cumming, 2009), most of these studies mainly focused on pedagogical interventions and strategy instructions aimed at the development L2 writing (McDonough et al., 2014; McMullen, 2009; Raimes 1991; Sengupta, 2000; Yang, et al., 2006). A major portion of L2 writing research has

focused on the link between pedagogical interventions and writing outcomes while little attention been given to the contribution and the role of motivational, social and cognitive aspects of learners in connection with improvements they show in courses that are specifically intended for the development of L2 writing.

Another problem concerns the fact that L2 writing motivation has not been adequately addressed in the literature of second language learning. It is worth noting that L2 writing motivation has been less explored in comparison with the other domains of second language (Sasaki, 2011). Only a few studies have sought to describe or explore the characteristics of L2 writing motivation or its relation with other learner variables such as language proficiency, attitudes and so on (e.g., Cheng 2002; Erkan and Saban; 2011; Hashemian & Heidari, 2013). L2 writing motivation, especially L2 writing self-efficacy and task value still need further research and exploration. In addition, previous research on task value has mainly focused on young learners; little research has been conducted on graduate and undergraduate students' task value. Therefore, there is a need to examine how motivational constructs such as task value and self-efficacy combine with cognitive constructs such as metacognitive and cognitive writing strategies, and how they affect L2 writing among undergraduate students.

L2 writing research to date has mainly exploited the quantitative data collected through the questionnaire or writing test. Although, quantitative tools such as questionnaire are reliable and widely used in different domain of language, they cannot capture in-depth information about the factors influencing L2 writing processes. Therefore a combination of both types of data is required to get a better understanding about L2 writing development. In addition, most of the studies exploring writing strategies in SLA have used only SILL items to evaluate learners' writing strategy use, but this scale has been designed for general language learning rather than specifically for L2 writing. In this study, ample attention has been directed toward a careful adaptation of L2 writing strategy items with regard to the reliability and validity of the items.

Theoretical Framework

In order to get a clear and thorough picture of self-efficacy, task value, writing strategies and writing performance, it seems necessary to understand the comprehensive framework of social cognitive theory. Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986, 1977) posits that environment, personal factors and one's behavior influence each other. This theory focuses on the dynamically triadic and reciprocal interaction between three factors, a) personal factors (cognitive, motivational, and biological factors), b) environment (teachers, parents, peers, models, classmates and one's community members) and c) behavior (writing performance, social activities and strategies).

Motivational factors (self-efficacy beliefs, task values, and attitudes, interest) belong to personal factors, and these are influenced by environment, behavior, and other personal factors such as cognitive factors. Individuals, through their behavior, interact with environment and personal factors hence individuals are both shaper and product of their environment. The reciprocity of these influences is not always equal in terms of their strength. A person, who has strong self-efficacy in second language

learning, is not highly affected by cognitive influences and environment. Generally, human learning is more or less the result of the interaction between one's behavior, environmental influences and personal factors.

Bandura (1986) stated that, within this triadic reciprocity, individuals are endowed with certain capabilities which help them to determine their own action; the first one is *symbolizing capability* which refers to symbols for communication; individual give meaning to symbols and internalize them for future behavior. This capability enables humans to communicate with each other across place and time. The second one is *forethought capability* which allows human being to predict the outcomes and, set goals and try to achieve them. The third one, *vicarious capability* refers to the ability that individuals can learn from the other people by observing their activities. *Self-regulatory capability* is conceptualized as the abilities required for monitoring and evaluating behavior. The last one, *self-reflective capability* refers to metacognition ability to analyze and organize the way of thinking. Self-efficacy is one the most important self-reflective capabilities. Therefore, the dynamic triadic interaction among the three influences namely environment, behavior and personal factors allows people to develop the above mentioned capabilities including self-reflective capabilities such as self-efficacy.

Another aspect of social-cognitive theory is motivation and self-regulated learning (Pintrich, 2003). Students' motivation is linked to their ability to self-regulate their learning activities. According to social cognitive theory, human beings are endowed with abilities that can control their behavior, cognition and motivation. They can regulate their behavior, motivation and cognition in interaction with their environment to achieve their goals (Schunk, 2004). According to social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1997), individuals have self-management abilities that enable them to control their cognition, motivation, and behaviors. This controlling ability allows humans to regulate and manage their behavior in interaction with the environment. Therefore, SCT posits that learning strategies and motivation (self-efficacy and task value) are specific to the learning context (environment), and that self-regulated learners can effectively regulate their motivation, cognition, and performance (behavior) until they achieve their goals.

