Blended Learning Strategies and EFL Learners' Self-Regulation in Academic Writing

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ABSTRACT

Blended learning in Iran has provided a novel learning milieu for language learners and teachers. This study examined how blended learning writing strategies might contribute to the self-regulation of EFL learners in their writing performance. To this end, grounded theory was used as the study's systemic methodology. Ninety-four Iranian EFL teachers were purposively selected through Writing Strategies and e-Learning Experience questionnaires. The participants were further interviewed to provide information on the blended learning strategies which can contribute to the self-regulation of the learning process. To enrich the data, the interviews were triangulated with some document analyses, observations, and field notes. The collected data were analyzed through open, axial, and selective coding processes in grounded theory. The results included some web-based strategies that Iranian EFL learners can take into account in order to become academic writers, some web-based strategies which might put Iranian EFL learners into the self-regulated learning frame, and some web-based strategies through which Iranian EFL learners can become self-regulated academic writers. The entire analyzed data were modeled and put into a putative frame. The results revealed that blended learning helps EFL writers in becoming contributors rather than just followers in the development of their compositions, and more importantly, in developing their self-regulated writing skills. The findings can have implications for teachers and students alike.

INTRODUCTION

Traditional face-to-face classes have fixed, chiefly periodic, repeating sessions, during which students need to attend each session in order to be able to receive the content taught in the classroom. However, in blended learning scenarios, learning materials are typically presented online, ready to be used on-demand with limited time constraints. The "when" and "where" of students' access to the materials is left to the students themselves, which dramatically improves the level of self-regulation necessary to efficiently achieve the learning objectives set by the instructors (Pedrotti & Nistor, 2019). Brandura (1986, p. 79) defined self-regulation as "the process of setting a goal for oneself and engaging in behaviors and cognitive processes that lead to goal competition." Self-regulation can allow learners to create better learning habits and boost their learning skills and utilize learning strategies to improve their academic knowledge (Carter Jr, Rice, Yang, & Jackson, 2020; Newman & Newman, 2020).

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Blended learning strategies include diverse context-bound techniques of teaching and learning through which online tasks and spaces for communication accompanied with the traditional instructions engage both teacher and students with some face-to-face interactional practices probably conducive to self-regulatory professional development and learning achievements. Lately, the ubiquitous availability of blended learning tenets in writing has substantially enlarged the range and scope of blended learning instructions (Bunch, Kibler, & Pimentel, 2012; Milner, Bloom, & Koehler, 2015). Research findings indicate that writing entangled with blended learning strategies can be specifically advantageous for EFL learners due to the communicative spaces it provides for practicing English in safe and engaging circumstances with few limitations (Sun & Chang, 2012). Wikis (Aydin & Yildiz, 2014; Elola & Oskoz, 2010; Kessler, 2009), web-based word processing, chats (Elola & Oskoz, 2010) and blogs (Sun & Chang, 2012) are resources that promote the improvement of writing abilities and skills (Kessler, Bikowski, & Boggs, 2012). Teachers and researchers grab the chance to monitor the writing processes of students using these devices. It is advantageous to provide blended learning options in a learning environment. Various resources facilitate the use of different learning strategies (Elola & Oskoz, 2010) while learners create their own self-regulatory practices in blended learning writing tasks (Kessler et al., 2012).

Accordingly, the present investigation intended to explore and model the essential and potential blended learning strategies functioning as a learning framework for Iranian EFL learners in order to assist them in achieving the academic writing proficiency with a focus on a self-regulatory mode of learning. In other words, the model that will be proposed in this study can be an efficacious guide for Iranian EFL learners to achieve such a domestic goal and resolve their writing drawbacks individually, so that it may enable them to reflectively recognize their gaps in academic writing, and to activate their self-regulatory potential and creativity so as to develop their writing skill

