

Exploring Sociocognitive Writing Strategies: A Study of EFL Undergraduate Students in Saudi

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Abstract

Cognition is central to writing and its development (Nishino & Atkinson, 2015). It is embodied and influenced by social factors. Cognition, the writer, and the context are intertwined elements in any writing activity. Therefore, they are important elements to consider when examining writing strategies, especially in contexts where social factors play an important role in strategy use, such as in the Saudi context. Although there is a considerable body of research on writing strategies, little is known about current EFL writers' sociocognitive writing strategies. This study addresses the call to investigate L2 writing from multiple perspectives through sociocultural affordances that involve interaction with humans and resources (Atkinson, 2011; Cumming, 2016). By reconceptualising L2/EFL writing as a sociocognitive activity (Atkinson, 2014), the study aims to understand the current EFL writing strategies employed by skilled and unskilled students. Considering this objective, the researcher analysed semi-structured interviews, writing strategy logs, diaries, and texts. The findings indicate that although the two groups of writers had similar academic and professional writing goals, their writing strategies differed, influenced by linguistics and contextual factors. The study offers recommendations for teachers and curriculum designers.

Keywords: L2 writing, EFL writing, Mediation strategy, Sociocognitive approach, Sociocultural affordances