An Investigation into the English Language Writing Strategies Used by Polish EFL Secondary School Learners

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An Investigation into the English Language Writing Strategies
Used by Polish EFL Secondary School Learners

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Author's Declarations

This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the MA TESOL & Applied Linguistics.

I confirm that this dissertation is all my own work, signed

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<tr>
<td>EFL</td>
<td>English as a Foreign Language</td>
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<td>ESL</td>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
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<td>LLSs</td>
<td>Language Learning Strategies</td>
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<td>First Language</td>
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<td>Second Language</td>
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<td>Strategic Self-Regulation</td>
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<td>UCLES</td>
<td>University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate</td>
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<tr>
<td>TESOL</td>
<td>Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages</td>
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Abstract

The study aimed to investigate the English language writing strategies used by Polish secondary school students. There were two major areas of concern which were hoped to be addressed in the course of the research. The first one was to establish whether those students were prepared to take their national school leaving exam in English which included the written composition part. The second concern was to determine whether those students were equipped with the strategic knowledge of how to write texts in a foreign language.

The study applied a mixed method approach; it combined the quantitative analysis of the Likert scale statements in the writing strategy questionnaires and the students' writing samples with the qualitative analysis of the open ended questions in the questionnaires and the semi-structured interviews. The objective of the quantitative approach was to test the hypothesis that good language learners used a variety of writing strategies (Cook, 2008; Ellis, 2012; Griffiths, 2008). The objective of the qualitative approach was to generate hypotheses using the grounded theory as guidance. It was hoped that the collected qualitative data would provide an in-depth insight into the nature of the L2 writing and thus, would enable the formulation of new hypotheses.

The quantitative analysis confirmed the hypothesis that good language learners used various writing strategies but this finding was not statistically significant. The qualitative analysis rendered two new hypotheses:

Hypothesis I: Students were generally not aware of the compositional aspect of the L2 writing; instead they tended to consider their level of the English language grammatical and lexical competence as predicative of their English writing ability.

Hypothesis II: Peer collaboration in writing in English was not frequently utilised in the classroom practice.

These two hypotheses seemed to provide an explanation why students in the studied sample struggled with their English writing; they lacked the understanding of the compositional aspect of the English writing and they did not view their English written text as a means of communication. Therefore, the implications of the research were as follows: to raise the students' awareness of the English writing compositional skills, to emphasise the communicative purpose of writing in English and to train them to use the peer collaboration strategy to facilitate their English writing most effectively.
Chapter I: Introduction

This dissertation aims to investigate the English language strategies used Polish secondary school students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The major objective is to establish whether those students are able to take control of their own writing in English. This chapter provides a brief account of the research context; it describes the theoretical basis of the research and presents the research questions and the research hypothesis. It also explains the significance of the study in the field of English language teaching and learning and informs the reader of the organisation of the dissertation.

1.1 Research Context

The research was administered in three classes in one secondary school and in one private after school institution for secondary school students in Poland in May 2014. There were 102 respondents to the writing strategy questionnaire and seven interviewees. Secondary school education in the Polish educational system lasts three years. The students in the research sample were either in their first or second year of study. Due to the time restrictions it was not possible to gain access to the third year students; those students were on a preparation course for the school leaving exam and there were no time slots available for any extra-curriculum activities in their syllabuses.

1.2 Theoretical Background and Research Aims

The present study has been informed by the current language learning methodology (Cook, 2008; Ellis, 2012; Griffiths, 2008), which stresses the autonomy of learners who are viewed as agents of their own learning process. The research findings will be analysed in the light of this theory in order to gain insight from the Polish secondary school context.

As Oxford argues, "Learners need to learn how to learn, and teachers need to learn how to facilitate the process. Although learning is certainly part of the human condition, conscious skill in self-directed learning and in strategy use must be sharpened through training" (1990: 201), I assume the issue of fostering both the independent as well as the collaborative learning in the language classroom should become an important aspect of the language teaching pedagogy. Consequently, this research has the following aims:

- to establish whether Polish EFL secondary school learners are aware of their English language writing strategies,
to find out whether they feel confident in their usage of those strategies or whether they require additional help to develop them,

- to discover what the learners' choices of English writing strategies are based on,
- and to investigate whether there exists a relationship between the learners' perceptions of their English writing strategies and their English writing performance.

1.3 Research Hypothesis and Research Questions

The above hypothesis of good language learners (see 1.2 Theoretical Background and Research Aims) assumes that competent L2 writers use a variety of the L2 writing strategies and that they are able to take charge of their L2 writing process. Consequently, the current research has been designed to test that hypothesis in the Polish secondary school context in the field of English writing.

In order to fulfil its objective, the study will aim to answer the following research questions:

- What are the English writing strategies used by Polish EFL secondary school learners?
- Why do they use those strategies?
- Is there any relationship between students' writing strategies and their writing performance?

1.4 Significance of the Research

The participants in this research are the first and the second year secondary school students who will be taking the national exam in English at the end of their third year of study. My intention is to explore their opinions and beliefs with regard to their English language writing strategies and also to relate these variables to the students' writing performance.

Consequently, in the course of this research, I hope to identify the aspects of English writing which those students struggle with. The implications of the research could be the change in the approach to the teaching and learning of English writing in Polish secondary schools and the design of new teaching syllabuses which would focus on the strategic teaching of English writing in the future.

1.5 Organisation of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organised into six chapters: Chapter I introduces the research topic and the research design; Chapter II presents an overview of the literature in the field of the language learning strategies, the L2 writing and the L2 writing strategies, it also includes the
explanation of the theoretical background of the current research; Chapter III describes the context of the research, the research tools and accounts for the research validity and reliability; Chapter IV deals with the analysis of the research data, Chapter V provides the summary of the findings and their interpretations, it states the implications of the findings for the teaching and learning of English writing in the Polish secondary school context and it also includes the limitations of the study; Chapter VI consists of a summary of the research, it emphasises the theoretical and practical applications of the research findings in the English teaching methodology and the classroom practice with regard to writing in English and it concludes with the suggestions for the future research directions in the field.
Chapter II: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

From my personal experience, both as an EFL learner and an EFL teacher, I find the development of the learners' English writing competence to be a challenging task to achieve. It necessitates the strategic teaching instruction which is sensitive to the culture-specific schemata (Myles, 2002) and the learners' linguistic proficiency (Cumming, 2001). It also carries a high cognitive demand on the part of a learner (Richards and Renandya, 2002).

In this literature review, I will present the previous studies which have influenced the current research and the theoretical framework which has provided the ramification for the analysis of the research findings. I will then provide a general overview of the LLSs phenomenon and I will discuss the nature of the L2 writing in detail by drawing on the product, process and post-process approaches. I will conclude with a description of the current status of the L2 writing strategies in the teaching instruction. My focus will be on what has been discovered in this field so far and how this knowledge can be applied in practice to facilitate the L2 writing teaching and learning.

2.2 The previous research in the L2 writing strategies

The present study is informed by the research in the L2 writing field (e.g., Skibiniewski and Skibiniewska, 1986; Kasper, 1997; Sengupta, 2000; Wolfersberger, 2003; Ferris et al, 2013) which show a positive correlation between the students' strategic awareness and their writing performance. These studies provided valuable insights into components of the writing process but they did not address the L2 writing from a comprehensive global perspective, instead they focused on individual aspects of the L2 writing process: for example, Skibiniewski and Skibiniewska (1986) in an experimental study established that better compositions were produced by Polish EFL learners who were aware of their writing process and their writing goals. Kasper (1997) looked into the metacognition and its impact on the writing proficiency among ESL college students of diverse national backgrounds in the US. He confirmed that the development of metacognition was positively correlated with the higher level of writing proficiency; he also found that the strategic knowledge was an attribute of the successful learners and those learners understood that the objective of writing was communication and not just the grammatical accuracy. Sengupta (2000) conducted an
experimental research which showed a positive impact of strategic revision instructions on the
development of composition skills of secondary school students in Hong Kong.
Wolfersberger (2003) studied the L1 to L2 writing strategy transfer and how this process
varied between high and low proficiency Japanese college students in the US. He established
that when the task difficulty was too high for the lower proficiency students they did not
transfer their L1 writing strategies to the L2 writing. Therefore, he postulated that the training
in compensation strategies was essential to teach students how to overcome the language
barrier imposed by the task difficulty. Ferris et al. (2013) in a case study examined how
feedback impacts on the development of the English writing skills among international
students at one of the US universities. They found that overall, feedback had a positive effect
on the quality of compositions in the research sample, however, the question regarding how
explicit the feedback should be, remained unanswered as both the explicit and the less explicit
feedback rendered similar contributions to the improvement of the students' writing.

In fact, the researchers view writing strategies as tools which enable learners to take
control of their writing process, which in turn leads to an increase of learners' confidence as
independent writers. This approach will be adopted in the current research with an aim to
investigate whether the above correlation applies to the Polish EFL secondary school context.
The study will also aim to fill the gap in the L2 writing research by providing a holistic
description of the relationship between students' writing strategies and their writing
performance in a culture-specific context. No previous research on English writing strategies
of Polish secondary school students has been conducted. In the Polish context, the studies on
L2 writing focused mostly on university level students and academia (Skibiniewski and
Skibiniewska, 1986; Duszak, 2006; Lehman, 2013). In addition, only Skibiniewski and
Skibiniewska are concerned with writing strategies whereas the field of interest of Duszak and
Lehman is contrastive rhetoric: they compare the Anglo-American and Polish rhetoric styles.

2.3 Sociocultural theory, social-cognitive model and self-regulated learning

The theoretical framework for this research is Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of cognitive
(S2R) Model of L2 learning, which is a continuation of Vygotsky's model of 'dialogic, self-
regulated learning' (ibid.: 28) and Zimmerman's (1990) social-cognitive model of self-
regulated learning. These three models conceptualise learning characteristics of those
language learners who are actively involved in and responsible for their own learning. This
framework is consistent with the current language learning methodology (Cook, 2008; Ellis, 2012; Griffiths, 2008), which stresses the autonomy of learners who are viewed as agents of their own learning process. Vygotsky's theory introduces the concept of learning situated in the socio-cultural context. It views learning as a socially mediated process which enables a learner to make a steady progress with the help of a more competent individual. From this perspective, cognitive development is associated with "gaining symbolically mediated control over, or regulation of, strategic mental processes" (Lantolf and Appel, op. cit.: 11), which leads to self-regulation. However, it has been stressed that the achievement of the self-regulation is "a relative phenomenon" (ibid.: 12) and it differs between individuals. What it means is that, for example, one student can achieve self-regulation in one type of tasks but not in another and also there can be differences between individual students in their self-regulation; one student can be self-regulated in different types of tasks than another student. In the current research, the relativity of self-regulation has been the factor which has necessitated the application of the qualitative approach to supplement the quantitative findings. The qualitative methodology consisted of the qualitative research tools: open ended questions in the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews and the qualitative analysis of the collected through these tools data. The grounded theory principles were used in the analysis and the aim was to understand the subjective nature of the L2 writing and to find the patterns which could provide some explanation on this phenomenon. Another aspect of the self-regulation in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory is the fact that the cognitive development of an individual takes place in the zones of proximal development through the dialogic scaffolding interactions with a more competent individual (ibid.) and since these interactions are part of the social and cultural context, the cognitive development is shaped by the same context. As Lantolf and Appel argue; "self-regulatory function has a social cast to it; this is because the origin of the strategic function, which it mirrors, is ultimately social" (ibid.: 13). Therefore, in the present research, the social and cultural context of EFL teaching and learning will be carefully studied on the basis of Polish secondary school students in order to establish how it affects the L2 writing development in this sample.

Oxford's model is a more complex structure, which deals with a whole spectrum of factors of the multifaceted nature of strategic learning and introduces the new concept of meta-affective and meta-socio-interactive strategies (Oxford, op. cit.: 40), thus emphasising the importance of learners' awareness of their own learning and the learning environment. The model consists of six strategy groups: metacognitive, meta-affective, meta-sociocultural-
interactive, cognitive, affective and sociocultural-interactive and it is an elaboration of the earlier taxonomy of LLSs by Oxford in 1990 (see Appendix 1). Oxford comments on the strategies in the S^2R Model as follows: "In a nutshell, these strategies involve various types of consciousness, facilitate learning, involve the whole learner rather than just the cognitive side, and are used flexibly" (ibid.: 13). She also elaborates further that these strategies "respond to changing needs of the learner for varying purposes in different sociocultural contexts" (ibid.: 19) and they have to be highly dynamic in their nature in order to fulfil the two fundamental assumptions of the S^2R Model, which are as follows:

"(a) Almost everyone can learn an additional language effectively by employing appropriate strategies, assuming some basic interest in learning the language and sufficient time.  
(b) Strategies can be learned through mediation or assistance (ibid.: 27)".

Zimmerman's model (op. cit.) underlines that the learner's willingness to use a learning strategy is based on its perceived effectiveness. The effectiveness is measured against the past achievement of the learner's goals. Zimmerman also emphasises that the self-regulated perspective has become the basis of the modern language teaching and learning methodologies which view learners as agents of their own learning; he argues that: "This perspective shifts the focus of educational analyses from students' learning ability and environments as 'fixed' entities to their personally initiated processes and responses designed to improve their ability and their environments for learning" (ibid.: 4). He lists the following characteristics of self-regulated learners: "metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally active", "self-aware, knowledgeable, and decisive" (ibid.: 4-5). He also highlights the fact that these learners use their strategies in a systematic way and they are in control of this process; he points out that:

"Undoubtedly, all learners use regulatory processes to some degree, but self-regulated learners are distinguished by (a) their awareness of strategic relations between regulatory processes or responses and learning outcomes and (b) their use of these strategies to achieve their academic goals (ibid.: 5)".

Other features of self-regulation which Zimmerman mentions include: the interdependency of motivation and learning and the cyclic nature of the "self-oriented feedback" (ibid.: 6). It means that learners have to set themselves certain goals which they want to achieve in a course of learning, then they have to monitor how effective their current strategies are in the
achievement of these goals and adjust or change them if they do not fulfil their roles effectively.

2.4 What are language learning strategies (LLSs)?

In order to define LLSs, Oxford (1990: 7) refers to the epistemology of the word strategia, which comes from the ancient Greek where it meant 'generalship or the art of war' and it involved 'planning, competition, conscious manipulation, and movement toward a goal'. In the course of time, strategia has been used in wider contexts and eventually lost its connotations with the military settings. As Oxford argues; "the strategy concept has been applied to clearly non-adversarial situations, where it has come to mean a plan, step, or conscious action toward achievement of an objective" (ibid.: 7-8). It has also become widely applied in educational settings where it has formed a popular fixed collocation, namely learning strategies (ibid.). There are various definitions of learning strategies, the one used in this research will be adopted from Oxford (2011: 12) who describes them as actions for learning which are under a learner's 'deliberate control'.

Oxford (1990) provides a comprehensive account of LLSs. I found particularly interesting her argument that although learning strategies are used by students to become more proficient learners, it is the teacher's role to facilitate the process by helping students use the strategies most effectively (ibid.: ix). I would argue that the instruction in language learning strategies should be included in teaching syllabuses and it should become an important part of classroom pedagogy. Furthermore, learner self-direction cannot be fully developed without an operational strategic tool set. Oxford also points out that LLSs are compatible with the process approach to language learning, which has replaced the product approach (ibid.: 5). The process orientation stems from the general systems theory which views all phenomena as dynamic by nature (ibid.). Researchers and educators who have adopted this approach are not merely interested in the outcome of learning, which was characteristic of the product approach, instead they aim to uncover how students learn and what factors influence the process of language learning. At the same time, this approach has been criticised (Cumming, 2001) for its purely cognitive perspective. Currently, the post-process approach is preferred in qualitative studies due to its multi-dimensional framework of analysis which takes into account social and cultural factors of learning and Oxford adopts this approach in her most recent review of issues in the field of LLSs research (Oxford, 2012). For the purpose of the present research, the post-process approach seems to offer sound
theoretical ramifications which should enable an in-depth analysis of learners' L2 writing strategies. Most importantly, this framework looks into context specific factors which influence learners' strategic choices.