professionally in a domestic and independent fashion. In educational psychology, the idea of self-regulation for academic learning emerged to characterize learners who, despite sometimes unfavorable conditions, learn for their own purposes (Zimmerman, 1998; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001). For example, Zimmerman (1998) referred to young Asian immigrants to the United States who accomplished academic goals perfectly in spite of intimidating economic, cultural, and linguistic challenges. Self-regulation has been addressed by second language acquisition theorists as a broader, more general construct than strategies for language learning strategies (Cohen & Macaro, 2007; Oxford, 2011; Oxford & Schramm, 2007). Self-regulation is commonly defined as the learners' attempts to guide their own learning by setting goals, preparing how to accomplish them, evaluating the learning process, using problem-solving learning techniques, and assessing their own progress. Self-regulation encompasses a range of procedures and understandings, involving autonomy (Benson, 2011; Cotterall, 2008), metacognition (Chamot, 2009; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012), learning strategies (Griffiths, 2013; Oxford, 2011), self-management (Rubin, 2001, 2005), and motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Learners can see changes and developments in their writing skill by understanding the various dimensions of self-regulatory learning as indicators of subsequent writing skills (Cutler & Graham, 2008; Hooper, Roberts, Nelson, Zeisel, & Kasambira Fannin, 2010) and by using evidence-based classroom activities, such as instructor and peer feedback during writing (Graham, McKeown, Kiuhara, & Harris, 2012; Troia & Olinghouse, 2013).

These approaches entail additional opportunities for writing (Graham & Hebert, 2010; Graham et al., 2012), explicit and direct text structure training and learning, handwriting, spelling, and keyboarding skills (Graham et al., 2012), and explicit instructing and acquiring of self-regulated strategies (Dunn & Finley, 2010; Ennis, Jolivette, & Boden, 2013; Graham & Hebert, 2010; Graham et al., 2012; Harris, Graham, &

Mason, 2003; Straub & Alias, 2013). Technology-enhanced interactive devices have brought L2 writing instruction into fascinating and innovative spheres. Research has concentrated on many factors, namely the rapport between student pairs (Storch, 2004); the collaboration between inexperienced and professional students (Lee, 2004); interaction characteristics (Fung, 2010); the impact of the environment, devices and participants on collaborative writing (Arnold & Ducate, 2006); the influence of the setting and context (Kessler, 2009); the application of online tools (Kessler, 2009; Kessler et al., 2012; Lee, 2004); and collaborative instructor involvement (Kessler, 2009). To date, evidence suggests a positive association between learning success and the ability of learners to self-regulate (Harris, Danoff Friedlander, Saddler, Frizzelle, & Graham, 2005). In fact, literature shows that learners with self-regulatory abilities are more successful and productive (e.g. Azevedo & Cromley, 2004; Mevarech & Kramarski, 2003; Palinscar & Brown, 1984). Technology-Enhanced Learning Environments (TELEs) have been subject to a multitude of studies in other fields of education (Dettori & Persico, 2011; Narciss, Proske, & Koerndle, 2007), while there seem to be few studies on the effectiveness of blended learning writing strategies in writing achievement (Farajollahi & Moenikia, 2010; Samar, Kiany, & Chaleshtori, 2015). This concern has been shown by Nodoushan (2012), who contends that though "self-regulated learning has been extensively researched in different fields of education, it has not been the focus of attention by language researchers and educators" (p. 1). The small body of research on blended learning strategies in writing emphasizes the provision of a new theory or model in this regard (Chen & Cheng, 2008; Warschauer & Grimes, 2008).

Therefore, the goal of this study was to address the following research questions:

Q1. What blended learning strategies can contribute to Iranian EFL learners' self-regulation in academic writing?

Q2. What are the components of a strategies-based model of blended learning for Ira-nian EFL learners which helps them become self-regulated academic writers?

METHOD
Context and Participants
A group of 94 (63 female and 31 male) EFL teachers and professors were selected non-randomly. The age of the participants ranged from 22 to 64 with the mean of 43 and their teaching experience ranged from 2 to 31 years. Purposive sampling was done through the writing strategy questionnaire. The number of participants of this study started from 40, and due to data and theoretical saturation as well as the type of analysis in grounded theory, it reached 94 participants(Ary, Jacobs, Sorenson, & Razavieh, 2010).