Bandura's (1986, 1997) SCT states that student learning is a result of reciprocal interactions among personal factors (i.e. thoughts, goals, beliefs, and values), behavior (i.e. academic achievement, writing performance), and environmental factors (e.g. teachers, peers, ESL/EFL contexts, or community life). According to this theory, people will exert effort to successfully accomplish a given task if they believe in their abilities to do the task, (self-efficacy beliefs), and if they value the task (task-value).

The second theory underlying this study is Expectancy-Value Theory (Wigfield & Eccles, 2002) which states that expectancy and value affect achievement and also determine effort and persistence. This theory holds learners' performance in a particular task can be explained and affected by their self-efficacy beliefs and by the value they assign to that task (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). In order to understand how and to what extent undergraduate students value ESL writing, this study focuses on exploring the applicability of expectancy-value theory in studying how students learn ESL academic writing in a writing course.

According to this theory expectancy for success and perceived task value play a vital role in learners' motivation for learning and their persistence in learning. Learners are most likely to choose a task to do when they expect to do it successfully and they assign value to that task. When learners believe that an activity is important, they enjoy doing that activity, and they consider it as a useful activity, hence their achievement in that task will be better (Wigfield et al., 2008). Task value is composed of four components (Eccles, 2009; Wigfield & Cambria, 2010; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000): attainment value, interest, utility, and cost belief. *Attainment value* refers to the importance of performing a task. *Interest* is characterized as how much the learner enjoys a task or is interested in an activity. *Utility value* is the usefulness of task for learners' future goals. *Cost belief* is the negative aspect of a task such as amount of effort when a learner prefer a task which is easier and requires less effort or when a learner lose an opportunity for doing a task because of another task.

There are several self-regulation models based on social cognitive theory and expectancy value theory (Zimmerman (1998, 2000, 2002; Pintrich, 2000; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Pintrich & Zusho, 2002). One of the most well-known models of self-regulation is Zimmerman's (2002), social cognitive model. The model postulates that the learning is an interactive process that involves three phases. In the first phase (forethought phase), learners set their goals of learning and then they think about the strategies which are required to attain their goals. Both setting goals and selecting strategies, including the analysis of task requirements (attention, amount of time and effort) are influenced by motivational beliefs such as self-efficacy, interest and task value value (Zimmerma, 2000, 2002; Kormos, 2012; Manchón & Roca de Larios, 2011).

The second phase in the model is performance stage. In this phase learner employs the strategies and regulates their attention and motivation to complete the task. Self-regulatory behaviors in this stage include maintaining attention on the task, deploying appropriate strategies and monitoring performance. In the last phase, which is called self-reflection, individuals evaluate their performance by comparing it with their previous performances or standard performances. This stage involves self-satisfaction about the performance; learners feel self-satisfied about their performances if they perceived them as successful results. The self-evaluative judgments that learners make about their performance affect their motivation and efforts for future or subsequent learning Students will show further task engagement if they positively evaluate their performance in that task whereas task performances which are negatively evaluated by the learners decreases their motivation to do future tasks (Zimmerman, 2002).

With respect to cognitive processing this study is also based on Hayes's writing model (1996) which focuses on the cognitive approach and environmental factors to writing. As shown in Figure 1, the model is composed of two components: task environment, individual the task environment consists of two parts social environment and physical environment. Individual components encompasses four factors namely motivation, cognitive processes, long-term memory and working memory.