Oxford (1990: 17) also provided a taxonomy of LLSs, which has been frequently applied by researchers and educators in the field (see Appendix 1). She divided LLSs into two main groups, each with a three-fold subscale: direct strategies (memory, cognitive, compensation) and indirect strategies (metacognitive, affective, and social). Direct strategies are those which relate to the actual language performance whereas the indirect strategies are concerned with the organisation and planning of learning. The focus of present study will be oriented towards the indirect strategies since these are viewed as higher level strategies whose development should lead to self-directed learning.

Woodrow aimed to establish which research instruments are most effective in measuring LLSs. Her study also emphasised a difficulty in the taxonomy of LLSs. The taxonomies of Oxford (1990) and Schmidt and Watanabe (2001) were considered but the researcher decided to adopt her own three-factor model, which divided LLSs into cognitive, metacognitive and social (Woodrow, 2005: 92). This came as a consequence of the pilot study which collected the data where variables fitted neither Oxford's six factor model (memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies) nor Schmidt and Watanabe's four-factor model (study skills, cognitive, social, and coping strategies). Woodrow has also found that Oxford's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) has high overall reliability, which however does not transfer to its individual components. What it means is that Oxford's taxonomy of SLLs is not supported empirically by SILL. In the current study, I also opted for the three-factor model of LLSs.

Woodrow's research has proved beneficial in establishing the methodological approach of the present study as well. She argues that Likert scale questionnaires which are used in SILL are not sufficient enough to account for learners' strategy choices and she emphasises the need for more qualitative researches in the field of LLSs. I support this standpoint and the present research will not rely solely on quantitative instruments - closed-ended Likert scale questions in questionnaires and writing samples - but it will also use qualitative data collection tools: open ended questions in questionnaires and semi-structured interviews (for more details see Chapter Three: Research Methodology). It is hoped that such approach will provide a comprehensive and context-sensitive account of the nature of LLSs.
By the inclusion of the context-sensitive dimension, I mean investigating the impact of culture on LLSSs; I will analyse the qualitative data from the open ended questions in the questionnaires and the interviews in order to establish whether there exists patterns which would confirm the impact of Polish culture on the studied sample with regard to students’ strategy choices.

2.5 Second language (L2) writing

Writing is a time when students produce their own texts which are based on their previously acquired skills and knowledge (Davidson, 2007: 11). The study of L2 writing in TESOL has its origin in the studies of first language (L1) writing (Hyland, 2003: 11); however the complexity of L2 writing goes far beyond the L1 territory. Kroll describes the domain of L2 writing as follows: "Second language writing is uniquely characterizable speciality area that has ties to but does not completely overlap with the fields of first language writing instruction, second language acquisition, or second language pedagogy" (Kroll, 2003: 11).

In order to understand the nature of L2 writing, it seems worthwhile to provide a brief account of approaches which have dominated the teaching of L2 writing over the past decades, and which are still applied in classroom methodologies nowadays. Raimes (1991) presents a comprehensive historical account of four major approaches to L2 writing instruction in TESOL. These are, in chronological order of their development: focus on form, focus on the writer, focus on content and focus on the reader. Focus on form is also known in the literature as the product approach (Hyland, op. cit.) and it emerged as the dominant approach to writing instruction in the 1960s, the time when the Audiolingual Method was the major mode of instruction in foreign language teaching. In this approach writing functioned as a subsidiary skill whose aim was to reinforce linguistic structures which were required to develop the speaking ability of learners. As Raimes argues; "writing took the form of sentence drills - fill-ins, substitutions, transformations, and completions. The content was supplied" (ibid.: 408). The focus was on accuracy and the knowledge of grammatical rules. The product approach was concerned with the final written product which became the major object of research in L2 writing at that time. This approach also provided foundations for the development of the contrastive rhetoric which considers paragraph and text structures as culture-specific constructs, and which will be examined in the present research in more detail. The contrastive rhetoric will be used in addition to the above mentioned post-process approach in order to provide a comprehensive holistic account of L2 writing strategies. The
post-process approach will be applied to investigate the dynamics of L2 writing from the learner's perspective whereas the contrastive rhetoric will be used to establish whether students are equipped with the L2 writing strategies which are focused on producing texts which are sensitive to the target culture writing convention.

The product approach became the target of criticism in the 1970s when researchers and educators embraced the cognitivist philosophy and shifted their attention from the product to the writer. This new approach became known as the process approach, it stemmed from the developments in L1 writing and it aimed to explain writing on the basis of mental processes which the writer engages in when creating meaningful messages. As Raimes points out; "In place of "accuracy" and "patterns" came "process," "making meaning," "invention," and "multiple drafts" (ibid.: 409). The content took priority over the form and the writer's cognitive activities were closely analysed: from generating ideas, through execution of writing to revising, receiving the feedback and acting on it. However, Raimes (ibid.: 410) argues that this approach with its revolutionary practices, which included allowing time for students to choose their own topics and exploring ideas, providing constructive meaning oriented feedback, using communicative tasks (e.g. writing journals or diaries) and providing opportunities for peer collaboration proved quite demanding to implement in the teaching instruction, and consequently - some teachers reverted to the product approach. Another limitation of the process approach was pointed out to be the lack of clear assessment procedures. This can be attributed to the nature of the cognitive processes which are in the state of flux and they do not render themselves to direct examination easily. Therefore, for the assessment purposes the product approach with its marking of the final composition provides the most feasible solution. This is also the method used by major foreign language examination boards like UCLES, London Trinity College and TOEFL.

In the second half of the 1980s two new approaches, also known as post-process approaches, emerged on the L2 writing scene. These were the focus on content and the focus on the reader. The former one will not be dealt with in the present study as it relates mostly to the university context where students study a content course in the foreign language. The latter approach, on the other hand, will be used as the theoretical framework for the analysis of the research findings, which was mentioned above. Its significance rests in the focus on the "socialization into the academic community" (Horowitz, 1986 cited in Raimes, ibid.: 412), which closely relates to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. It also refers to the domain of
contrastive rhetoric for the account of culture specific writing conventions whose acquisition is the goal of socialisation.

Over the last two decades it has been noticed that the development of students’ writing skills has been by large neglected in educational curricula (Leki, 2001) and students do not seem to have a strong motivation to engage in writing tasks (Elliott, 1999). In Elliott's research, 60 students of English at Lisbon University were surveyed in order to establish the reasons behind their reluctance towards L2 writing. They were asked to comment on how they feel when they are asked to write a composition, what their perception of written homework is, what they find difficult about writing, how this situation could be improved and what they consider to be the most effective form of feedback. They were also asked to rank the four language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) in order of importance. I found Elliott's approach particularly relevant to my research. It aimed to discover 'trends and not statistics' (ibid.: 59), it took into account psychological aspects of writing and it set to examine whether students are aware of components which constitute the writing process. The planning, execution and revision stages of writing were each given separate attention. The study found that students generally consider all the language skills as equally important with a slight tendency to view speaking as a higher priority skill among older students. The researcher attributed this finding to the fact that students seemed to find it relatively easy to control their reading and writing skills as far as mistake elimination was concerned but they still struggled with a mistake-free oral production. Interestingly, it was also established that overall students tend to be enthusiastic towards writing. However, when this finding was probed further it was discovered that there is a significant difference between students’ initial interest in beginning the writing task and its actual execution. The obstacles which students identified in the process included the choice of topics, the time factor and the difficulty in planning the task and organising ideas. As far as feedback was concerned, in general students expressed a wish to have all of their mistakes corrected. They claimed that they analysed their mistakes and they also learned from teachers’ comments. They also considered written homework as an important aspect of learning L2. These positive findings of the research were set against an alarming finding that only one student in the research sample was aware that writing is not an isolated activity but instead, it is interactive by nature, which means that every writing task should be conducted with the reader in mind. This links to another research finding that even though students were generally in favour of peer collaboration, they mostly used this technique only to generate ideas and the remaining writing process was conducted
individually. Other findings of the research included the significance of the teacher's role in stimulating students' interest in writing and the fact that the teaching of writing in order to produce the best results should take a form of facilitation. The researcher concluded that motivation for writing comes from the enjoyment of the process and it is very much a personal matter which requires a careful handling in order to be encouraged and not hindered in the classroom context. I find this perspective worth further investigation and in my research I will follow Elliott's approach in order to obtain an insight from Polish learners about their views on the affective and social nature of L2 writing.

2.6 L2 writing strategies

The theoretical framework applied in this research consists of sociocultural theory, Zimmerman's social-cognitive model and self-regulated learning. This framework requires focusing the analysis of L2 writing strategies on the examination of the impact of the teacher and other learners on the strategy development. Davidson (op.cit.) argues that the role of the teacher is crucial and it takes the form of guided instructions and modelled writing whereas peer interaction is another form of scaffolding in the writing process (ibid.: 11-12). This approach contrasts with a view of writing as an individual cognitive activity, which became the basis of cognitive writing process theory in Hayes and Flower model (1980). I assume that a purely cognitive approach due to its lack of the social dimension is not sufficient to explain the development of L2 writing strategies. Taking into account that teaching and learning are socially situated phenomena, the social dimension of L2 writing strategies - undoubtedly deserves research attention. In the present study both social and cultural factors will be given a careful consideration.

Writing involves activating a complex set of resources. These include content knowledge, linguistic knowledge (vocabulary, grammar and text structure) and strategic understanding (provision of relevant information). Students who are aware of their own learning process and what makes it effective learn more (Oxford 1990, 1997, 2011; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). Crinon and Marin (2010) emphasise the role of peer collaboration in the deductive reasoning and their research findings revealed that peer collaboration resulted in an increase of students' strategic understanding and an overall development of their writing strategies. This was manifested in more coherent texts being produced by those students who developed their awareness of the reader and who aimed to ensure that the intended message is communicated to the reader. The researchers also established that students who took the role
of writing mentors progressed more than the mentees, which seems to suggest that activating
the reader's cognition processes is conducive to the development of students' better
argumentative and organisational skills. These skills being transferable are then available for
an application in writing tasks. Taking the role of writing mentors has also another advantage. It
provides students with an opportunity to experience the communicative outcome of writing,
which helps to create a cognitive link between reading and writing processes and intertwines
these two together in students' minds. In this research, I will follow an insight gained from the
above findings and I will aim to establish whether in the studied sample, the students' usage of
peer collaboration as their writing strategy could be the factor which contributes to the
coherence and clarity of the message in the students' texts.

Another important aspect of studies in L2 writing strategies relates to a degree of
similarity between composing processes in L1 and L2. Silva (1993) examined the research on
L1 and L2 writing in order to find out the differences between these two processes. His study
was a reaction against the dominant tendency at that time to teach L2 writing using the
methodology borrowed from teaching L1 writing which stemmed from the focus of
researchers and educators on recursivity of the writing process. It was pointed out that writing in
any language follows the same stages (planning, transcribing and reviewing) and adhering to
this pattern would be the most effective method to teach writing. Silva argued that such
approach would be reductionist since L1 and L2 writing processes vary significantly at
morphosyntactic, lexicosyntactic and text levels, which needs to be taken into account for the
benefit of L2 learners. His impact on the development of L2 writing strategy instruction was
crucial as he pointed out to the need for teachers to adjust the available writing strategies to
the 'L2 students' rhetorical and linguistic resources' (ibid.: 671).

The other issue is the culture-specific rhetoric and how it impacts L2 writing and L2
writing strategies. Lehman (2013) compares the rhetoric patterns of Polish and Anglo-
American academic writing within the framework of discourse analysis and Kaplan's (1966)
research on culturally bound paragraph structures across languages. She comments on
Kaplan's contribution to the studies in contrastive rhetoric as follows:

"Kaplan, by attributing logic to culture, argued that neither logic nor
rhetoric is universal but unique in each culture, at a specific moment of its
development. His studies focused on the paragraph as a unit of text and
thought and demonstrated that a good command of sentence level features
of a language does not automatically translate into a command of
discourse level features involved in constructing a text" (Lehman, ibid.: 72).

Lehman also refers to Hinds' 1987 'division of languages into writer- and reader- responsible' (ibid.: 73). In this tradition English, has a Saxon style which is characterised by a clear argumentative structure, narrowed down and focused topic presentation, directness and explicitness and therefore is considered to be a reader-friendly language. Polish, on the other hand, has a Teutonic style which is digressive, wordy and focused on the writer's journey of self-discovery of topic-related ideas, which makes it cognitively challenging for the reader. I assume Polish EFL learners would benefit from becoming aware of this distinction and the study of authentic English texts should prove helpful to familiarise them with the English rhetoric style.

For a comprehensive overview of writing strategies I have consulted CELT's Writing Guide. It provides guidelines on a range of strategic behaviours and processes which can be applied by learners in their preparation, execution and revision of writing tasks. I have also used the taxonomy of writing strategies according to the stages of the writing process (planning, execution and revision) in the present research which alongside the above mentioned four-factor model (cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies) will be used in the present research for the purpose of the data analysis.

2.7 Conclusion

Despite a substantial body of research into L2 writing strategies, the issue of how strategy instruction can be introduced most effectively into the classroom practice remains unresolved. This research will ask for students' opinion in this respect and will also gain an insight from the student's writing samples to establish the general level of students' writing competence. The quantitative part of this research will endeavour to investigate the correlation between the variety of writing strategies and the writing performance by using the statistical tools. The qualitative part will use the grounded theory approach and it will analyse the collected data in order to establish the patterns in the findings and form the ramifications for new theory which will address L2 writing strategies and L2 writing competence in Polish EFL secondary school context from a comprehensive global perspective. As for the implications of this research, the aim is to help Polish EFL students in the development of their writing skills. The L2 writing strategies have been viewed by researches as tools enabling learners to take control of their writing process (Oxford 1990, 1997, 2011; O'Malley
and Chamot, 1990; Paradowski, 2007), which in turn should lead to an increase in learners' self-efficacy as L2 writers. The question arises though, what types of writing strategies constitute a pre-requisite for the development of competent L2 writers, which I assume deserves research attention and the present study will aim to address this issue in the Polish EFL secondary school context. It should also be emphasised that this research has been designed with a long-term goal in mind of devising the strategic writing curriculum for Polish EFL secondary school students in order to help them face challenges of the English writing in the higher education, both in Poland and abroad.
Chapter III: Method of the Study

3.1 Introduction

The popularity of English as a school subject in Poland is high. As Duszak (2006: 43) points out, "In universities and colleges, English ranks high among the most popular fields of study". Thanks to the Erasmus Programme, Polish students can also study for part of their degree course at one of the UK universities. Since writing skill is considered to be 'a predicator of academic success' (Graham and Perin, 2007:3), it seems worth investigating how Polish students prepare themselves for the written composition part of the exam, what is their general English writing ability and whether they are equipped with the strategic mechanisms to control the written task. Therefore, this research has aimed to gain an insight into what English writing strategies are used by Polish EFL secondary school students and what are the students' reasons for their strategy choices. The ultimate aim has been to establish whether there exists any relationship between students' English writing strategies and their writing performance. The definition of learning strategies in this research has been adopted from Oxford (2011: 12) who describes them as actions which are under learner's 'deliberate control'. To conceptualise components of L2 writing process, Matsuda's (1997) dynamic model of L2 writing has been referred to.