Instruments and Materials
The instruments which were applied consisted of two questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, some document analyses, and observation field notes. The Writing Strategy Questionnaire developed and validated by Petrić and Czárl (2003) was used to elicit information on the writing strategies adopted by language teachers. It consisted of 44 items; 6 items belong to background questions, 38 items referred to strategy items, i.e. 8 items for planning strategies, 14 items for while-writing strategies, and 16 items for revising strategies. The calculated Cronbach Alpha was 0.86, showing a high degree of internal consistency. This questionnaire was utilized for the purpose of the sampling type in this study. In other words, as a purposive sampling tool, the writing-strategy questionnaire was given to the participants, out of whom those who were acquainted with the writing strategies were selected to be interviewed later.

The second questionnaire was the e-Learning Experience Questionnaire, developed and validated by Ginns and Ellis (2007), including 32 items addressing key aspects of student learning in online and how they are related to face-to-face experiences of learning. This second questionnaire was used to purposively select those who were in favor of blended learning and the integration of online tasks into the traditional contexts of learning. The calculated Cronbach Alpha for this question-

naire was 0.79 in terms of the present sample, showing a high degree of internal consistency. Subsequently, a large number of semi-structured interviews were conducted to elicit information on the participants' experience based on the research questions of the study. The interviews took about 15 minutes with selected participants. Most of the interviews were conducted individually, the number of which was 94 depending upon data saturation due to the systematic analysis in grounded theory.

Document analysis was another means of data collection in the present research. Analyzing documents incorporated coding content into themes similar to the way the interview transcripts were analyzed. The documents included a number of materials from diverse articles, books, and diverse themes in the literature related to the research topic, and helpful in answering the research questions, and in attaining data saturation and in the development and revision of the model in the current study. Field notes were also used to gather data during the interviews and some observations.

Data Collection Procedures

This study adopted grounded theory methodology and a triangulated multi-phased concatenation. The grounded theory methodology would work best for this study, ever since it is also devoid of any restrictions which limit generalization capabilities and better combines data and literature into a theory in a more suitable way to explain and understand a process, which is not the characteristic of the other designs.

Generally, qualitative interviews have been used as the primary data collection strategy. However, since the focus of this study was on the writing strategies to be blended with the online and technology-assisted tasks and activities towards a self-regulatory learning status, the Writing Strategy Questionnaire (Petrić & Czárl, 2003) was employed prior to the interviews to purposively ensure that the interviewees had a preliminary and reasonable information on the use of writing strategies. Additionally, to ensure that the interviewees were proponents of blended learning and the inte-

gration of online activities into traditional classes, the e-Learning Experience Questionnaire (Ginns & Ellis, 2007) was applied to purposively select those who think and act in line with blended learning premise.

Accordingly, the interview phase encompassed 94 interviewees who were fairly mindful of writing strategies as well as blended learning premises. The semi-structured interviews applied in this study aimed to seek blended learning strategies suggested by the participants which can contribute to the self-regulation of their learning process, some of which were carried out in the form of focus group. In order to reduce misconceptions between the researchers and the focus-group, the discussions were conducted in Persian. In order to explain some vague and confusing practices or strategies the participants described in their interviews, several observations were carried out along with the interviews. It was attempted to video-record the observations as much as the ethical issues allowed though all the significant points in the observations were entirely written down and coded using jot notes. Additionally, in order to give meaning and sense to the data gathered from the participants, contextualized explanations and interpretations of certain documents and materials in the literature were provided. Retrospective field notes were mostly perceived to be the supplementary notes used by the researchers at just the end of each data collection period.

In this investigation, the researcher used an amalgamation of data collection techniques, justified as follows: Rich materials, useful for researchers from many fields, are generated by questionnaires. The information presented by the respondents is extremely insightful about different aspects of daily life. The use of interview helps the researcher of the study explain, better understand and investigate the participants' viewpoints, attitudes, and perspectives. Documents analysis may provide background information and wide data coverage (Bowen, 2009). Observation facilitates an in-depth and rich understanding of a phenomenon, circumstance and/or setting. Field notes mainly assist in the creation of dense, rich explanations of

the context of the research, experience, interview, focus group, and useful qualitative data from the document.