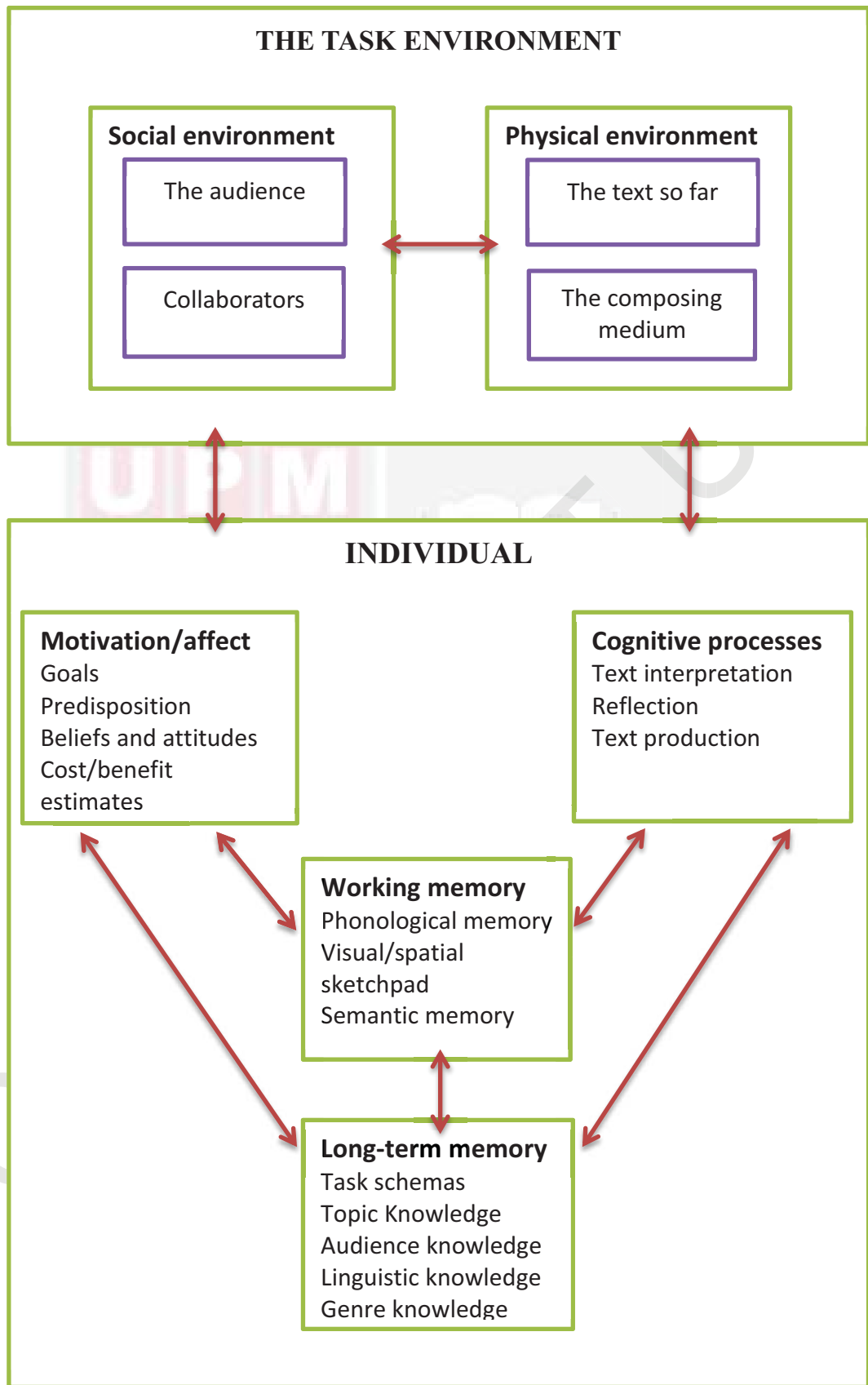


Figure 1. Hayes's (1996) Writing Model

Conceptual Framework

The proposed conceptual framework is hypothesized to describe the interrelationships among the selected variables in L2 writing. On the left side of the framework, it is hypothesized that self-efficacy and task value are positively correlated. These features are however, moderated by the individual's level of writing proficiency. This moderating variable is not specified in the model under the individual domain of Hayes model, but in this study it is part of the issues addressed as individual variations in language ability is seen to exert an important influence on task performance. Thus, it is hypothesized that both self-efficacy and task value predict writing strategies which in turn are also moderated by the individuals' writing proficiency. Writing strategies are assumed also to predict writing performance. In sum, writing self-efficacy, writing task value and writing strategies are seen as the main interrelated factors that impact writing performance, and this impact is moderated by L2 writing proficiency as shown in Figure 2.