3.2 Research Context

This research examined English writing strategies in the Polish secondary school context. The participants were the first and the second year secondary school students in Kielce, Poland. Those students were aged between 16 and 17 and English was their compulsory subject. They were preparing for the national school-leaving exam in both spoken and written English which was to take place at the end of their third year of study. The marks students would achieve on this exam play an important role in the selection processes at the higher education institutions. In the Polish educational system it is assumed that at this stage students are independent enough to be aware of their responsibility for their own learning progress. Therefore, they are expected to make their own informed decisions related to their choice of a field of study which they would like to pursue at the academic level, as well as to the choice of a higher education institution where they would like to get admission. It is also presumed
that students have developed strategies for independent learning, which is an essential requirement for their progression to the academic level.

The theoretical framework outlined by Vygotsky, Zimmerman and Oxford, as well as the teaching methodology which stemmed from these theories emphasised the active role of learners in the learning process. This framework constituted the foundations for this research and from such perspective it seemed vital to enquire students about their perceptions on writing strategies, that is, how effective these strategies were and how confident they felt in their application of these strategies. I decided to address these issues from a mixed method approach: to compare the quantitative findings with a holistic and in-depth analysis of individual cases. For my data collection tools I chose questionnaires for the learners (a combination of the Likert scale and open-ended questions), learners' writing samples and interviews with the learners. I aimed at 100 responses for the questionnaires and writing samples and at 10 interviews. In order to obtain access to conduct my research in May 2014, in September 2013 I approached in person headteachers in two schools in Kielce, Poland, to familiarise them with my study and to make the necessary arrangements for the timings, places and the implementation procedures for the data collection tools. One institution was a secondary school; the other was a college for secondary school students, which offers EFL courses to enhance students English language skills. I obtained the permission from the headteachers of these schools to carry out my research. I also submitted the Research Ethics form (see Appendix 2) to the Research Ethics Committee at the London Metropolitan University and obtained their approval.

3.3 Research Tools

As mentioned above, the present research was conducted using the mixed method approach. It used questionnaires, writing samples and interviews as its data collection tools. The quantitative method of the research was implemented as follows: participants were asked to fill in the questionnaires about their L2 writing strategies, and then they were asked to write short paragraphs on the topics specified by the researcher which were similar to those that could be expected on the school-leaving exam. The questionnaires were divided into two parts: the quantitative part with the Likert Scale questions and the qualitative part with open-ended questions. The Likert Scale part provided the data on the type of strategies used by individual students and the popularity of these strategies in the sample. The writing samples were marked by the researcher according the criteria used for the school-leaving exam (The
Central Examination Commission, 2013). To examine whether there existed any relationship between the two variables: $x$-number of strategies used by individual students and $y$-marks they achieved from the writing samples, Pearson's correlation coefficient ($r$) was calculated (Cohen et al., 2007: 528-529). Being aware that the statistical measurement was not sufficient to account for the complexity of students' strategic behaviours and processes, the second part of the research used the qualitative method with the aim to collect the data through the open-ended questions in the questionnaires and through the semi-structured interviews. The grounded theory approach formed the methodological framework for the qualitative analysis of the findings. It was hoped that such approach would provide an insight into a multifaceted nature of students' writing strategy choices.

The research aimed to investigate the writing strategies of Polish EFL secondary school students and since the strategies were defined as behaviours and processes which were initiated by students intentionally (Oxford, 2011: 12), they did not render a direct observation by the researcher feasible. This is due to the fact that the agency to decide whether the intentional element is present or not does not belong to the researcher. It is the learners’ agency to decide whether their actions and processes are deliberate or not. Therefore, the data in this research had to be obtained from the learners directly. Two of the research methods which enable access to this type of data are questionnaires and interviews; thus, this research employed both these methods to collect the information about the learners' writing strategies.

Questionnaires can provide the researcher with the data obtained from a statistically significant number of respondents. For questionnaires this number has to amount to at least thirty in order to statistically justify the choice of questionnaires over the interviews as a data collection tool. In the context of the present study, where a typical number of students per class in the Polish secondary school is thirty, it seemed reasonable to set the sampling size to at least 100 in order to cater for the adequate representativeness and the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, I used the cluster sampling (Dörnyei, 2007: 98) and I distributed the questionnaires to the first and the second year classes in the two schools in person, which resulted in 102 completed questionnaires. I also collected 102 corresponding writing samples. In the first place, I contacted eight schools in Kielce, Poland to obtain the permission to conduct my research but only two schools were willing to participate and were ready to allocate in their timetables the time slots required for the research. A major limitation of questionnaire surveys is the return rate (Bryman, 2012: 199-200) and for this reason I deemed necessary the distribution of questionnaires during the timetable classes. This procedure
allowed me to distribute and collect the questionnaires in one session, thus exerting more control over the return rate. Another limitation of questionnaires is their lack of interactivity (Cohen et al., op. cit.: 320-321, Richards et al., 2012: 125), which means that nothing can be added or deleted. To compensate for this, I decided to deal with any information items which required further attention in the follow-up interviews. The other problem is a potential for ambiguity in understanding the questions, which may lead to respondents' confusion. Therefore, care was taken to address this issue through the pilot study and the application of a carefully selected appropriate wording and definitions of the used terminology. Useful guidelines for this purpose were those provided by Fowler, Jr. (2009), Bryman (op. cit.: 473) and Cohen et al. (op. cit.: 334-339). To design my questionnaire, valuable sources of reference proved to be writing strategy questionnaires designed by Petrić and Czárl (2003) and Abdul-Rahman (2011) which helped me to identify the writing strategies which were applicable to my research context. I also learned how to group individual statements into categories and I decided to divide my questionnaire into three sections: planning, execution and revision, which correspond to the stages of writing process. Once the drafting phase was completed, my questionnaire had to be tested for its clarity and unambiguity. Therefore, I conducted the pilot study on five secondary school students (from different schools than the research sample) and I also asked for feedback on the questionnaire design two secondary school English teachers (who taught the students in the research sample on a regular basis). The received feedback was constructive and useful. One of the comments was to delete the open-ended question: Write down how you usually prepare yourself for the writing task and what helps you in the writing process. Are you happy with your writing skills or do you want to improve them? It was considered to be not specific enough. This suggestion was made by one of the teachers who also advised me to replace that question with a table where students could write in the first column what they considered to be their strong points in writing whereas in the second column they could list what they thought to be their weak points in writing. I found this feedback particularly useful; especially in the view that none of the questionnaires which were completed by the students in the pilot study provided a conclusive and informative answer to that question. Another change to the questionnaire, which resulted from the pilot study, was the deletion of the statement: I prefer controlled tasks (where you have to follow a set of rules) to free writing (where you choose what you want to write about and how). This statement was criticised for its complexity by both teachers and it was found highly confusing by all of the pilot study respondents. I also realised that this statement would not render statistical analysis feasible as it referred to two different strategies simultaneously.
(the strategy of using the guidelines in controlled writing tasks and the strategy of following a free flow of thoughts for free writing tasks) whereas the questionnaire was designed on the premise that every statement would correspond to only one strategy. Finally, a lack of control over respondents' honesty, known as Hawthorn effect (Bryman, op. cit.: 392, Cohen et al., op.cit.: 141-149), is also an issue in questionnaires whose potential negative impact I addressed in my study by triangulating the questionnaire responses with the interview answers and the writing samples.

Interviews are more time consuming than questionnaires in both their implementation and analysis, and they also require good communication skills on the part of a researcher (Berg and Lune, 2014.: 116-128). At the same time, they are an immense source of qualitative data if conducted in a semi-structured or unstructured format. They provide an insight into past experiences, perceptions and feelings of interviewees and since this research requires the data to be obtained directly from the participants, they are highly suited for this purpose. In addition, they allow the researcher to establish the reasons for interviewees' behaviours and mental processes (ibid.: 108-116). Therefore, interviews seem to be the most appropriate data collection method where an answer to the research question requires an explanation from those individuals who have the agency to provide that answer. In the present study the aim was to establish what writing strategies were used by a specific group of learners and then to investigate the reasons for learners' choices in that respect. The first objective was achieved by collecting the data through questionnaires but the second one required an application of the open-ended question strategy. This could again be done using questionnaires but the perspective would be limited due to the mentioned above lack of interactivity in questionnaires. In interviews, there is interactivity, which not only enables the researcher to explain any confusing issues to the interviewees but most importantly, it allows for a deeper insight to be obtained by using a probing technique, that is asking follow-up questions to provide a more complete and comprehensive explanation of the studied phenomenon (ibid.: 141-146). At the same time, the researcher has to be aware of the partial and biased view that interviews present (Schostak, 2006: 15). It is a small sample of interviewees whose views are subjective which rendered generalisability of findings difficult. The present research addressed this limitation by a careful design of the interview questions which were based on the data collected from the questionnaires, thus enabling triangulation. This procedure allowed for establishing the patterns in the data related to the learners' perceptions of their
writing strategies. The interviewees were also chosen on the basis of the questionnaire answers and the aim was to examine both the strategy users and non-users.

Any data collection tool has its advantages but also limitations. In this research the choice of the data collection tools was based on a careful examination of the research questions. The other consideration was related to the implementation of the research and included such elements as: access to the respondents, time factor, and place of the research. I also gave the respondents an option to answer the questions either in Polish or in English, according to their preference and language ability. The reason for this was to allow students with lower English proficiency to express their opinions fully, which could otherwise be inhibited due to the language barrier. I piloted my interview questions on two secondary school students from outside the research sample. I also asked the two secondary school teachers, whose help in the pilot study of the questionnaire I found immensely valuable, to provide their feedback on the interview questions. The pilot study rendered good results as both the respondents and the teachers found the questions clear and easy to follow. They also commented favourably on the given choice of the language of response.

3.4 Research Validity and Reliability

To account for my research validity, I followed the dichotomy suggested by Campbell and Stanley (1963 cited in Dörnyei 2007: 50) who separate the internal validity of the research from its external validity. The former one refers to the choice of research variables which should lead to an outcome being the function of these variables. The latter one relates to how the sampling results can be generalised to a larger population. In my research, I have ensured that I carefully selected my variables with respect to English language writing strategies which are used by Polish EFL learners in secondary schools. My aim was to establish whether the strategy choice correlates to writing performance of learners. As for the generalizability of my sampling, there is a high degree of homogeneity of the Polish education system which is regulated by the Ministry of Education. Teaching curriculums are universal across the country and they are based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Consequently, teaching materials, teaching methodologies and learning goals do not vary significantly between the schools.

Dörnyei argues that in order to ensure quantitative standards of a study, the research validity is not a sufficient criterion for research meaningfulness because it accounts only for one aspect of the research, namely its design. The other aspect, which has to be addressed, is
the measurement validity. In my research, I chose the Likert scale questionnaire which also included open ended questions, interviews and writing samples as my research instruments. My choices did not fall neatly into the quantitative methodology paradigm, thus they rendered a combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses procedures. It was hoped that the triangulation of the research analyses will contribute to the research validity.

Finally, for the research findings to be recognised as a source of the new knowledge, research reliability has to be proved. Reliability refers to the outcomes of the research and their consistency in the same sample in various circumstances. In this research, I used what Dörnyei calls 'respondent feedback' (Dörnyei 2007: 60) to ensure reliability of my findings and in the interviews, I included questions for participants to comment on some of the data collected from the questionnaires. Despite the three week time span between the administration of the questionnaires and the interviews; the responses of the participants were found to be consistent in both of the data collection tools, which confirmed the honesty of students' responses and contributed to the overall reliability of the research.
Chapter IV: Results and Analyses

4.1 Findings

There were 102 respondents to the writing strategies questionnaire: 48 female and 54 male, 50 students were a lower intermediate level and 52 were an intermediate level. The questionnaire consisted of 30 five-point Likert scale statements and 4 open-ended questions (see Appendix 3). As mentioned above (see Chapter Three, Research Tools), the Likert Scale questions were divided into three sections: planning, execution and revision, which correspond to the stages of writing process. The aim was to identify the writing strategies which students use at these stages. The statistical analysis was applied in order to establish which strategies were most popular among students and also to identify students who are the most and the least frequent strategy users. This quantitative analysis was supplemented by the qualitative analysis of the open-ended questions with an aim to establish whether there existed any correlation between the students' usage of the writing strategies and their general attitudes towards their writing ability. Students' preferences for the types of writing tasks were also factors in this analysis. Students were asked to identify their strong and weak points in writing and to list those writing tasks which they liked and those which they did not like. It was hoped that respondents' answers to these questions would shed more light on those aspects of L2 writing which students struggled with as that would indicate the lack of the development of effective writing strategies which could alleviate students' problems in those areas. In order to establish patterns in the data, the answers to the open ended questions were matched with the corresponding Likert Scale statements.

In their responses to the open-ended question in the questionnaire which asked the respondents to list their weak points in writing, students in the sample identified the following factors: grammar, vocabulary, mistakes, the lack of ideas, style, tenses, the relevance of content to the topic, and accuracy. It was observed that students who identified their weak points to be grammar related (grammar, tenses, and accuracy) tended not to use the two planning writing strategies: I revise rules of writing in English before I start writing; and I practise grammatical structures which are required for a writing task beforehand. There were eighteen such matches identified in the data (see Table 1). At the same time those students generally strongly agreed or agreed to statements: The more writing tasks I do, the better my writing gets (4 exceptions), I check my grammar (1 exception), I only use grammatical
structures I know well to avoid mistakes (5 exceptions); and The error correction and teacher's feedback help me to improve my writing (5 exceptions). The statement: I pay more attention to the meaning than to the grammatical correctness; rendered mixed responses. Overall, the above planning strategies were identified to be an area which required further investigation.

The vocabulary related weak points in writing were compared with the five corresponding writing strategies in the questionnaire. These were as follows: I use a list of key words or vocabulary items useful for a writing task; If I lack the right word, I describe what I wanted to say; I use a monolingual dictionary, I use a bilingual dictionary; and I check my vocabulary. Fourteen matching responses were identified. Interestingly those students who strongly agreed or agreed with the statement: I use a list of key words or vocabulary items useful for a writing task; disagreed with the statement: If I lack the right word, I describe what I wanted to say (only 1 exception). The opposite was also true, meaning that those students who strongly agreed or agreed with the latter statement disagreed with the former statement. Consequently, this negative correlation between the two strategies was considered to be an important finding in the data which could benefit from further examination. Overall in this sub-sample students used both monolingual and bilingual dictionaries with a slightly higher preference for the former ones. The students also strongly agreed and agreed with the statement: I check my vocabulary (only 1 undecided).

The other area of writing weaknesses was composition-related (the lack of or not too many ideas, the difficulty in composing the text relevant to the topic, and style). These responses were divided into two groups: those related to the process of generating the ideas and those referring to organising the ideas. The former one included: the lack of or not too many ideas; the latter one consisted of: the difficulty in composing the text relevant to the topic, and style. The first group was correlated with the following statements in the questionnaire: Reading around the topic helps me in writing; I brainstorm many ideas first before I start a writing task; I study some samples first before I start my writing task; Sharing and discussing ideas with other students or the teacher help me a lot in writing; I refer to my personal experience which is relevant to the topic when I write; and If I don't know what to write next , I take a short break to refresh my mind. Twelve matches were identified but there was no internal correlation in the above strategy subset; students provided mixed responses to the statements. Interestingly some of the students who reported vocabulary to be their weak point were also in this group. This finding seemed to suggest the existence of a mental linkage.
between the vocabulary knowledge and the process of generating the ideas for writing, which was also pursued further in the qualitative part of the research.