Data Analysis Procedures

The research analysis began with the collation of sensitizing beliefs and in vivo codes. (see Ary et al., 2010). The concepts and codes found from literature were also listed. The next level of data processing was coding, through which core concepts, categories, and properties were developed. After that, by linking sub-categories, axial coding was used to create core categories, and also to define the scope of their properties and dimensions. Besides that, axial coding was employed as much as possible to connect categories with each other. Selective coding was the next step, offering a general description of the processes or schemes recognizable in relation to specific conceptual relationships. In this research, selective coding was used as a method to incorporate and present grounded theory or the proposed model. Through this cyclical mode of analysis, this study sought to reach 'saturation,' which was interpreted as nothing new to be observed from the participants.

RESULTS

The current study aimed to investigate how blended learning writing strategies might be conducive to the self-regulation of Iranian EFL learners in their writing performance. In response to the first research question, Iranian EFL teachers explained how they found space to implement and carry out blended learning writing strategies integratively in the presence of the traditional curriculum. They focused on the students and their interests as the central factor in their classrooms, and did not try to mold them to the pre-set traditional curriculum. Instead, they fit the blended learning curriculum around their interests and curiosities. They identified blended learning curriculum standards in a negotiated way, focusing on the students' internalization of online material use, and not primarily the traditional writing curriculum. In this way, both teachers and students could explore the complexities involved with engaging in such an interactive blended learning writing practice, in terms of what it

means to become a self-regulated writer, how to negotiate spaces for online use of tasks within the traditional teaching principles, and finding peers to support reflection upon blended learning pedagogy work. There were a number of ideas expressed by many of the participants pertaining to the integrative aspect of blended learning self-regulatory strategies of writing:

- *I thought about **the differences I would make to the educational process while still following the traditional procedures**[1] in place…*

- *In some ways this may be seen as a backout, but when you see that **the more you use the internet, the better your class scores will be, then I think it's an understandable coping strategy**[2] …*

- *Teachers had better **make the most of the situations in which the internet can find a way through**[3] …*

- *It is the teachers' responsibility **to take advantage of golden moments to practice through online tasks and consider it as a mighty tool to teach**[4] …*

According to the above translated exemplars, by open coding and initial memoing, i.e., the researcher's act of recording reflective notes from the data, some preliminary categories were extracted, i.e. recording reflective notes about what the researcher gained from the data through the collection of written concepts or details on concepts and their relationships. They include teachers' motivation to make a difference in the teaching process while following the traditional rules of writing (utterance 1), teachers' satisfying coping strategy (utterance 2), and teachers' attempt to take advantage of the online "golden moments" (utterances 3, 4). Through axial coding and intermediate memoing, the notion of *Integrative Use of the Internet and Online Pages* was extracted as an etic substantive core category for the above tentative subcategories. This extracted theme might indicate that teachers have the capability to recognize the need for understanding their position of privilege and disadvantage within different contexts in questioning the traditional approaches to teaching and learning the writing skill. In fact, this theme

highlights the importance of placing blended learning pedagogy work at the very core of the writing curriculum, not adding online practices as an extracurricular item. These findings were in line with Farajollahi and Moenikia (2010) and Samar et al. (2015) who highlighted the significance of blended learning.

Moreover, the participants of this study referred to an exceptionally high level of creativity manifested in teachers' online practices, often resulting in greater interaction with the emerging hidden dimensions of reality:

- *I always think about different moments of my teaching; I try **to create opportunities in which I can have the choice of mixing elements** [6] ...*
- *I don't violate the traditional rules of writing instruction; I just **insert my creativity into my teaching practice** [7]; I always **search for online techniques through which I can do what I want** [8] ...*
- *I have had some amazing **experiences mixing my traditional principles with online experience** [10] ...*
- *Sometimes, I don't have much time to think, so I **make use of spontaneous ideas from my students which usually give me a hint to create my online strategy** [11] to deal with the issue; after discovering my strategy in that situation, **I use my traditional experience to organize it in an online style in a few seconds** [12] ...*
- ***I produce a strategy including a mixture of both traditional and online techniques which may tightly be related to each other in the moment of my teaching** [13] ...*