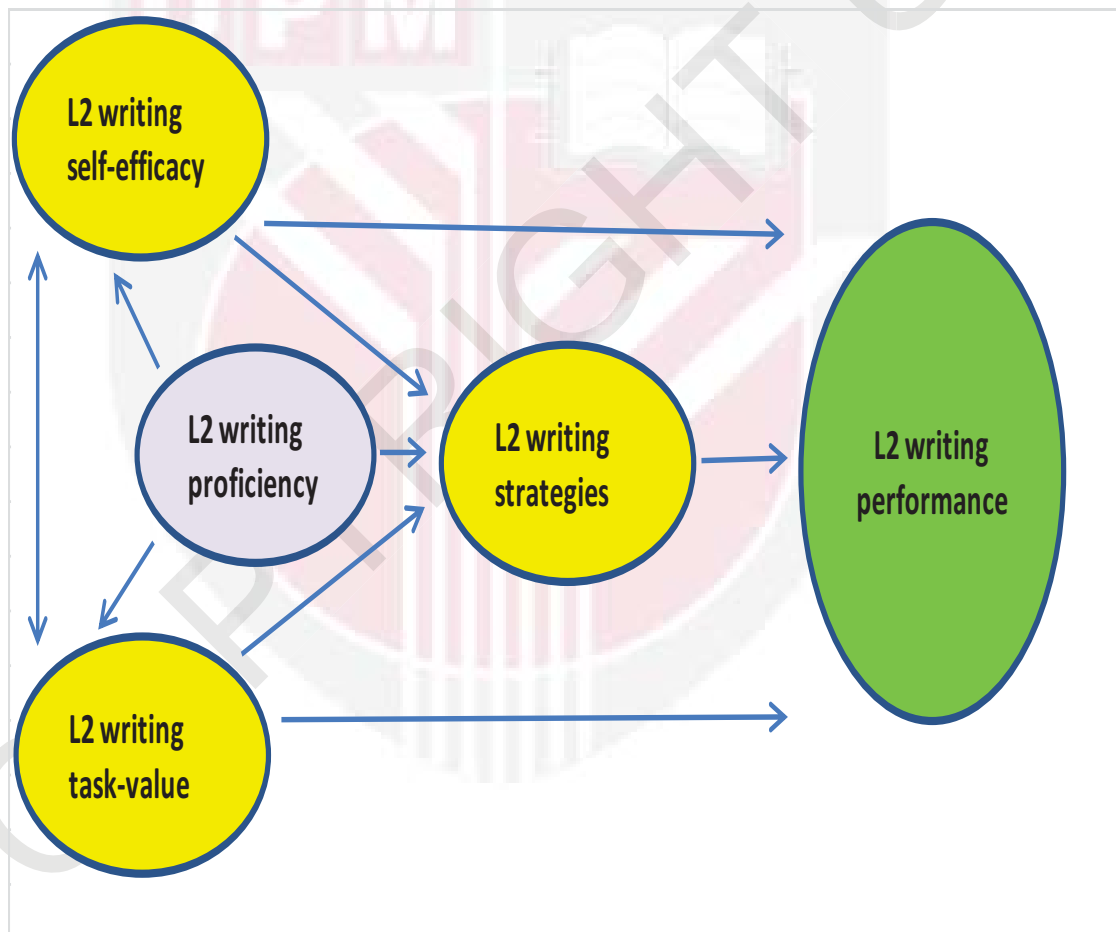


Figure 2. The Hypothesized Relationship between the Variables

Research in the area of educational Psychology has proposed several self-regulation models based on social cognitive theory and expectancy value theory (Zimmerman (1998, 2000, 2002; Pintrich, 2000; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Pintrich & Zusho, 2002). In all of these models, both motivational and cognitive factors play an important role in determining individuals' learning and performance. These models postulate that the learning is an interactive process that involves three phases, and that learners set their goals of learning and then they think about the strategies which are required to

attain their goals. Both setting goals and selecting strategies, including the analysis of task requirements (attention, amount of time and effort) are influenced by motivational beliefs such as self-efficacy, interest and task value (Zimmerman, 2000, 2002; Kormos, 2012; Manchón & Roca de Larios, 2011).

Hayes's writing model (1996) also can be instrumental in unraveling how L2 writing motivation (interest, task value, self-efficacy) affect the processes and strategies in L2 writing. Hayes's writing model (1996) makes it possible to investigate the interwoven influences (motivation, environment, cognitive processes) on writing. Hayes's writing model (1996) is expanded to include features of the self-regulation models. Essentially this model captures the notions of cognitive and motivational states of the self-regulation models which have been developed based on social cognitive theory and expectancy value (Zimmerman 2002; Pintrich, 2000; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990). In all of these models, both motivational and cognitive factors play an important role in determining individuals' learning and performance, and can explain, interactions among motivational, cognitive, environmental factors in learning processes.