The strategy subset which referred to the organisation of ideas included statements as follows: *I plan out first what I want to write; I plan out the text organisation as I write; I always write a draft first and then I revise it and correct it; I check the content for clarity and logic; I read the text to myself to check if it is easy to follow for the reader; I check if the content is relevant to the topic; and I break down too long sentences into shorter and simpler ones.* There were fourteen cases of respondents reporting their weak points in the organisation of ideas. At the same time those respondents indicated that they used the above strategy subset, which rendered a negative correlation in the data: students used the strategies which referred to the text organisation but they reported their weak point in writing to be the organisation of ideas. This finding was further analysed with the aim to find a possible explanation for the above contradiction and will be discussed in more detail in the qualitative part of the research report.

As for the strong points in writing the following aspects were reported: imagination, many words, speed, good ideas, meaningful texts, following the rules, form, content, coherence, and cohesion. Interestingly, none of the students indicated grammar as their strong point. The positive finding was that some of the respondents were familiar with the compositional aspect of writing, which for the purpose of the research was considered as indicative of the higher level writing awareness. It meant that those students were familiar with the need to communicate their ideas in writing in a structured and meaning-focused manner.

The answers to the question which asked the students to list the writing tasks they liked the most were as follows: letters, e-mails, essays, descriptions, stories, instructions, articles and poems. The writing tasks which the sample group did not like were identified to be: letters, essays, stories, descriptions, reviews and e-mails. Table 3 presents a detailed breakdown of the students’ answers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing tasks you like the most</th>
<th>Writing tasks you don’t like</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>letters (21%)</td>
<td>stories (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-mails (18%)</td>
<td>letters (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>essays (7%)</td>
<td>essays (9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3
The breakdown of the types of writing tasks which students in the sample liked and those which they did not like.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>descriptions (4%)</th>
<th>descriptions (3%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>stories (4%)</td>
<td>e-mails (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instructions (1%)</td>
<td>reviews (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>articles (1%)</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poems (1%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were no patterns established in the data between the strong and weak points in writing and the preferences for the types of the writing tasks. It should also be emphasised that the answer to the above question was left blank by most of the respondents, which seemed to indicate that the students in the sample may not have been used to reflecting on their learning. The relevant answers were only provided by those students who received higher marks on their writing samples (6 and above). This finding will be examined in more detail in the qualitative part of the research report.

4.2 The Quantitative Analysis

The statistical analysis of the Likert Scale statements was conducted in order to establish the general level of student’s writing strategy usage. The formulas which were applied included: mean, standard deviation and mode. The analysis was conducted at two levels: level one which aimed to find out how strategy usage varies between individual students, and level two which looked at the popularity of individual strategies (see Appendix 4). The following quantitative findings illustrate the level one of the analysis.

\[
\text{Strategy Total Mean (M) = 113} \\
\text{Sample Standard Deviation (S) = 8} \\
\text{Sample Mode = 4}
\]

The maximum score for the strategy total which could have been achieved in the sample was 150. This could have been the case if any of the respondents strongly agreed to all of the statements in the questionnaire. The strategy total mean in the sample was 113 with the standard deviation of 8, which meant that the majority of respondents scored between 105 and 121 in their strategy total, which was one of the positive findings in the collected data. It
indicated an overall good level of strategy usage among the respondents. This was also confirmed by the mode calculation, which in the sample was 4 out of 5, and which meant that there was the highest frequency of agree responses to the questionnaire statements.

The level two analysis aimed to compare planning, execution and revision writing strategy groups. The quantitative findings for those data sets were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>351.6 (70%)</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Execution</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revision</td>
<td>425.6 (83%)</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interestingly, the data showed the highest usage of revision strategies among the students in the sample. This was followed by the execution strategies and the planning strategies. The finding seemed worth further investigation in order to establish the reasons why students tended to revise their writing more than they planned for the writing task.

The quantitative analysis of the data which was obtained from the questionnaires also allowed establishing which individual strategies were the most popular and which ones were the least popular among the students in the sample. The graphic illustration of this data is presented below.
Figure 1
The most popular writing strategies in the sample.
The above data also indicated a tendency in the sample to favour revision strategies over the planning strategies. The majority of the most popular strategies belonged to the revision subgroup (six instances), which was followed by two execution strategies and only one planning strategy. This trend was repeated again in the breakdown of the least popular strategies: three strategies (two from the strongly disagree category and one from the disagree category) belonged to the planning subgroup and one to the execution subgroup. Further
exploration was assigned to be conducted within the qualitative analysis in order to identify the possible causes of the phenomenon.

I also classified the English writing strategies into C-Cognitive; M-Metacognitive and S-Social in the writing strategy questionnaire (see Appendix 3) in order to find out which of these three groups achieved the highest strategy total, thus was the most frequently used in the studied sample. In order to establish this, I calculated the strategy usage totals for each of the strategies (see Appendix 4), then I added up the totals for each of the three strategy groups and I divided them by the number of strategies in each group to find out the average strategy usage for each group. The table below presents a detailed illustration of those procedures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Group</th>
<th>Cognitive (C)</th>
<th>Metacognitive (M)</th>
<th>Social (S)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Strategies</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy Usage Total</td>
<td>3,506</td>
<td>6,602</td>
<td>1,559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Usage</td>
<td>390 (77%)</td>
<td>388 (76%)</td>
<td>390 (77%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Strategy Usage</td>
<td>11,667</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Strategy Usage</td>
<td></td>
<td>15,300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Average Usage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>510 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: The calculation of the frequency of usage of the cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies in the studied sample.

Interestingly, the comparative analysis of the three strategy groups showed a very equal distribution of their frequency of usage in the studied sample. The average usage for the cognitive strategies was the same as for the social strategies (390; 77%) whereas the usage of metacognitive strategies was only slightly lower (388; 76%). This finding seems to suggest that overall; respondents were using a wide range of the English writing strategies across all three strategy groups.

My next step in the quantitative part of the research was to mark the students writing samples and then compare the individual scores with the individual strategy totals using the Pearson's correlation coefficient (see Appendix 5). The aim was to investigate how the variety of strategy usage corresponded to the writing proficiency and whether the relationship between these two variables rendered statistically significant results. The Pearson's
correlation coefficient obtained in the sample \( (r=0.559801) \) showed a weak positive correlation between the two variables which meant that the variety of strategies could be one of the factors which contributed to better marks achieved by students, thus their higher writing proficiency but the statistical significance of this relationship was low. This phenomenon was subsequently addressed in the qualitative part of the research. A close examination of individual cases rendered interesting findings, which required interviews to be conducted in order to find answers to the following questions: Why some of the students who achieved the highest marks did not have the highest strategy totals?; and Why some students with high strategy totals achieved lower marks?

4.3 The Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative part of the research aimed to investigate in more detail the patterns which were established in the quantitative data. Therefore, these findings formed the basis of my interview guide and helped me to formulate the interview questions (see Appendix 6). The technique of combining the qualitative and quantitative research methods was suggested by Bryman (op. cit.: 473) and Dörnyei (2007: 42-43), who pointed out that such approach not only provides a more comprehensive description of the studied phenomenon but it also accounts for a higher validity and reliability of the research. The qualitative part of my study used the grounded theory (Cohen, 2007: 491-492) as its methodological framework; the data was cross-checked for the emerging patterns and the findings were used as sources for generating hypotheses regarding the research sample.

The first area of inquiry was concerned with the planning stage of the writing process. It was identified that those students who struggled with the grammar-related aspects of EFL writing tended to use the grammar-related execution and revision strategies but they did not use the planning strategies which could help to alleviate the grammatical difficulty of the tasks. Therefore, the interview questions probed the planning stage in a great detail. Students were asked to report the steps they took when planning their writing tasks and their preference for the source of help at this stage (written materials, the teacher and the peer students). They were also asked to choose one aspect of English learning ability which they considered to be the most crucial for achieving the competency in EFL writing. They could choose from three options: good grammar, good vocabulary and ideas and their presentation. The aim was to establish how students regulated their planning stage and whether they utilised in practice the strategies which they reported to be using in the questionnaire. The attention was paid to how
helpful the students found the knowledge of grammar in obtaining their writing competency and whether they included grammar related strategies in their writing planning. The interviewees confirmed in their responses their usage of the same strategies as they reported a few weeks earlier in the questionnaires. This was a positive finding which was established as a result of the triangulation of the questionnaire findings with the interview data. The time lapse between the administration of the questionnaires and the interviews was three weeks, which seemed to confirm that students in the sample were honest in their responses and their strategy usage was already fixed. They developed patterns of behaviour and techniques, which they appeared to have a strong attachment to. At the same time though, most of the interviewees admitted to experience problems which related to various aspects of the writing ability. Three of them reported problems with grammar. Table 4 presents a breakdown of the students answers to the question: Which one would you like more help with: grammar, vocabulary, finding ideas and organising them? (You can choose only one).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Number of Interviewees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>grammar</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vocabulary</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ideas</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5
The aspects of EFL writing which the interviewees indicated they would like more help with.

Only one option was allowed to be chosen by the interviewees in order to avoid multiple answers which would render the analysis difficult and could result in the lack of relevant findings. The aim was to determine which aspect of the EFL writing ability was considered by the interviewed sample to be the most difficult to acquire. Interestingly, the division of answers was comparatively even, with just a slight priority of the grammar related problems. This however, did not correspond with the findings of the questionnaire where generating the ideas and their organisation were identified as the most difficult aspect of EFL writing (see Results and Analyses) by twenty six of the respondents (twelve who mentioned their weak point in writing to be the lack of ideas and fourteen who struggled with the meaningful organisation of the ideas into coherent texts). In comparison, eighteen questionnaire respondents referred to the grammar as their weak point in the EFL writing and fourteen to the vocabulary. The triangulation of the responses to the above interview question with the questionnaire findings however, confirmed that students were aware of their weaknesses and
viewed them as their fixed attribute. The same pattern was repeated in both of the data collection tools, which meant that for each of those seven students the weak point in writing which was identified in the questionnaire was the same as the help-requested aspect in the interview. In addition, the students who would have liked more help with their writing ideas and how to organise them also referred to their lack of extensive vocabulary in other parts of the interview, which again confirmed the positive correlation between the limited knowledge of vocabulary and the difficulty in generating and organising the ideas.

The second area of enquiry related to the lexical competence and its role in facilitating EFL writing. Two of the respondents who in their questionnaire answers identified their problems with EFL writing to be vocabulary related also confirmed those beliefs in their interview responses. However, they did not confirm the negative correlation found in the questionnaire data where those students who strongly agreed or agreed with the statement: *I use a list of key words or vocabulary items useful for a writing task*; disagreed with the statement: *If I lack the right word, I describe what I wanted to say* (only 1 exception) and vice versa, those students who strongly agreed or agreed with the latter statement disagreed with the former one. Both interviewees made positive comments regarding the suggestion of providing students with the guidelines on the paragraph content. One of them used both the list of keywords and the strategy of retrieving the missing word from the long term memory by reminding himself the word collocations or contexts of usage in a sentence; he had also developed the coping strategy and he could keep on writing despite the lack of the right word. He pointed out: "I try to prepare more complex vocabulary items [translated from Polish]" and he added: "I try to remind myself the collocations which are used with the word which I am missing; also I remind myself the context of how this word was used in a sentence, if that also does not work I leave the space blank and I keep on writing [translated from Polish]". The other student mentioned only the use of the Google translation as her vocabulary strategy. She replied: "Find on translate.google.com" to the question: *What do you do when you are not sure if you used the right word? Why?* At the same time, some of the interviewees who claimed to have a good lexical knowledge of English reported using other vocabulary learning and retrieval strategies, which will be discussed in more detail in the following descriptions of each of the interviewees.

The third area of analyses dealt with the compositional aspect of the EFL writing strategy. It focused on the techniques which the students in the sample reported using for generating the ideas and the methods they applied to present these ideas in a coherent and
consistent manner. The aim was to establish how successful students' methods were to produce the stylistically appropriate and topic-relevant texts. As it was mentioned above the positive finding of the questionnaire data analysis was the fact that some students were aware of the compositional aspects of EFL writing strategy (see Results and Analyses). In order to establish what the students in the sample understood by the concept of the EFL compositional competence, I decided to analyse the individual interviews with the objective to find patterns and trends in the data which could provide more information on the subject. I used the grounded theory approach and I did not formulate any pre-conceived hypothesis. I hoped that the data from the interviews would allow me to arrive at the possible explanations of the studied phenomena and I would be able to form my hypothesis regarding the research sample. In order to accomplish that aim I used the thick description and I underlined the patterns in the data which had reference to the compositional aspect of the EFL writing strategy. Subsequently, I clustered the patterns across the interviews to illustrate the emerging trends (for transcripts of the interviews see Appendix 7; for the samples of students' short compositions and the explanation of the marking criteria see Appendix 8). I included below the sample of my analysis of the data which was obtained from one of the interviews (for the analyses of the remaining six interviews see Appendix 9).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondent Number: 31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Strategy Total: 103, Mark: 5 points (50%). The weak point in writing: Vocabulary.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Variety</th>
<th>Accuracy</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This student achieved a low mark for her writing samples (total 5 out of 10). She also had a comparatively low strategy total in comparison to the mean value in the sample. She preferred writing in Polish to writing in English. She also planned her writing in Polish first and then she translated her ideas into English. She did not spend too much time on her planning stage. Interestingly, she indicated that a good knowledge of grammar is the most important factor in the development of the English writing competence however; she indicated that she would require more help with expanding her vocabulary which she considered to be not extensive enough. She preferred the teacher help to the peer-help. She gave her written works to other students to be checked though; she reported that this was not a reciprocal strategy as other students did not share their works with her. She used the
Google translations when she did not know what to write, when she was not sure about the vocabulary and when she did not know the correct grammar. She would have liked to be provided with the paragraph guidelines, which she viewed as beneficial for the development of a topic-relevant writing. She commented favourable on the teacher's correction and the constructive feedback. Despite the fact that she identified her vocabulary to be her weak point in writing, with regard to the form of the error correction, she believed that grammar corrections would be most useful for her. She claimed to check her grammar as her revision strategy. She did not use the social strategies in the planning stage however, she reported discussing her completed essays with her mother or sister. That student's self-discovery of the revision social strategies was considered to be the positive finding in the research, which could indicate the student's awareness of the communicative purpose of writing. She did not answer the question which asked about her willingness to take part in the after-school EFL writing classes.