The above translated categories include creating online spaces in which there is choice to manipulate the writing practice (6), inserting creativity (7), searching for online techniques (8), acting creatively to solve problems (9), mixing traditional principles with online experience (10), making use of students' spontaneous ideas to create and organize online strategies (11&12), and mixing and matching techniques contextually (13). Through axial coding and intermediate memoing, the notion of *Recreativity through Online Strategies* was extracted as a theoretical core category for the above tentative subcategories. This extracted

theme indicates that the participants tend to engage rigorously in blended learning recreativity as a facilitative process of learning the writing skill seems to take learners to higher levels of consciousness in learning the writing skill as they become more aware of the hidden dimensions of interrelationships and as they increasingly participate in intuitive creative dimension of writing practice. Their mentions were made of the fact that blended learning recreativity can result in high levels of experience and understanding, helping learners find the most creative solutions to even the most complicated compositional problems in their writing practices. In fact, this theme can be regarded as a self-producing macro learning strategy not in terms of the physical component, but in terms of the writing organization, which can be manifested in learners' information, knowledge, experience, and awareness about the contextual complexity of writing. In other words, learners can create writing spaces within the blended learning restrictions in order to creatively resolute their writing problems through the net while composing at the moment of problem emergence. Therefore, through blended learning recreativity, i.e. creative self-resolution of local writing problems leading to compositional synchronicity of online solutions, learners can gain greater power behind the curtain of the traditional writing.

Furthermore, according to the participants' views, an act of blended learning creation and re-creation of a writing task may be possible if it is assimilated with dialectic interaction with the web:

- *I always consider the reality and **make a connection between their ideas and what we see on the internet** [14] ...*
- ***I make my students interact with one another and through some questions, statements, or so, I make them realize the link between what they're doing online and the use of it inside the class** [15] ...*
- *I always want them to understand that there is **a dynamic connection between the online moments and reality moments** [16]; if I succeed to convey this, **a sort of au-***

tonomy will emerge in their learning process [17] ...

- *Through online collaboration, they can recognize the advantages of the internet while they're practicing writing[18]* ...

The above data include collaboration as virtuality-reality dynamic connection (14 & 16), class-collaboration through question-answer about the online tasks (15), making the students interact with each other and realize the link between what they learn traditionally and what they experience on the internet (15), understanding the fact that online-offline connection may lead to internalization of autonomy in the learning process (17), and the recognition of diverse advantages of online collaboration (18). Accordingly, the notion of *Online Collaborative Interaction* was determined as a core category for the above tentative subcategories. This extracted theme indicates a sort of dialogic interaction through the online tasks which require an intense faith in the cultivation of harmonious, rehearsed, and humanistic relationships between the learner and the online world as a struggle for learners' self-affirmation and the preservation of their web-linked individuality as a safe space for professional writing development.

Additionally, another issue suggested by the participants in this study can be in line with Seaman and Gaines (2013), which focuses on knowledge construction, meaningful application of knowledge, collaborative learning, and facilities like web as a guide (Loyens & Gijbels, 2008):

- *The main point is that my classes are student-centered and learning-centered [19]* ...
- *Most teachers present the main points of the lessons, and then they assign some homework, and that's it. But what I emphasize is that learning must occur in the class as much as possible; that's why, sometimes I don't give the students any homework [20]* ...
- *I learn a lot about my teaching [21]; about the point to be revised; about my errors; I mix my own learning with my students' learning [22]; I give them tangible pieces of my own experience [23]* ...

- *I try to create learning opportunities by exploring the way learners tend to learn [24]* ...
- *Teachers must encourage students' learning by relating the subject to their previous experiences, and helping them solve their problems in learning [25]* ...