Similarly, in this study, both motivational factor (self-efficacy and task value) and cognitive factor (e.g., strategies such as cognitive, metacognitive) have hypothesized to be important for shaping one's performance (L2 writing performance). The conceptual framework postulates that strategy use and motivation which involves task value and self-efficacy are specific to context of learning and individuals regulate their motivation, behavior and cognition in response to the environment. Based on the social cognitive theory, the proposed model is hypothesized to describe the interrelationships among variables in L2 learning. In this model, self-efficacy, task value, writing strategies (different categories of writing strategies are independent variables and, writing performance is a dependent variable. In this study, both motivational factor (self-efficacy and task value) and cognitive factor (e.g., strategies such as cognitive, metacognitive,) have been hypothesized to be important for shaping one's performance (L2 writing performance).

Motivation (self-efficacy and task value) and writing strategies which are independent variables in this study have an important role in determining individuals behavior and learning in the self-regulation models based on social-cognitive and expectancy-value theories. In a similar vein, motivation and cognitive processing are two important components in the Hayes's writing model (1996), these two components are essential in understanding and determining writing performance. In this study, writing performance is the dependent variable. In all of the self-regulation models and Hayes's model, motivation and cognitive factors are recognized to be crucial in understanding individuals' performance and behavior (writing performance in the case of Hayes's model). In this study, the outcome is expected to be in line with these models' assumptions and structure, that is, motivation (self-efficacy and strategy use are likely explain variations in L2 writing performance.

Purpose of the Study

The objectives of this mixed method study were (a) to determine and describe Malaysian undergraduates' ESL writing value, self-efficacy and strategies, (b) to determine how students ESL writing value (utility value, intrinsic value, attainment

and cost) is related to their writing proficiency, (c) to examine the types of writing strategies that enable ESL student writers to develop their writing ability, and (d) to investigate the relationships between writing task value self-efficacy, strategies and writing performance.

Research Questions

This study attempted to examine the following research questions.

1. To what extent do Malaysian undergraduate students believe in their ability to write in English?
2. What are the indicators of task-value in ESL writing of Malaysian undergraduate students?
3. To what extent do students with different levels of writing proficiency (high, medium and low) differ in terms of their writing task value indices (intrinsic value, utility value, attainment value and cost)?
4. What are the ESL writing strategies used by Malaysian undergraduate students?
5. To what extent do students with different levels of writing proficiency differ in the use of writing strategies (cognitive, metacognitive, compensation, social and affective strategies)?
6. What are the relationships between ESL writing task value, writing self-efficacy, writing strategies and writing performance?

Significance of the Study

This study expands our understanding of classroom learning contexts theoretically and practically. This study contributes to the field of second language learning especially in writing by showing how motivational variables (self-efficacy and task value) affect writing strategies and how writing self-efficacy, task value and writing strategies affect L2 writing development. Research emphasizes the integration of motivational constructs and cognitive components in classroom learning (Garcia & Pintrich, 1995, 1996; McManus, 2000). This study holds importance in that it is one of the few studies that investigates the relationship between cognition and motivation in the area of language learning. This study has provided significant data to explain the importance of learner's cognition and motivation affect their writing skill. The findings provide useful information for writing teachers to take both cognition and motivation into consideration in their teaching endeavors.

This study shed light on the factors affecting ESL writing for academic purposes among undergraduate students majoring in different fields of study. To become proficient in ESL writing or to be able to use ESL writing in educational contexts especially in universities is very fundamental and instrumental for students who are not the native speakers of English. The development of academic writing is needed for university students as it is very essential for production and dissemination of knowledge within any disciplinary discourse. It is valid to say that the assessment of the students' academic achievements in academic contexts relies largely on their abilities to convey their knowledge and ideas. Given the important role of writing skill for different purposes, huge numbers of university students, want to develop their writing skill as much as their reading or listening

skills if not more. For these reasons, this study appears to be important for teachers and students because this study seeks to investigate the possible ways to enhance learners' ability in L2 writing.