**Figure 3**
The analysis of one of the interviews.

The patterns which emerged as the result of the qualitative analysis of the data from the interviews were as follow:

- the interviewees with the highest marks seemed to be more reflective towards their writing skills and they had more advanced strategies to rely on (e.g. discussing the topic with the peers, using and providing peer feedback, watching movies with English subtitles, reading in English, consulting the study guides) than the students with the average or the lower marks,
- students who achieved the average or the lower marks relied on the translation strategy (one of them admitted that he would have liked to read books or articles in English but his level of English did not allow him to do that),
- there was no clear correlation established between the strategy total and the achieved mark (e.g. the students with average marks had high strategy totals, one student with the high mark had the low strategy total),
- students were very much teacher-dependent (especially with regard to grammar),
- the sample group had a generally positive attitude towards the teacher's feedback and the error correction; students considered these activities as helpful in the improvement of the accuracy of their writing,
not many of the compositional aspects of the English writing were reported by the interviewees (only one of the interviewees mentioned the focus on coherence of her English writing and the attention to the clarity of the message); overall grammar and vocabulary orientation to the English writing dominated in the sample,

planning stage was generally short and mostly consisted of making a general plan for writing,

students appeared to be very much constrained by the time factor,

they seemed to prefer to obtain help in their English writing from the more competent individuals (two students mentioned the lack of trust in their peers' writing ability; one student reported that other students did not give her their compositions to read and comment on, one student mentioned having private English tuitions).
Chapter V: Discussions

5.1 Interpretations of the Questionnaire Findings

The research showed that 18 respondents to the questionnaire identified their problems with the writing in English to be grammar related. This figure amounts to only 18% of the total research sample and could seem to be not significant enough however, if we take into account that only around half of the respondents answered the question which asked them to identify their strong and weak points in their writing in English, this finding grows in importance. Out of seven interviewees in the study, three mentioned they would like more help with the grammatical aspect of the English writing, which also contributes to the significance of the issue. Obviously, the grammatical accuracy exerts an important role on the final written product however, when the process of writing is concerned and especially the free flow of thoughts, the focus on grammatical correctness is commonly viewed as an impeding factor (Gordon cited in Griffiths, 2008: 250). Good language learners in Gordon's study conducted their grammar checks in the revision stage only (ibid.). The question arises then why students in the current research were so much concerned with the grammatical accuracy of their writing. The students' approach seems to be the product of the teaching and learning priorities in the Polish educational context. From my personal experience as an EFL learner; I remember that the marks for the English compositions were based primarily on their grammatical correctness and from my experience as an EFL teacher; I have to admit there is a huge impact on the grammatical accuracy of students' texts in the teaching curriculum and the teaching objectives. Historically, the grammar orientation in the L2 writing is associated with the product approach, which was introduced in the 1960s by the structural linguists and then became popularised by the behaviorist learning theories (Hyland, 2003: 3). As Hyland argues; "For many who adopt this view, writing is regarded as an extension of grammar - a means of reinforcing language patterns through habit formation and testing learners' ability to produce well-formed sentences" (ibid.) Bade mentions another issue which has to be taken into account with regard to the grammar orientation, which is the impact of culture on the learning context. She points out that teachers should first find out their students' expectations of the course through for example, questionnaires, then analyse the collected data in order to devise the most feasible teaching solutions and act accordingly (Bade cited in Griffiths, op. cit.: 180).
Bade comments on her study in the field of grammar and the language learning strategies as follows:

"Teachers should get to know the kinds of learners they have in their class and particularly gain ideas of their attitudes towards learning. This can assist with course planning. It can also assist with the overall success of their students' learning and instruction. For the majority of learners in this study, grammar was obviously something that needed to be visible in the lesson" (ibid).

Similarly, in my research context, grammar seemed to be a very important aspect of the EFL teaching and learning and this could have impacted the students' attitudes towards writing in English; those 18% of the respondents who identified their weakness in their English writing to be grammar related most probably associated the compositional skills with the ability to produce the error-free sentence level constructions. The implication for the future would be to include more of the functional approach in the classroom instruction (Thornbury, 1997: 153) in order to explain the students the functions of the written texts and to make them aware of the communicative purpose of their writing. As for the grammar oriented strategies in the L2 writing, revising the rules of grammar prior to writing as well as studying the guidelines on the target language writing conventions, seem to be highly recommended activities. In this way, students should become well prepared for the writing task, they would be provided with a useful source of reference and consequently, they should gain more confidence in their writing ability.

14% of the respondents identified their weakness in writing in English to be the lack of extensive vocabulary. Interestingly, they seemed to use only the strategy of describing the missing word or they prepared the list of useful keywords and vocabulary items. They did not combine the two strategies, which could have been more beneficial in helping them overcome their vocabulary related weaknesses. When this issue was probed further in the interviews, the interviewees appeared to be unaware of how they can effectively use vocabulary strategies in their English writing; they identified their problem to be vocabulary related but they did not develop a strategic response to that problem. The investigation into their planning, execution and revision strategies in English writing showed that the planning stage was usually concerned with the development of the general outline, which they developed in the execution stage and then they simply proofread their final product. In the same manner as the students
who identified grammar to be their major weakness, those students did not seem to be aware of the complexity of English writing; they were unaware of the compositional aspects instead, they view writing tasks as an extension of vocabulary practice. Therefore, the implication for the future would be the same as above, students need to become familiarised with the nature and the purpose of English writing. There could be two ways to achieve that goal in the classroom practice: one class per week could be devoted solely to the English writing instruction and practice or time slots could be allocated during the regular English classes for this purpose.

The remaining 26% of the respondents related their difficulty in writing in English to either, the lack of ideas (14%) or the inability to organise the ideas into a coherent composition. This group was distinctive from the above two as these students seemed to be aware of the compositional aspect of the English writing skill. It was also established that some of the students who found it difficult to generate ideas for writing also struggled with their English vocabulary. Three interviewees who reported that they would have liked more help with their ideas when writing in English did not seem to develop the strategic understanding of how this problem could be solved by them. This indicated that they still required more training in how to apply the English writing strategies independently while conducting their written tasks. My suggestion would be to demonstrate during the classroom instruction how the English writing strategies could be used in practice; for example, the teacher could conduct a writing task together with students and while doing this they could use a wide variety of strategies, then the monitored by the teacher group and pair works could follow. I assume such approach would help to equip students with the strategic tools to solve the problems which emerge when they write in English.

The other finding in the data obtained from the questionnaires was that students tended to struggle with organising their ideas into coherent texts despite their usage of the strategies which related to the compositional skills. The implication is the need to train students how to choose and how to apply the strategies effectively; it is not enough to rely on the fact that the questionnaire results indicated the students’ usage of the strategies, it is advisable to gain a deeper insight into how students actually employ those strategies in practice and whether they are successful in these actions. Therefore, the functional approach to teaching English writing seems to be the right direction to follow in the Polish secondary school context. The students would become familiar with the communicative functions associated with the specific language forms; they would learn the construction of paragraphs and the purpose of the topic
sentence and the supporting sentences; they would also learn the strategies of how to achieve coherence of the whole composition (Gordon 2008 cited in Oxford 2011: 250). Hyland lists the following activities which are part of the functional approach: "developing an outline into an essay, or imitating the patterns of a parallel text in their own essay" (Hyland, 2003: 7). He also argues that these tasks "offer good scaffolding for writing by supporting L2 learners' development" (ibid.). The limitation of this approach is however, the lack of focus on meaning. Thus, I assume it is advisable to supplement the above tasks with the meaning focused activities of the post-process L2 writing approach like for example, those suggested by El-Ashri: interviewing, reading, discussion, brain storming, questioning, summarizing, poster presentations, commenting on the topics, decision making and problem solving (El-Ashri 2013). I hope that such eclectic approach should provide Polish EFL secondary school students with both sound theoretical foundations and a practical ability of how to use English writing strategies competently in order to become more proficient writers. I would also recommend for Polish EFL teachers to use Matsuda's (1997) dynamic model of L2 writing as their point of reference in the writing instruction; I found his holistic approach and the explanation of the L2 writing process very comprehensive. This helped me to understand the complex nature of L2 writing and allowed me to identify the teaching strategies which I am planning to test in my future teaching practice.

In the course of the research it was also established that out of three writing stages: planning, execution and revision, students seem to be the least strategically equipped for the planning stage. Consequently, this finding of the research seemed to confirm Silva's (1993) hypothesis that L2 writers struggle at the planning stage of composing. The possible explanation could be the fact that if written tasks were usually given as homework, not enough classroom instruction was directed at teaching students how to plan for their compositions. As for the execution stage, students had to find the strategies to be able to complete their written tasks and for the revision, they had to devise their own strategies as well in order to ensure the correct form and content of the final product. Planning could have been reduced to just finding the ideas and commencing writing or even writing without any prior planning stage and relying on finding the ideas while writing. In addition, if writing was conducted under the exam conditions, the time pressure could have led students to skip or reduce the planning stage in order to allocate more time for the execution and revision. The negative washback of the exam time pressure could have been transferred to writing under the
non-exam conditions. However, these hypotheses would require additional research in order to be confirmed.

Lastly, the statistical analysis of the questionnaire data and the students' marks from the writing samples seemed to serve as a confirmation of the existence of a positive correlation between the language proficiency and the usage of a variety of learning strategies, which was emphasised in the studies of language learning strategies which triggered interest in good language learners (Oxford 1990, 1997, 2011; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Cohen, 1998 and Griffiths, 2008). The Pearson's correlation coefficient established in the sample however, was not statistically significant since it only showed a weak positive correlation between the students' strategy totals and their marks. The possible explanation for this could be the fact that it may not be enough to know or use a variety of strategies, what is vital I assume, is to have the understanding and self-awareness of the effectiveness of the strategies as measured against the goal achievement (Zimmerman 1990). This implies that students need to become aware which strategies work for them and how to use them most effectively; such self-reflection could be conducted for example, in the form of logs, which would facilitate the dialogic relationships between the students and the teacher. Deciding on the learning preferences and learning strategies are frequent activities in reflective logs (Pickering 2003) and as Schunk (2009) points out reflective learning is one of the elements in Zimmerman's three-phase self-regulated learning model. What helps in the self-reflection according to this model, is an analysis of the past performance in relation to the achievement of the goals which were set by learners themselves. I would argue, such approach requires the teacher to introduce students to the goal setting in the first place, later on when students would become more independent in this activity, they should be able to set their own learning goals and then reflect on their English writing performance and if necessary, adjust their strategies accordingly. From this perspective, I view the English writing strategies (and the learning strategies in general) not as isolate and independently existing phenomena but as the elements in the self-reflection process and the factors which contribute to raising the learners' self-awareness.

5.2 Interpretations of the Findings from the Interviews

I aimed to analyse the data obtained from the interviews using the grounded theory approach. I did not set any pre-conceived hypothesis instead; I decided to use the thick description technique (Richards et.al. 2012) and I described the students' responses in detail. I underlined
the emerging patterns in the data, which then allowed me identify the factors which impacted
the interviewees' writing process. As the result of the analysis, it was established that the self-
awareness and the self-reflection seem to be the attributes of more advanced learners. These
learners also developed the strategic approach to their English writing and they appeared to be
confident writers. I assume the most distinctive characteristic of these learners was their
autonomy which was manifested in that they seemed to be in control of their writing. They
knew what strategies worked for them and they applied those strategies consistently; they
developed what Holec calls "a learning structure in which control over the learning can be
exercised by the learner" (Holec 1981 cited in Griffiths 2008: 118) and this structure
consisted of their strategy set. As Cohen points out;

"good learners know where their strengths lie and are able to tackle learning
problems flexibly. A defining characteristic of autonomous learners is their
ability to make decisions about their learning which take account of the
context in which they are learning" (Cohen 1998 cited in Griffiths 2008: 118).

The self-reflection, self-awareness, autonomy and strategic approach seem to be the factors
which together account for the learner's higher writing proficiency. This is consistent with the
theoretical framework of this research as all three theorists (Vygotsky, Zimmerman and
Oxford) emphasised the need for the holistic approach in order to understand the complexity
of the development of the learner's strategy for learning and using a foreign language.

The research also seems to confirm the hypothesis of Gu, Wen and Wu (1995 cited in
Griffiths 2008: 89) that the higher strategy totals may not necessarily indicate a more frequent
usage of the strategies but they may only signal the students' awareness of those strategies.
Learners' awareness however, is not enough by itself if it does not lead to the activation of the
strategic behaviours and processes by the learners. Therefore, I assume it is important to
obtain a closer and more detailed account of what actually happens when students write. In
this study, they were not the Likert scale statements but the interviews which provided a more
complete picture of the strategies which were used by the individual students when they
conducted their English writing tasks.

As for the planning stage of the writing process, the interviewees appeared to be
generally unprepared to use the strategies effectively. The agreed or strongly agreed to certain
questionnaire statements but a few weeks later they did not mention these strategies in their
answers to the interview questions. They only reported preparing plans for the written tasks
but without elaborating in more detail. Some of them mentioned preparing the lists of useful vocabulary items and one student admitted studying samples of writing prior to commencing the task. The implication of this finding would be to devise the methods of how planning for the written compositions can be taught and practised as part of the classroom instruction.

The other finding of the qualitative analysis was the fact that the social context and the culture impacted the learning processes of the research sample significantly. The interviewees appeared to be highly teacher-dependent; they considered the teacher as a competent individual who was the source of the valuable and accurate knowledge and who was the expert in the field of the English writing. They all seemed to aspire to achieve a higher writing competence and they considered the teacher's feedback and the error correction as strategies conducive to the improvement of their writing skills. This places the responsibility on the teacher to be sensitive to how the feedback is provided and to its content; Gordon draws teachers' attention to the fact that:

"Feedback, with its potential to transform a writer's text, has a really important role in process writing but it is not without its drawbacks. First among these is the tendency for learners to add or delete ideas in their draft only in response to teacher feedback. In other words, unless teachers are discerning in how feedback is given, they can foster student dependency"

(Gordon cited in Griffiths 2008: 245).

I assume in the present research context, the type of feedback which would focus on the compositional aspects of the text and the communicative role of the essay content would be the most beneficial to foster the students' better understanding of what the English writing ability involves. Therefore, it should result in the development of better writing skills of those students, with the grammar and vocabulary becoming the subsidiary skills.

Finally, introducing the pair and group works as means of fostering the usage of social strategies should also be drawn to the teachers' attention. The care would have to be taken though, to ensure that students understand the importance of these activities in the first place. To start with, they would have to be introduced to the benefits of sharing and discussing the ideas, working on the tasks and revising the final product together; they would also have to develop the appropriate strategies to fulfil their group roles competently and they would have to understand that the success of the written task is the responsibility of the whole group. The members' backgrounds, experiences and interactional exchanges would also play an
important role in the construction of the common grounds for their discourse community (Matsuda 1997: 54).

5.3 Limitations of the Study

At the same time, I am aware of the limitations of this study: the research sample could have been more representative of the population; especially the number of the interviews could have been higher. These were however, the results of the time and access restrictions. It is believed that despite these limitations, the insight gained from the research is still highly valuable and shows the new directions for further research.
Chapter VI: Summary and Conclusion

6.1 Theoretical and Practical Applications of the Research

The purpose of this research was to establish what English language writing strategies were used by Polish EFL secondary school learners and to identify what the learners' reasons for their strategy choices were based on. This topic has been selected for examination due to the fact that in Polish context L2 writing is commonly viewed as the product of learning and not much attention is devoted to the components of the writing process. English writing tasks are usually assigned to students as homework and they are not practised in the language classroom. For instance, Lewkowicz and Zawadowska-Kittel's (2008) research showed that in terms of the frequency of skill related EFL classroom activities in Polish secondary schools, writing was the least practised skill.

This research seems to confirm the above finding as students in my sample generally reported that the writing tasks were conducted by them independently and without much mediation or scaffolding offered in the classroom practice. This, I assume led them to consider the writing skill as an extension of grammar or vocabulary competence and the majority appeared to be unaware of the compositional aspect of EFL writing. Only a few students seemed to be more reflective with regard to their English writing strategy and these students achieved high marks for their writing samples. I would argue, the example of those students proves that the self-reflection and the learners' self-awareness of their learning are essential elements in the development of the English writing proficiency and therefore, the teaching materials and classroom instruction should include these as their objectives.

6.2 Recommendations for Further Research

On the basis of the research findings, I would strongly recommend that the further research in the L2 writing strategies should take a combination of the qualitative approach and the experimental form. I believe the questionnaires are not enough by themselves to gain an insight into the complex and multifaceted nature of the L2 writing and the L2 writing strategies. In my next research, I hope to conduct an experimental study where in one class I would first introduce students to the self-reflection in the form of reflective logs and then for ten months, I would incorporate the strategy instruction and practice as part of the regular teaching curriculum in this class. In other classes of the same level as the experimental class, I
would teach without the strategy intervention approach. Within the ten-month period, I would conduct periodic checks of the log entries and I would use them as the source of the background information for the subsequent interviews with their authors. At the end of the ten-month period, I would compare the marks for compositions in the experimental sample with the marks in the other classes of the same level who were taught using the traditional method. The aim would be to establish whether the experimental teaching approach would result in statistically significant better results achieved by the experimental class.
References:


APPENDICES

Appendix 1: The taxonomy of LLSs by Oxford in 1990 and the S^2R Model in 2011.