The above data involve student-centered and learning-centered classes (19), encouraging in-class learning and excluding homework as much as possible (20), learning teaching (21), collaborative teacher-student learning (22), teachers' sharing of their own experiences (23), creating learning opportunities by exploring the way learners tend to learn (24), and relating the teaching subjects to students' previous experiences as well as problem-solving (25). As a result, the notion of *Integration of Online Strategies* (Seaman & Gaines, 2013) was extracted as a combination of both the etic substantive and theoretical core category for the above tentative subcategories. This extracted theme indicates that learners' motivation to use the online strategies and make sense of what they are composing guided through the web as well as their previous knowledge and experiences can help them overcome barriers to learning the writing skill. The blended classroom actively shifts instruction to a learner-centered style to discuss subjects in greater detail and develop more meaningful and innovative compositions by using educational technology including online videos or blogs to provide the content needed (Herreid & Schiller, 2013). This is also in line with Azevedo and Cromley (2004), Palinscar and Brown (1984), and Butler and Cartier (2005) who referred to higher levels of success as an outcome of the possession of self-regulation.

One of the most crucial macro strategies teachers and learners mentioned has much to do with the day-to-day use of the web and the social-interactional structures of the online world:

- *Teachers must interpret[26]; they must interpret their online experience[27]; they must make students understand their online responses and actions[28]* ...

- *I believe **teachers must be able to show their thoughts and feelings on the web**[29]**; students must tangibly recognize teachers' perceptions about online tasks** [30] ...*
- *For instance, **I must act so particularly that if I become absent, my absence can be felt so easily due to lack of enough interpretation about the online tasks**[31] ...*
- *If we're about to practice writing through the internet, we must first **show that we are a real web user; this can be shown in our actions, words, way of talking, or even the way of addressing the online issues**[32] ...*
- ***My online interaction with my students is different from the way I interact with them in the classroom** [33] ...*

The exemplars above indicate teachers' skill to interpret their online experience, and to make students understand their online responses and actions (26, 27, & 28), teachers' capability to show their thoughts and feelings about the online context, and to make students tangibly recognize their perceptions about online tasks (29 & 30), teachers' attempt to be particular and have significant contribution (31), teachers' attempt to show that they are real web users through their actions, words, way of talking, or even the way of dressing the online issues (32), and teachers' adaptation of their interactions to different online and offline contexts (33). Consequently, the notion of *Online/Offline Interactional Adaptation* was extracted as a core category for the above tentative subcategories.

The notion focuses on the extent of the learner's capability to play the role of particular web-users by taking up certain web-linked interactional formulas in conversations. Several different online languages and genres can make up the writing discourse, often affiliated with particular web-specific characters, philosophies, occupations, and viewpoints. The meanings created in learners' sentences inside their writing tasks, therefore, can be promoted through their web-instigated words, values, or ideologies associated with a specific language and a special recognizable kind of figure explored through the web and guided by the instructor.

For instance, the reference and prediction refer to what the student is writing about and how the student is writing about it. Selecting whom to quote, and in what manner, can reveal the learners' particular types of interaction and interpretation of the web manifested in their writing. In addition, evaluative indexicals, i.e. specific expressions connected with certain social groups, which are used by learners themselves when writing about the topic, or by other people through quotations expressing themselves in specified ways are thought to be characteristics of developing their writing skill. Also, the use of epistemic modalization, i.e. how they appealed to relate to the occurrences and characters in their compositions, can indicate how learners claim to be more or less involved in matters of linguistic accuracy.

Ultimately, another crucial point the participants referred to is the recognition of the need to expand the web-oriented knowledge base and interdisciplinary scope of the writing profession, entailing a specific sense of agency or self-regulation:

- *I simply **look inside of myself** [34] in order to see my **online skills better** [35]; in order to choose my **best-suited skills for online tasks**[36] ...*
- ***I search in myself** [37] to see if it is possible to take advantage of **my own skills related to the use of the internet in order to find any hidden techniques I can use in my classes** [38]; we have **many choices of skills inside of us; we must just recognize them** [39] ...*
- ***Instead of focusing on limitations, let's find our opportunities** [40]; let's discover those intact skills inside of us in line with the use of technology**[41] ...*
- *Actually, the **restrictions in the traditional class are helpful opportunities to discover our creativity potential in using the internet in our instructions**[42] ...*
- ***Sometimes, I go to my classes without any preparation to test myself** [43]; to see if I can manage it; **to see my capabilities in using the web in my classes** [44]; after that, I come back and **think about that situation and try to solve my problems** [45] ...*