This study also expands the literature of L2 writing as it provides a better understanding of how individual differences such as value, beliefs and strategies affect L2 writing. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this is one of the first research attempts to use writing task value and writing strategies such as effort regulation strategies in the field of second language writing. This study yields new insights into how strategy use together with motivation involving task value and self-efficacy jointly affect L2 writing processes. The findings help teachers to take appropriate pedagogical steps to increase learners' L2 writing ability by giving positive training feedback, focusing on activities which can increase learners' self-confidence and motivation. This study enjoys importance due to the fact that it focuses on the contribution of task value and self-efficacy in the L2 writing. This has principal importance for educators and teachers because motivational factors such as task value and self-efficacy are malleable and open to interventions. Cognitive ability is a factor, over which teachers do not have control, but motivational factors are controllable and teachers can undertake pedagogical interventions to enhance learners' performance and encourage them to exert further effort in their learning and performance.

In the SLA literature, several dimensions have been mentioned for writing. In order to clarify the dimensions of L2 writing, Manchón (2011) classified the writing dimensions into three distinct types: learning how to write in L2 language, using L2 writing to learn the L2 language and using writing to acquire knowledge and content of a specific field. It is noteworthy that cognitive, motivational and emotional factors play a critical role in all of these dimensions (Kormos, 2012). This study provides important information for the role of motivational and cognitive factors in acquiring the skills of writing.

Delimitations

This study investigated the effects of three variables on the L2 writing performance, but other variables such as the effect of L1 writing ability, background knowledge, cultural factors were not examined. Furthermore, the study was carried out in a writing course at only one public university in Malaysia, a multicultural context where students were primarily Malay females. Another delimitation is about the context in which the participants were raised. Since the participants are Malaysian ESL students from three mother tongue backgrounds (Malay, Chinese and Indian), it is not easy to generalize the results to EFL students or students who are native speakers of other languages.

In addition, the participants were selected from students enrolled in a writing course. The course was mainly attended by students with low to upper intermediate English proficiency. Therefore the sample did not represent the average Malaysian undergraduate students. However, there was some evidence that shows that the sample is roughly representative of Malaysian undergraduate student population. First, an overwhelming majority of the university students took the course. Second, there were many students with MUET score 4 (indicative of a reasonable level of

English proficiency) in the sample. Third, many participants obtained high scores in English writing proficiency tests (i.e., an argumentative writing test and a descriptive writing test used by the researcher to measure their writing performance), though proficiency does not necessarily equal general English proficiency. The above mentioned features imply that the sample is representative of the university student population to some degree, though the results should be generalized with caution to the high proficiency students or students in other contexts.

Key Terms

The following are the key terms and their definitions that are important for the operationalization of the variables investigated in the study.

English as a second language (ESL) refers to the use of English by non-native speakers of English in the contexts or regions where English is frequently used.

Writing Task value refers to the beliefs learners have about the reasons to do writing tasks. Perceptions about the importance of the task, interest in the task, the utility of the task and the cost of the task constitute the task value (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000).

Intrinsic Value of writing refers to the enjoyment, pleasure, or interest in performing writing tasks. Wigfield and Eccles (2000) define intrinsic value as the enjoyment or pleasure individuals get from performing a task.

Attainment value of writing refers to the perceived importance of success in doing writing tasks. Attainment value of a task relates to individuals' self-respect, sense of accomplishment, identity and self-schema. It is defined as "the importance of doing well on a given task" (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000, p. 72).

Utility value of writing refers to the degree of usefulness of ESL writing in attaining personal goals. Utility value of writing is the degree to which learners believe that writing tasks are useful for their future goals.

Cost of writing refers to individuals' willingness to invest effort and time to perform writing tasks. It refers the degree to which learners believe that the academic task is worth pursuing.

Language learning strategies refers to "specific actions taken by learners to make the learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations" (Oxford, 1990, p. 8). *Language learning strategies* mean techniques or actions used by learners to learn an L2.

Writing strategies refers to thoughts, actions, or behaviors employed by students to make their writing more effective.

Self-efficacy, a key component of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), refers to "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). It is described as a domain specific concept, that is, one's self-efficacy in performing writing tasks is different from his self-efficacy in delivering a speech.

Writing self-efficacy means individuals' confidence in their own ability to do writing tasks. (Pajares et al., 2001). In other words, writing self-efficacy refers to individuals' beliefs in their capabilities to perform writing tasks.

Writing performance is defined as students' overall score in argumentative and descriptive writing tests.



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