Appendix 2: The Research Ethics form.

Appendix 3: The writing strategy questionnaire.

Appendix 4: The breakdown of the students' responses to the writing strategy questionnaire in the research sample.

Appendix 5: The breakdown of the Pearson's correlation coefficient calculation in the research sample. The interview questions.

Appendix 6: The transcripts of the interviews.

Appendix 7: The samples of the marked students' short compositions.

Appendix 8: The analyses of the data from the interviews.

Appendix 9:
APPENDIX 1

Taxonomy of Language Learning Strategies

Direct Strategies
- Memory Strategies
  - Creating mental linkages
  - Applying images and sounds
  - Reviewing well
  - Employing action
- Cognitive Strategies
  - Practicing
  - Receiving and sending messages
  - Analyzing and reasoning
  - Creating structure for input and output
- Compensation Strategies
  - Guessing intelligently
  - Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing

Indirect Strategies
- Indirect Strategies
  - Centering your learning
  - Arranging and planning your learning
  - Evaluating your learning
- Metacognitive Strategies
  - Lowering your anxiety
  - Encouraging yourself
  - Taking your emotional temperature
- Affective Strategies
  - Asking questions
  - Cooperating with others
  - Empathizing with others

Source: Adapted from Oxford, 1990: 19.
S²R Model

Metacognitive Strategies

Cognitive Strategies

Sociocultural Interactive Strategies

Affective Strategies

Meta-SI Strategies

Meta-affective Strategies

APPENDIX 2

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW FORM

In the case of postgraduate research student projects (i.e. MRes, MA by Project/Dissertation, MPhil, PhD and DProf), this form should be completed by the student concerned in full consultation with their supervisor.

In the case of staff research projects, this form should be completed by the member of staff responsible for the research project (i.e. as Principal Investigator and/or grant-holder) in full consultation with any co-investigators, research students and research staff.

Further guidance on the University's Research Ethics Policy and Procedures, along with links to relevant research ethics materials and advice, can be found on the Research & Postgraduate Office Research Ethics webpage:

http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/research/the-research-and-postgraduate-office/current-students/research-ethics.cfm

This form requires the completion of the following three sections -

SECTION A: APPLICANT DETAILS
SECTION B: THE PROJECT - ETHICAL ISSUES
SECTION C: THE PROJECT - RISKS AND BENEFITS

SECTION A: APPLICANT DETAILS

A1 Background information
Research project title: An investigation into the English language writing strategies of Polish secondary school EFL learners.
Date of submission for ethics approval: 25 March 2014
Proposed start date for project: May 2014
Proposed end date for project: Sep 2014
Ethics ID no: *
(to be completed by RERP)

A2 Applicant details, if for a research student project
Name: Miroslawa Mohite
London Met Email address: mam2481@mylondonmet.ac.uk

A3 Principal Researcher/Lead Supervisor
Member of staff at London Metropolitan University who is responsible for the proposed research project either as Principal Investigator/grant-holder or, in the case of postgraduate research student projects, as Lead Supervisor
Name: Dr Ahmad Nazari
Job title: Principal Lecturer for Languages & Course Leader for MA TESOL and Applied Linguistics
London Met Email address: a.nazari@londonmet.ac.uk
## B1 The Research Proposal

Please attach a brief summary of the research project including:

- Background/rationale
- Aims/objectives
- Research methodology
- Review of the key literature in this field & conceptual framework for study
- References

The purpose of this research is to establish what English language writing strategies are used by Polish EFL secondary school learners and what the learners' reasons for their strategy choices are. This topic has been selected for examination due to the fact that in Polish context writing is commonly viewed as the product of learning and not much attention is devoted to the components of the writing process. Writing tasks are usually assigned to students as homework and they are not practised in the language classroom. For instance, Lewkowicz and Zawadowska-Kittel's (2008) research showed that in terms of the frequency of skills-related EFL class activities in Polish secondary schools, writing was the least practised skill.

The present study has been informed by the current language learning methodology (Nunan, 1999, Cook, 2008, Ellis, 2012, Griffiths, 2008), which stresses the autonomy of learners who are viewed as agents of their own learning process. The research findings will be analysed in the light of this theory in order to gain insight from the Polish secondary school context.

As Oxford (1990: 201) argues: 'Learners need to learn how to learn, and teachers need to learn how to facilitate the process. Although learning is certainly part of the human condition, conscious skill in self-directed learning and in strategy use must be sharpened through training', I assume the issue of fostering independent learning in the language classroom should become an important aspect of the language teaching pedagogy. Consequently, this research has the following aims:

- to establish whether Polish EFL secondary school learners are aware of their English language writing strategies,
- to find out whether they feel confident in their usage of these strategies or whether they require additional help to develop them,
- to discover what the learners' choices of writing strategies are based on,
- and to investigate whether there is any relationship between learners' perceptions of their writing strategies and their writing performance.

The participants in this research will be the first and the second year secondary school students who will be taking the national exam in English at the end of their third year of study. My intention is to explore their opinions and beliefs with regard to their English language writing strategies and also to relate these variables to the students' writing performance. Consequently, I have decided on a mixed method approach to the study, which will combine a quantitative analysis of questionnaires and learners' writing samples with a qualitative analysis of interviews with the learners.

The theoretical framework for the research is Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of cognitive development (Lantolf and Appel, 1994), the sources of information on the

References:


Research Ethics
Please outline any ethical issues that might arise from this study and how they are to be addressed.

NB all research projects have ethical considerations. Please complete this section as fully as possible using the following pointers for guidance.

- Does the project involve potentially deceiving participants? Yes/No
- Will you be requiring the disclosure of confidential or private information? Yes/No
- Is the project likely to lead to the disclosure of illegal activity or incriminating information about participants? Yes/No
- Does the project require a Criminal Records Bureau check for the researcher? Yes/No

As the researcher collecting data in the institutions, I will remain under the supervision of English teachers who are employed by these institutions.

- Is the project likely to expose participants to distress of any nature? Yes/No
- Will participants be rewarded for their involvement? Yes/No
- Are there any potential conflicts of interest in this project? Yes/No
- Any other potential concerns? Yes/No

If you answered yes to any of the points above, please explain.

Does the proposed research project involve:

- The analysis of existing data, artefacts or performances that are not already in the public domain (i.e. that are published, freely available or available by subscription)? Yes/No
- The production and/or analysis of physical data (including computer code, physical entities and/or chemical materials) that might involve potential risks to humans, the researcher(s) or the University? Yes/No
- The direct or indirect collection of new data from humans or animals? Yes/No

If you answered yes to any of the points above, please explain.

This research will involve the direct collection of the new data in the field of L2 language writing from Polish secondary school learners aged above sixteen. The data will consist of the students' writing samples, the information regarding the type of English language writing strategies used by these students and the explanations of students' strategy choices. The collected data will be used only for the purpose of this research.

To obtain the permission to conduct the research in the schools I will book appointments with the headteachers. At these meetings, I will explain the purpose of the research and its data collection tools. If the permission is granted, I will provide the headteachers and the English teachers with the consent form before commencing the research. This form will guarantee the confidentiality of provided information and the voluntary participation of institutions and participants. It will also address the issues of storage, use and destruction of the collected data.

The data for this research will be collected through questionnaires, writing samples and interviews. If the participants are willing to take part in the research they will be asked to sign the consent form. The questionnaires will be distributed in the institutions during students' English classes. At the same time, students will be asked to write short paragraphs on the specified topics and these writing samples will be collected together with the questionnaires. Students will also be asked if they are willing to be contacted to take part in a follow-up e-mail interview and an option to opt
out will be included in the consent form. The institutions and participants will be provided with copies of the signed consent forms to keep for their record. They will be assured that their participation in the research is voluntary and they have the right to withdraw their consent at any time. They will be also guaranteed that any information collected in this research will remain confidential and will be used only for academic purposes at the London Metropolitan University. All the data will be destroyed within six months of the final project being submitted. The collection of the data will start in May and the final project will be due for completion in September 2014. There will be no personal information required of institutions and participants and the findings in the final report will be presented anonymously.

The above procedures are consistent with the requirements of the Act of 29 August 1997 on the protection of personal data in Poland.

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<tr>
<th>Will the proposed research be conducted in any country outside the UK? If so, are there independent research ethics regulations and procedures that either:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Do not recognise research ethics review approval from UK-based research ethics services? Yes/No and/or</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Require more detailed applications for research ethics review than would ordinarily be conducted by the University's Research Ethics Review Panels and/or other UK-based research ethics services? Yes/No</td>
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</table>

If you answered yes to any of the points above, please explain.

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<tr>
<th>Does the proposed research involve:</th>
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<tr>
<td>☐ The collection and/or analysis of body tissues or fluids from humans or animals? Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ The administration of any drug, food substance, placebo or invasive procedure to humans or animals? Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Any participants lacking capacity (as defined by the UK Mental Capacity Act 2005)? Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Relationships with any external statutory-, voluntary-, or commercial-sector organisation(s) that require(s) research ethics approval to be obtained from an external research ethics committee or the UK National Research Ethics Service (this includes research involving staff, clients, premises, facilities and data from the UK National Health Service, Social Care organisations and some other statutory public bodies within the UK)? Yes/No</td>
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If you answered yes to any of the points above, please contact your faculty’s RERP chair for further guidance.

SECTIO C: THE PROJECT - RISKS AND BENEFITS

| C1 | Risk Assessment |
Please outline

• the risks posed by this project to both researcher and research participants N/A
• the ways in which you intend to mitigate these risks N/A
• the benefits of this project to the applicant, participants and any others N/A
Checklist to be completed by applicant prior to submission of the form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Completed</th>
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<td>Section A</td>
<td>Yes Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Section B</td>
<td>Yes Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Section C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Proposal attached</td>
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</table>

Please submit this Form as an email attachment to the Chair of your faculty’s Research Ethics Review Panel (RERP) and copy in all of the staff and students who will be involved in the proposed research.

See: http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/research/the-research-and-postgraduate-office/current-students/research-ethics.cfm

Please note that research ethics approval can be granted for a maximum of 4 years or for the duration of the proposed research on the condition that:

- The researcher must inform their faculty’s Research Ethics Review Panel (RERP) of any changes to the proposed research that may alter the answers given to the questions in this form or any related research ethics applications
- The researcher must apply for an extension to their ethics approval if the research project continues beyond 4 years.
Feedback from Ethics Panel

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<tr>
<th>Approved Feedback where further work required</th>
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<td>Section A</td>
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<td>Section B</td>
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<td>Section C</td>
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**Date of approval**

NB: Researcher to be notified of decision within two weeks of the submission of the application
This questionnaire aims to investigate your English language writing strategies. It also includes a section where you are asked to write short paragraphs on the provided topics. Your participation in the research will remain confidential and it will be used only for academic purposes at London Metropolitan University. All the data will be destroyed within six months from the submission date of the final project. There will be no personal information required of you and findings in the final report will be presented anonymously.

For each statement please tick one of the boxes which best suits you.
The options are:
1 - Strongly Disagree
2 - Disagree
3 - Undecided
4 - Agree
5 - Strongly Agree

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Planning</th>
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<th>2</th>
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<th>5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 I use study guides to English writing a lot.</td>
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<td>2 I revise rules of writing in English before I start writing.</td>
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<td>3 Reading around the topic helps me in writing.</td>
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<td>4 I plan out first what I want to write.</td>
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<td>5 I plan out text organisation as I write.</td>
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<td>6 I practise grammatical structures which are required for a writing task beforehand.</td>
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<td>7 I prepare a list of useful keywords or vocabulary items.</td>
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<td>8 I brainstorm many ideas first before I start a writing task.</td>
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<td>9 I study some samples of writing first before I start writing my task</td>
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<td>10 Sharing and discussing ideas with other students or teacher help me a lot in writing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 I refer to my personal experience which is relevant to the topic when I write.</td>
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<td>12 I pay attention to the meaning than to the grammatical correctness.</td>
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<td>13 If I lack the right word, I describe what I wanted to say.</td>
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<td>14 The more writing tasks I do, the better my writing gets.</td>
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<td>15 If I don’t know what to write next, I take a short break to refresh my mind.</td>
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<td>16 I think in English when writing the text.</td>
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<td>17 I think in Polish first and then translate my ideas into English.</td>
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<td>18 I use a monolingual dictionary.</td>
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<tr>
<td>19 I use a bilingual dictionary.</td>
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<td>20 I only use the grammatical structures I know well to avoid mistakes.</td>
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<td>21.</td>
<td>I always write a draft and then I revise it and correct it.</td>
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<td>22.</td>
<td>I benefit from peer feedback a lot.</td>
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<td>23.</td>
<td>The error correction and teacher’s feedback help me to improve my writing.</td>
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<td>24.</td>
<td>I check the content for clarity and logic.</td>
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<td>25.</td>
<td>I check my grammar.</td>
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<td>26.</td>
<td>I check my vocabulary.</td>
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<td>27.</td>
<td>I read the text to myself to check if it is easy to follow for the reader.</td>
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<td>28.</td>
<td>I check if the content is relevant to the topic.</td>
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<td>29.</td>
<td>I break down too long sentences into shorter and simpler ones.</td>
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<td>30.</td>
<td>I read the teacher’s feedback on my previous assignments and follow the advice received in the new assignments.</td>
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Write a short paragraph for each of the following writing tasks.

1. Describe your best friend.

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Thank you for your time and help in this research.
APPENDIX 5
APPENDIX 6

This interview aims to investigate your English language writing strategies. The objective is to help you identify the processes and behaviours which you activate when you prepare for, execute and revise your L2 compositions. Your reflections will provide an insight into the nature of the L2 writing which will be an important contribution to knowledge and could be used to design materials and resources which will facilitate the teaching and learning of the L2 writing in the future. The interview should take approximately half an hour and your participation and cooperation throughout the process is highly appreciated. All the information collected in this interview will remain confidential and it will be used only for academic purposes at London Metropolitan University. All the data will be destroyed within six months from the submission date of the final project. There will be no personal information required of you and findings in the final report will be presented anonymously. You also have the right to drop out at any time in the course of the research.

Please answer the questions in English or in Polish.

1. Which one do you prefer: writing in Polish or writing in English? Why?
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2. What is the first thing that you do when you are given your English writing task? Why?
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3. What are your next steps in writing in English? Why?
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4. How much time do you spend planning your English writing task? Why?
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5. Do you read articles or books in English? Do you think reading can help you in writing? Why?
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6. Which one do you think is most important for writing in English:
   □ good grammar,
   □ good vocabulary
   □ ideas and how you present them? Why? (You can choose only one)

7. Which one would like more help with: grammar, vocabulary, finding ideas and
   organising them? (You can choose only one)

8. Who do you prefer to ask for help when writing in English: another student or the
   teacher? Why?

9. Do you find it helpful to discuss your English writing topic with other students? Why?

10. Do you give your English written work to another student to read and ask for his/her
    opinion? Why?

11. Do you read other students' English written works and give them your opinions?
    Why?

12. What activities in the English classroom help you in writing? Why?
13. What do you do when you don't know what to write? Why?

14. What do you do when you are not sure if you used the right word? Why?

15. What do you do when you are not sure about the grammar? Why?

16. Would you find it useful to be given a guide of what to write in each paragraph? Why?

17. Does your English teacher give you his/her comments on your written work together with the mark? Do you think such comments can help you improve your English writing? Why?