The above data include looking inside (34 & 37), recognizing intact skills, hidden techniques, and creativity potentials regarding the use of the web (38, 39, 41), choosing best-suited skills (35 & 36), seeing opportunities instead of limitations (40), changing limitations into opportunities (42), testing the self to see improvisational capabilities (43 & 44), and retrospectively, introspectively, and prospectively thinking about the problematic contexts and trying to solve the problems (45). Accordingly, the notion of *Blended learning Reflection and Exploration* was extracted as a core category for the above tentative subcategories. By means of such a macro strategy inside the blended learning writing processes, learners can either allege agency or decrease their own control over what occurs in their writing practices. Learners should actually be able to re-flect in the midst of taking advantage of the online tasks.

Thinking on the online experience can prompt a careful, critical reflexivity in their writings. It helps the potential of EFL writers changing into contributors rather than just followers in the development of their compositions, and more importantly, in developing their self-regulated writing skills. Accordingly, using the blended learning thinking and interaction can promote the relative exclusiveness of their area of expertise, i.e. the metacognitive and experiential diversity of their writing strategies. Figure 1 and Figure 2 below illustrate the concerned blended learning macro strategies along with their respective micro strategies in the form of a putative framework for the EFL academic writing instruction.
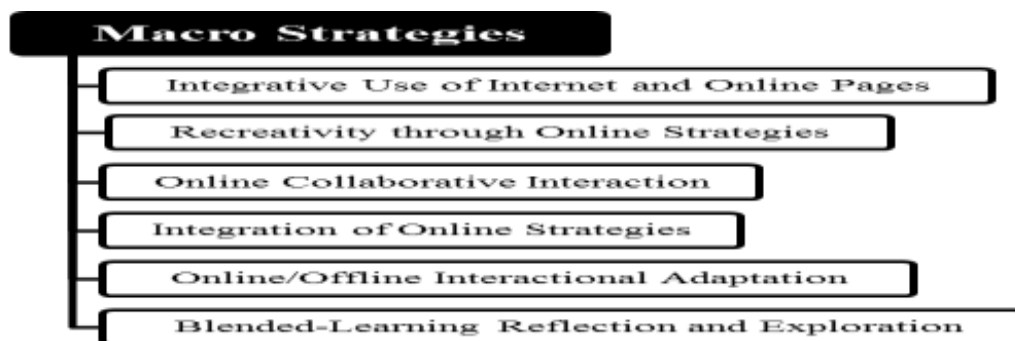

Figure 1
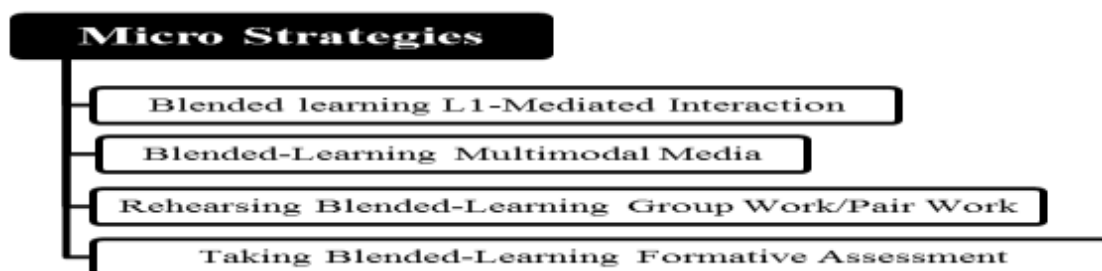*Self-Regulatory Blended Learning Macro-Strategies in Writing*

Figure 2
Self-Regulatory Blended Learning Micro-Strategies in Writing

DISCUSSION

Some EFL/ESL teachers may be paving the way for students to practice language skills and self-regulating behaviors today. Additionally, learners may receive feedback throughout the language learning process, which may inspire them to become more self-directed in their learning. The learning environment is another important factor in boosting learners' ability to self-regulate their learning. The importance of environment in learners' self-regulated learning, according to Zimmerman (2002), demonstrates that environmental factors influence bidirectional interactions with learners' personal and

behavioral characteristics. Learners' self-regulation develops and adapts in a cyclical manner as a result of their interaction with the environment. As a result, the environment can be efficiently used to improve student self-regulated performance.