18. What types of correction do you think would be most useful for you to improve your English writing? Why?

19. How do you revise your written work and how much time does it take you? Why?

20. If your school organised after school classes for students to meet and discuss their English writing tasks with other students and to get advice from a writing mentor...
(a person qualified to help you develop your English writing skills) would you take part in them? Why?

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Thank you for your time and help in this research.
Interview 1 [Conducted in English]

1. Which one do you prefer: writing in Polish or writing in English? Why?
   I do prefer writing in Polish because this is my native language. Simple.

2. What is the first thing that you do when you are given your English writing task?
   Why?
   Plan out the answers in my head in Polish.

3. What are your next steps in writing in English? Why?
   Translate this, and I write.

4. How much time do you spend planning your English writing task? Why?
   Moment. Because, I don't need much.

5. Do you read articles or books in English? Do you think reading can help you in writing? Why?
   Yes, I like to read this. I do think that is helpful because I learn spelling and grammar.

6. Which one do you think is most important for writing in English:
   ✅ good grammar, ✅
   good vocabulary
   ✅ ideas and how you present them? Why? (You can choose only one)

   Grammar is important [translated from Polish].

7. Which one would like more help with: grammar, vocabulary, finding ideas and organising them? (You can choose only one)
   Vocabulary, because it is often deficient.

8. Who do you prefer to ask for help when writing in English: another student or the teacher? Why?
   Teacher. I don't know why. Simply.

9. Do you find it helpful to discuss your English writing topic with other students? Why?
   [No answer was provided]

10. Do you give your English written work to another student to read and ask for his/her opinion? Why?
Yes, because opinion about my work of English is important to me, when it is reasonable.

11. Do you read other students' English written works and give them your opinions? Why? No, because they don't give them to me.


14. What do you do when you are not sure if you used the right word? Why? Find on translate google.com.

15. What do you do when you are not sure about the grammar? Why? Find on translate google.com.

16. Would you find it useful to be given a guide of what to write in each paragraph? Why? If I had that guide, it would be very useful for me because I would know what I must include in my essay.

17. Does your English teacher give you his/her comments on your written work together with the mark? Do you think such comments can help you improve your English writing? Why? My teachers give me a lot of useful comments about my essay or something like that. I think this is very important because I can understand my defects.

18. What types of correction do you think would be most useful for you to improve your English writing? Why? I think, I should work more on my grammar and spelling because these are the aspects of English I struggle most with [translated from Polish].

19. How do you revise your written work and how much time does it take you? Why? I always check my grammatical errors and I talk about my essay with my mom or sister; it takes me 15 minutes.

20. If your school organised after school classes for students to meet and discuss their English writing tasks with other students and to get advice from a writing mentor (a person qualified to help you develop your English writing skills) would you take part in them? Why?
21. [No answer was provided]
1. Which one do you prefer: writing in Polish or writing in English? Why?
   I prefer writing in English because it gives me the opportunity to practise the vocabulary and grammar and it leads to an increase in my overall language ability.

2. What is the first thing that you do when you are given your English writing task? Why?
   The first thing is to prepare the general layout of my text which I follow when writing. This helps me to complete the task in an effective and confident manner.

3. What are your next steps in writing in English? Why?
   Then I write the first draft in order to be able to assess the produced text for its quality and length. This allows me to correct the mistakes related to the grammar and the coherence of the text.

4. How much time do you spend planning your English writing task? Why?
   I need around 10 minutes. This is the optimal time frame, which allows me to plan my text. Within this time frame, I also try to find the useful vocabulary.

5. Do you read articles or books in English? Do you think reading can help you in writing? Why?
   Personally, I don't read articles or books in English because my level of English does not allow me to that. However, I am sure it is helpful in learning the language; helps to expand the vocabulary, improve the grammar including the idioms.

6. Which one do you think is most important for writing in English:
   □ good grammar, □
   good vocabulary
   □ ideas and how you present them? Why? (You can choose only one)
   Good extensive vocabulary helps to show off your language ability, which is positively assessed by the examiner.

7. Which one would like more help with: grammar, vocabulary, finding ideas and organising them? (You can choose only one)
   In order to develop the vocabulary, it is definitely helpful to read English books. The care also needs to be taken when selecting the course books.

8. Who do you prefer to ask for help when writing in English: another student or the teacher? Why?
Definitely, the teacher. Despite the time constraints, she is the person who stays in touch with the changes in the curriculum all the time and most importantly she has a lot of experience in the field.

9. Do you find it helpful to discuss your English writing topic with other students? Why?
Discussions are helpful because they are conducted in English; in this way I can gradually adjust to the English language setting. In addition discussions help to improve my English language ability.

10. Do you give your English written work to another student to read and ask for his/her opinion? Why?
I am not sure whether such activities are effective. As I already mentioned, the teacher knows better how to correct written tasks and for sure, she will provide me with the right feedback.

11. Do you read other students’ English written works and give them your opinions? Why?
Sometimes, I help students who are not sure about their compositions when they ask me for that.

12. What activities in the English classroom help you in writing? Why?
I find it very helpful in my English writing to be in contact with the language: discussions, conversations as well as, grammatical exercises and those exercises which are focused on the development of more advanced vocabulary are very useful. In this way, the produced text becomes more original and has a better quality.

13. What do you do when you don’t know what to write? Why?
In such case, I try to imagine myself in the context of what I am writing. Such approach allows me to better understand the topic.

14. What do you do when you are not sure if you used the right word? Why?
Depending on the available time, I either try to remind myself the word collocations or I focus on how the missing word is usually used in a sentence. If neither approach works, I leave that word out and continue writing.

15. What do you do when you are not sure about the grammar? Why?
The same as the previous one. I try to remind myself how the form was used in the examples or other contexts.

16. Would you find it useful to be given a guide of what to write in each paragraph? Why?
Yes, I would like such help because this could prevent the possibility of my misunderstanding of the topic.
17. Does your English teacher give you his/her comments on your written work together with the mark? Do you think such comments can help you improve your English writing? Why?
No, my teacher doesn't use such method but I believe it would be a good idea because comments from the teacher who is the expert in the field would be highly valuable.

18. What types of correction do you think would be most useful for you to improve your English writing? Why?
I think the already mentioned teacher's feedback with the detailed error correction as well as suggestions of better constructions would be sufficient.

19. How do you revise your written work and how much time does it take you? Why?
I check if the text is relevant to the topic and if it follows the task instructions. I check if I stayed within the word limit. Then I proofread the text. It takes me around 10-15 minutes.

20. If your school organised after school classes for students to meet and discuss their English writing tasks with other students and to get advice from a writing mentor (a person qualified to help you develop your English writing skills) would you take part in them? Why?
Unfortunately, my school doesn't organise such type of meetings.
Interview 3 [Conducted in English]

1. Which one do you prefer: writing in Polish or writing in English? Why?
   I prefer writing in English because I don't like writing in Polish.

2. What is the first thing that you do when you are given your English writing task? Why?
   I check some vocabulary which I will need. I think that using unusual vocabulary makes my writing more interesting.

3. What are your next steps in writing in English? Why?
   Then I check some grammar and I'm reading around the subject. It's easier to write then.

4. How much time do you spend planning your English writing task? Why?
   Not a lot. I'm just writing and then I check my mistakes. It's good for me because I've got everything what I'm thinking on paper and nothing escapes from me.

5. Do you read articles or books in English? Do you think reading can help you in writing? Why?
   Yes, it is helpful because I can find there interesting vocabulary.

6. Which one do you think is most important for writing in English:
   □ good grammar, □
   □ good vocabulary
   □ ideas and how you present them? Why? (You can choose only one)
   Good vocabulary. It makes the work more interesting.

7. Which one would like more help with: grammar, vocabulary, finding ideas and organising them? (You can choose only one)
   I think that I need help with finding ideas.

8. Who do you prefer to ask for help when writing in English: another student or the teacher? Why?
   It depends. I don't have an opinion.

9. Do you find it helpful to discuss your English writing topic with other students? Why?
   Yes, because I can hear from them good ideas.

10. Do you give your English written work to another student to read and ask for his/her opinion? Why?
    Sometimes, I sometimes don't see my mistakes.
11. Do you read other students' English written works and give them your opinions? Why? If they ask me. I like helping other people.

12. What activities in the English classroom help you in writing? Why? Discussing the topic. If teacher tells how to write something, it's easier to start writing.

13. What do you do when you don't know what to write? Why? I'm searching some clues on internet because there is everything and I can find something what will help me.

14. What do you do when you are not sure if you used the right word? Why? I'm checking it on internet. I don't know why I do that, it just makes me sure.

15. What do you do when you are not sure about the grammar? Why? I'm asking the teacher because she/he will always help me.

16. Would you find it useful to be given a guide of what to write in each paragraph? Why? Yes, I like to know what I have to write.

17. Does your English teacher give you his/her comments on your written work together with the mark? Do you think such comments can help you improve your English writing? Why? Yes, it can help me because I can see what I did wrong and in the future I'll avoid that mistake.

18. What types of correction do you think would be most useful for you to improve your English writing? Why? I think that giving comments on my work can help me the best.

19. How do you revise your written work and how much time does it take you? Why? I check it only once. It takes me two minutes. I have to check that I wrote for sure.

20. If your school organised after school classes for students to meet and discuss their English writing tasks with other students and to get advice from a writing mentor (a person qualified to help you develop your English writing skills) would you take part in them? Why? No. I don't have a lot of time.
Interview 4 [Translated from Polish]

1. Which one do you prefer: writing in Polish or writing in English? Why?
   I prefer writing in Polish because I know more words and I make fewer mistakes.

2. What is the first thing that you do when you are given your English writing task? Why?
   I plan out and what I want to write; I write down the messages I want to convey. In this way it is easier to produce a coherent text.

3. What are your next steps in writing in English? Why?
   Then I write the whole text and once I finish, I correct the mistakes because it is quick that way.

4. How much time do you spend planning your English writing task? Why?
   A few minutes, I always have a few ideas and I choose the best one.

5. Do you read articles or books in English? Do you think reading can help you in writing? Why?
   Yes, I do; especially those articles or books which I have already read in Polish. In this way I learn more vocabulary.

6. Which one do you think is most important for writing in English:
   - good grammar,
   - good vocabulary
   - ideas and how you present them? Why? (You can choose only one)

Vocabulary; the most important is to convey the message correctly and in a comprehensive manner.

7. Which one would like more help with: grammar, vocabulary, finding ideas and organising them? (You can choose only one)
   Grammar

8. Who do you prefer to ask for help when writing in English: another student or the teacher? Why?
   I prefer to ask the teacher because she will help me more.

9. Do you find it helpful to discuss your English writing topic with other students? Why?
   No, I prefer to use my own ideas.
10. Do you give your English written work to another student to read and ask for his/her opinion? Why?
   Rarely, my works are usually ones of the best.

11. Do you read other students' English written works and give them your opinions? Why?
   Sometimes, if they ask for this, I check their works and give my opinions.

12. What activities in the English classroom help you in writing? Why?
   Grammatical exercises because then I understand more.

13. What do you do when you don't know what to write? Why?
   I don't have this problem. I always have some ideas.

14. What do you do when you are not sure if you used the right word? Why?
   I replace it with another which I am sure about. I don't want to waste time on searching in the dictionary.

15. What do you do when you are not sure about the grammar? Why?
   I try to guess and I write down what I think might be right because there is a high probability that I chose the right option.

16. Would you find it useful to be given a guide of what to write in each paragraph? Why?
   No, I wouldn't.

17. Does your English teacher give you his/her comments on your written work together with the mark? Do you think such comments can help you improve your English writing? Why?
   She doesn't do it however; this could be helpful in order not to make the same mistakes again.

18. What types of correction do you think would be most useful for you to improve your English writing? Why?
   I think that my English writing is ok.

19. How do you revise your written work and how much time does it take you? Why?
   I read it again and correct if necessary. It takes me a few minutes.

20. If your school organised after school classes for students to meet and discuss their English writing tasks with other students and to get advice from a writing mentor (a person qualified to help you develop your English writing skills) would you take part in them? Why?
   No, I don't have time for this.
Interview 5 [Translated from Polish]

1. Which one do you prefer: writing in Polish or writing in English? Why?
I prefer to write in Polish because this is my mother tongue and I have more extensive vocabulary.

2. What is the first thing that you do when you are given your English writing task? Why?
I think about what I should write, I read some samples of similar compositions. I plan my text in such a way to ensure that that the structure and the content are right.

3. What are your next steps in writing in English? Why?
I start writing because once I planned my work I don't think there is anything else remaining to be done.

4. How much time do you spend planning your English writing task? Why?
It depends whether the task is easy or difficult. I sometimes start writing straightaway but other times it can take me even up to 20 minutes.

5. Do you read articles or books in English? Do you think reading can help you in writing? Why?
Yes, I do read in English. I think it helps to improve vocabulary and to get more familiar with grammatical constructions.

6. Which one do you think is most important for writing in English:
   - good grammar,
   - good vocabulary
   - ideas and how you present them? Why? (You can choose only one)
Vocabulary; because it is essential to express the thoughts. Only grammar and ideas are not enough if you don't know the vocabulary.

7. Which one would like more help with: grammar, vocabulary, finding ideas and organising them? (You can choose only one)
I would need help with the ideas because sometimes I lack the creativity and I don't know what to write.

8. Who do you prefer to ask for help when writing in English: another student or the teacher? Why?
The teacher because she has more knowledge and experience.

9. Do you find it helpful to discuss your English writing topic with other students? Why?
I don't think this is helpful because other students usually have the same level of English as me and they tend to make mistakes. Sometimes it is better not to follow other students' advice because it may be wrong.

10. Do you give your English written work to another student to read and ask for his/her opinion? Why?
   No, I don't; for the same reason as I already mentioned. Only sometimes I ask my friend who lived in America for advice because she knows English very well.

11. Do you read other students' English written works and give them your opinions? Why?
   No, because I don't consider it as a useful activity. I prefer examples from professional study guides.

12. What activities in the English classroom help you in writing? Why?
   When the teacher explains the structure of the task and provides the useful vocabulary, then I know exactly how to complete the task.

13. What do you do when you don't know what to write? Why?
   I ask my private tutor for help or I read samples of similar works which helps me to find some ideas for writing.

14. What do you do when you are not sure if you used the right word? Why?
   I search for a synonym; either I use a dictionary or I try to remind it myself in order to be confident that what I write is correct.

15. What do you do when you are not sure about the grammar? Why?
   If I can, I revise the grammatical rules. If I can't do that, I try to substitute it with a simpler construction if there is such a possibility.

16. Would you find it useful to be given a guide of what to write in each paragraph? Why?
   Yes, because sometimes I struggle with finding ideas for writing. I also feel more confident when my work is checked by someone who knows English better than I do.

17. Does your English teacher give you his/her comments on your written work together with the mark? Do you think such comments can help you improve your English writing? Why?
   Yes, she does. I think this is helpful because it makes it easier for me to understand my mistakes and work on correcting them.

18. What types of correction do you think would be most useful for you to improve your English writing? Why?
Comments on what I did wrong, why that was wrong and how I should correct it. In that way I can fully understand my mistakes.

19. How do you revise your written work and how much time does it take you? Why?
I usually read the work once to check if there are any spelling mistakes. While writing, I think a lot about my composition and all doubts regarding the vocabulary and grammar I try to check as it goes.

20. If your school organised after school classes for students to meet and discuss their English writing tasks with other students and to get advice from a writing mentor (a person qualified to help you develop your English writing skills) would you take part in them? Why?
No, because I have private English tuitions which have more individual approach and give better effects.
Interview 6 [Translated from Polish]

1. Which one do you prefer: writing in Polish or writing in English? Why?
   I prefer writing in Polish to writing in English because my vocabulary is more extensive in Polish.