The findings of this study were consistent with those of several other studies in this field. Graham, Harris, and Adkin (2015), for example, looked into the use of a self-regulatory strategy in story writing, and found that the strategy had a significant impact on the skill. Bakry and Alsamadani (2014) investigated the impact of self-regulatory strategies on writing persuasive articles. They said the technique worked well for writing persuasive essays, with the most predictable abilities to improve being idea generation, sentence construction, paragraph writing, organization, and vocabulary. Samanian and Roohani (2018) looked at the impact of self-regulatory strategy development on students' descriptive writing and reflective thinking, and came to the same conclusion. Some more recent studies in the same area have also found that self-regulatory strategy has an impact on writing ability. For example, Hashey, Miller, and Foxworth (2020) looked into the impact of self-regulated strategy development on writing ability and concluded that it is a valuable resource for all writers in today's classrooms. Mitchell, McMillan, and Rabbani (2019) looked into writing self-efficacy and self-regulatory behaviors in undergraduate writings of nursing students. However, their findings revealed that self-regulatory behaviors played a significant influence in their writing.

A self-regulatory technique can serve as a blueprint and projection for EFL students who want to improve their writing skills. It makes it easier for them to proceed through the processes of discursive writing. In other words, it ensures that they don't overlook or forget the steps. Furthermore, this self-regulatory technique benefits teachers by allowing them to organize their classes in a more learner-centered manner, as learners' wants and requirements are the class's goals, and the focus is on making them responsible and enthusiastic in their writing abilities. As a result, students become more autonomous, accountable,

and independent as they progress through the course. Furthermore, the findings of this study back up Bandura's (1986) concept of agency, which states that while students try to be agents, they are cognizant of the process they are going through and can control and change it. Yun (2008) also stated that reflecting on our work enhances learners' metacognition knowledge of what they're doing at each level. As a result, a self-regulatory strategy can help pupils think more critically.

CONCLUSION

Blended learning can be conceived as an essential factor in improving the ability to write and therefore, in self-regulating learning. Depending on the outcomes, most EFL teachers will be able to identify potential spaces in their teaching practices through their mediation of blended learning methods to incorporate their writing instruction. EFL teachers shift their roles from traditional writing instructors to blended learning self-regulators of the writing skill. Through such a role, the construction of self-regulated writing behavior may become possible as teachers' teaching strategies are altered towards a more autonomous learning environment. The model indicates the very concept of constructing learners' writing behavior as an independent and autonomous enterprise Mediated through blended learning opportunities and self-regulatory responsibilities.

Because of the complicated nature of human behavior, most of the studies suffer from a range of limitations which can affect the interpretation of the results of the study. This study is not an exception. Studies investigating self-regulation deal with a complex human characteristic, and hence, the data gathered might suffer from some degree of pollution due to its dealing with a personal construct. Two of the potential sources of criticisms are related to the generalizability of such research and the intrusion of subjectivity.

In order to clarify the long-term effects of strategy use for different language skills for EFL learners, several additional studies need to be carried out. Teachers should be aware that the failures of students may not be due to their lack of understanding, but their inappropriate use of strategy and encourage them to

be aware of their potential which will give them more beliefs and encouragement for self-efficacy, resulting in greater academic achievements. By promoting self-regulation, promoting target setting and scaffolding, teachers should integrate writing technique instruction into their classes (Hammann, 2005; Wang, Quach, & Rolston, 2009). To help them constantly adapt and strengthen these newly learned techniques for their own further studies, instructors need to track the strategy use and activities of students regularly. Finally, analytical activities of teachers concentrating on challenges encountered by learners when processing new language skills can be helpful in seeking solutions to change their own teaching techniques.

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