2. What is the first thing that you do when you are given your English writing task? Why?
   I prepare a plan of the order in which I am going to write.

3. What are your next steps in writing in English? Why?
   I think about the beginning and the useful vocabulary.

4. How much time do you spend planning your English writing task? Why?
   I usually think for a short while about the topic and I start writing straight after.

5. Do you read articles or books in English? Do you think reading can help you in writing? Why?
   I like reading English newspapers; they are definitely useful in learning a variety of phrases.

6. Which one do you think is most important for writing in English:
   - good grammar
   - good vocabulary
   - ideas and how you present them? Why? (You can choose only one)
   Ideas and the content are the most important.

7. Which one would like more help with: grammar, vocabulary, finding ideas and organising them? (You can choose only one)
   Grammar

8. Who do you prefer to ask for help when writing in English: another student or the teacher? Why?
   The teacher always explains the problem so it is always better to ask her when it is needed.

9. Do you find it helpful to discuss your English writing topic with other students? Why?
   Yes, because in this way we can exchange the ideas which could be useful when I will be writing the task later on.

10. Do you give your English written work to another student to read and ask for his/her opinion? Why?
Yes, I find it helpful.

11. Do you read other students' English written works and give them your opinions? Why?
   Yes, I also try to advise them what else they could include in their compositions.

12. What activities in the English classroom help you in writing? Why?
   Group work

13. What do you do when you don't know what to write? Why?
   I ask the teacher/fellow students for their opinion.

14. What do you do when you are not sure if you used the right word? Why?
   I ask a fellow student for their opinion.

15. What do you do when you are not sure about the grammar? Why?
   I ask the teacher for her opinion.

16. Would you find it useful to be given a guide of what to write in each paragraph? Why?
   No, I generally don't have much problem with writing.

17. Does your English teacher give you his/her comments on your written work together with the mark? Do you think such comments can help you improve your English writing? Why?
   Yes, the teacher's feedback provides the guidelines for not making the same mistakes in the future.

18. What types of correction do you think would be most useful for you to improve your English writing? Why?
   Vocabulary focused.

19. How do you revise your written work and how much time does it take you? Why?
   It doesn't take long. I usually read the text once and I try to find the mistakes.

20. If your school organised after school classes for students to meet and discuss their English writing tasks with other students and to get advice from a writing mentor (a person qualified to help you develop your English writing skills) would you take part in them? Why?
   I think: yes, I would. It is definitely a good way to improve my skills.
Interview 7 [Translated from Polish]

1. Which one do you prefer: writing in Polish or writing in English? Why?
   I prefer writing in Polish to English because it is my national language and I have more words in my head so it's much easier for me.

2. What is the first thing that you do when you are given your English writing task? Why?
   I think about the general concept and how to structure and organise the text.

3. What are your next steps in writing in English? Why?
   I start writing down my ideas because I already have my concept and the plan ready.

4. How much time do you spend planning your English writing task? Why?
   About 15 minutes.

5. Do you read articles or books in English? Do you think reading can help you in writing? Why?
   Yes, I do. I think that reading in English is helpful because you can expand your vocabulary, which is useful for writing.

6. Which one do you think is most important for writing in English:
   - good grammar
   - good vocabulary
   - ideas and how you present them? Why? (You can choose only one)
   I think the ideas are the most important because otherwise there is nothing to read.

7. Which one would like more help with: grammar, vocabulary, finding ideas and organising them? (You can choose only one)
   Grammar

8. Who do you prefer to ask for help when writing in English: another student or the teacher? Why?
   Another student because I find it easier to communicate with peers.

9. Do you find it helpful to discuss your English writing topic with other students? Why?
   Yes, because in this way I find new ideas and I learn different perspectives on the topic.

10. Do you give your English written work to another student to read and ask for his/her opinion? Why?
    Yes, because every opinion, advice and correction is important.
11. Do you read other students' English written works and give them your opinions? Why?  
Yes, because they ask me that.

12. What activities in the English classroom help you in writing? Why?  
Watching English movies with subtitles because this helps me remember words better.

13. What do you do when you don't know what to write? Why?  
I search for ideas, advice from fellow students because this allows me to start writing.

14. What do you do when you are not sure if you used the right word? Why?  
I ask other students because they will help me.

15. What do you do when you are not sure about the grammar? Why?  
I ask my teacher for advice.

16. Would you find it useful to be given a guide of what to write in each paragraph? Why?  
Yes, because this would be helpful for me.

17. Does your English teacher give you his/her comments on your written work together with the mark? Do you think such comments can help you improve your English writing? Why?  
Yes, she does. It is useful because I can learn more in this way.

18. What types of correction do you think would be most useful for you to improve your English writing? Why?  
I'm not sure but I think that the corrections by my teacher are sufficient.

19. How do you revise your written work and how much time does it take you? Why?  
I ask my teacher or a fellow student to proofread my texts. It takes around 10 minutes.

20. If your school organised after school classes for students to meet and discuss their English writing tasks with other students and to get advice from a writing mentor (a person qualified to help you develop your English writing skills) would you take part in them? Why?  
No, because the help of my teacher is sufficient. Besides, I believe that such classes should not focus only on the writing skills.
APPENDIX 8

The marking criteria used were as follows:

- 10 points was the maximum which a student could score for the whole task; this breaks down as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content (C)</th>
<th>Form (F)</th>
<th>Variety (V)</th>
<th>Accuracy (A)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 point for each text (4 points max)</td>
<td>2 points max</td>
<td>2 points max</td>
<td>2 points max</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- only full points were given, no half points were allowed,
- the content referred to the communicative function of each text,
- the form referred to the structures used by the students and the suitability of those structures to the topic and the purpose of the text (following the English writing conventions: coherence of the text; division of the text into the beginning, the main body and the ending; linking the ideas, etc),
- the variety of vocabulary and grammatical constructions,
- the accuracy of vocabulary and grammatical constructions.
III. Write a short paragraph for each of the following writing tasks.

1. Describe your best friend.
   
   **My best friend is Dominika. She is smart, kind, and helpful. She has long brown hair and curly eyebrows. She is very pretty and intelligent. She is like my sister. Dominika is smart.**

2. Write a letter from holidays to your parents.
   
   **Hi Mom and Dad,**
   
   **I'm in America on holidays. It's great. I was in a lot of interesting restaurants etc. America is pretty here. See you soon, Karin.**

3. Decide whether you are for or against wearing school uniforms.
   
   **School uniforms are a good idea because it is ugly. School uniforms are embarrassing and uncomfortable.**

4. Find a solution how you can help the environment.
   
   **We must limit driving an car, because it is very dangerous. We must ride on bike and on foot.**

IV. Fill in the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your strong points in writing</th>
<th>Your weak points in writing</th>
<th>Writing tasks you like the most</th>
<th>Writing tasks you don't like</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Picture</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>Letter</td>
<td>Essay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III. Write a short paragraph for each of the following writing tasks.

1. Describe your best friend.
   My best friend is Asia. We knew each other for many years. She is very tall, slim, girl with long, shiny, brown hair, blue, almond-shaped eyes and full, red lips.

2. Write a letter from holidays to your parents.
   Dear Mom and Dad,
   I’m going to tell you all about my holidays. We and my friend, Asia, are having a great time in one of the hottest countries in the world! We are there just one week, but we did a lot of activities.

3. Decide whether you are for or against wearing school uniforms.
   I don’t want to wear school uniforms, because they’re uncomfortable and they take away student’s individuality. I’m for against wearing school uniforms.

4. Find a solution how you can help the environment.
   We can change the bulbs, separate the paper, plastic and glass into special bins. We should turn off the light while we are leaving the room, take often showers, not baths, because while we’re taking showers we waste less water.

IV. Fill in the table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your strong points in writing:</th>
<th>Your weak points in writing:</th>
<th>Writing tasks you like the most</th>
<th>Writing tasks you don’t like</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>grammar</td>
<td>email</td>
<td>stories</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>letters</td>
<td>essays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>describing people</td>
<td>discussing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>pictures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mark 10
C|F|V|A
3
4 2212
III. Write a short paragraph for each of the following writing tasks.

1. Describe your best friend.

2. Write a letter from holidays to your parents.

3. Decide whether you are for or against wearing school uniforms.

4. Find a solution how you can help the environment.

IV. Fill in the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your strong points in writing</th>
<th>Your weak points in writing</th>
<th>Writing tasks you like the most</th>
<th>Writing tasks you don't like</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>grammar</td>
<td>writing</td>
<td>learning words</td>
<td>writing a review</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mark: 6
III. Write a short paragraph for each of the following writing tasks.

1. Describe your best friend.
   My best friend is ginger with pretty sandy hair. She has blue eyes and she is always smiling. She's nice for everyone so she has got a lot of friends.

2. Write a letter from your friends to your parents.
   Dear mom and dad! How are you? Today we went with my friends to the beach. We didn't have a good time here, but I'm missing you. I can't wait when I'll come back home.
   Kisses your daughter.

3. Decide whether you are for or against wearing school uniforms.
   I'm against wearing school uniforms because I do not like when somebody tells me what I should do. I prefer wearing my own clothes to school.

4. Find a solution how you can help the environment.
   I think that people should save water and electricity and eat less meat too. To prepare produce meat, it is using a lot of water and it is unecologic too. People should using more public transport and bikes, too.

IV. Fill in the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your strong points in writing</th>
<th>Your weak points in writing</th>
<th>Writing tasks you like the most</th>
<th>Writing tasks you don’t like</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ideas</td>
<td>grammar</td>
<td>review</td>
<td>essay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mark 9 1/2/21
III. Write a short paragraph for each of the following writing tasks.

1. Describe your best friend.
   Her's name is Maya. She is tall and has curly hair. She lives down the street. We often play together and laugh a lot. Her smile is amazing. We support each other when we have problems. I can always depend on her. I met her on school trip when I'm ten. This friendship has stood the test of time!

2. Write a letter from holidays to your parents.
   Dear my lovely parents,
   I have a good time here. The weather is superb!
   I meet a lot of nice people and pets. Don't worry about me. I am safe here and I love the beach. Give my regards to grandmothers. Have you everyone able to... ledgeringly?

3. Decide whether you are for or against wearing school uniforms.
   In my opinion, wearing school uniforms is absolutely in school fashion. Girls have their own clothes but children who grow up in poor are less well
   equipped.

4. Find a solution how you can help the environment.
   I can:
   - separate rubbish
   - organise action when clean up

IV. Fill in the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your strong points</th>
<th>Your weak points in writing</th>
<th>Writing tasks you like the most</th>
<th>Writing tasks you don't like</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>words</td>
<td>grammar</td>
<td>grammar</td>
<td>vocabulary, irregular verbs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III. Write a short paragraph for each of the following writing tasks.

1. Describe your best friend.
   
   Her name is Maria. She is 12 years old. She is a tolerant person. She likes to wear colorful clothes and a lot of jewelry. She also likes to read horror and thriller books and films. She sings in a rock band.

2. Write a letter from holidays to your parents.
   
   Hi, mom and dad!
   
   I'm writing to you now because I haven't got money but I want to tell you about wonderful time I'm spending in Paris. The weather is so good.
   
   Gradient... for... you... see you soon.

3. Decide whether you are for or against wearing school uniforms.
   
   I like wearing school uniform and I think everyone school must be the uniform. I think when you have the uniform people will be thin and that you are from good school.

4. Find a solution how you can help the environment.
   
   I am recycling the bottle - after juice or water it is a glass and plastic bottle - can after coke-cola and... I do from us many things which I and my family use every day. I did the chair from... old... newspapers.

IV. Fill in the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your strong points in writing</th>
<th>Your weak points in writing</th>
<th>Writing tasks you like the most</th>
<th>Writing tasks you don't like</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>many words</td>
<td>finding ideas mistakes</td>
<td>letter</td>
<td>essay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mark: 10  
CFVA 4.222
III. Write a short paragraph for each of the following writing tasks.

1. Describe your best friend:
   
   My best friend is the most important person in my life. He is tall and has brown long hair. He has 18 years. He is very helpful and polite. I can trust him.

2. Write a letter from holidays to your parents.
   
   Dear Mom and Dad,
   
   I had an amazing time in New York. The hotel I stayed in was very nice and comfortable. I have made a lot of new friends. New York is an interesting city. Sorry, I am really tired.

3. Decide whether you are for or against wearing school uniforms.
   
   I think school uniforms are good. They are good for young students. They teach school uniform, a self-concerted and discipline. School is not very boring.

4. Find a solution how you can help the environment.
   
   I can recycle. I can put any rubbish in the dustbin.
   
   IV. Fill in the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your strong points in writing</th>
<th>Your weak points in writing</th>
<th>Writing tasks you like the most</th>
<th>Writing tasks you don't like</th>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>paragraph</td>
<td></td>
<td>unpractical</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 9

Interview 2

Respondent Number: 65

Strategy Total: 122, Mark: 6 points (60%). The weak point in writing: Vocabulary.

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<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Form</th>
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<th>Accuracy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
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</table>

This student achieved an average mark for his writing samples, at the same time; he had a comparatively high strategy total. He preferred writing in English to writing in Polish, the reason for his choice was the perceived opportunity to expand his vocabulary and to practice grammatical rules when writing in English. He viewed the writing activity as facilitative to the language acquisition. He claimed to start his writing by first preparing a detailed plan of the text and then he conducted his drafting. In the planning stage he also focused on the preparation of useful vocabulary items. He admitted that his level of English proficiency did not allow him to read books or articles in English however; he considered the reading activity to be helpful in the language acquisition. He considered extensive vocabulary to be the most important attribute of the good writing. He liked to ask the teacher for help and he viewed positively discussions of writing topics with other students. He helped other less competent students with their writing as well. He believed that conversations, discussions and vocabulary and grammar exercises helped to improve his language proficiency, which consequently, should increase his writing competence. If he struggled with writing, he tended to use his imagination to arrive at new ideas. He focused on collocations to retrieve the missing words from his long term memory or he switched to sentence context clues and he tried to remind himself how these words were used in a sentence. If neither of those two strategies was successful, he simply omitted the missing word and continued writing. He used the same techniques as those described above when he was not sure about the grammatical structure. He would have liked to be given the guidelines for the paragraph writing and he would have liked to receive the teacher’s corrective feedback, which was not part of the classroom practice. He checked if his completed texts were relevant to the topic and if they were within the word limit then; he checked individual lexical and grammatical constructions. He also expressed a wish to take part in the after school writing classes.
Interview 3

Respondent Number: 57

Strategy Total: 124, Mark: 10 points (100%). The weak point in writing: Ideas.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
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<th>Accuracy</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This student achieved a high mark and had a high strategy total. She preferred writing in English to writing in Polish. The most challenging aspect of writing for her was finding the ideas. At the same time, she linked a limited scope of ideas with a lack of extensive vocabulary knowledge. She believed that if she had used more complex and varied vocabulary, her writing would become more proficient. She also reported that peer proofreading was helpful since it indicated the mistakes which otherwise would have remained unnoticed. Discussing the topic in the classroom, reading around the subject and the use of the Internet were identified to be conducive to the development of the EFL writing ability. She did not plan for her writing tasks instead; she preferred to carry on writing while following her thoughts and ideas which emerged in the process. However, she prepared some useful vocabulary items beforehand. The feedback was welcomed both from the teacher and the peer students. She was also willing to help other students with their writing by providing them with feedback on their compositions. She considered the strategy of using the paragraph guidelines to be useful for her writing development at the same time; she was not interested in taking part in the after school English writing classes due to the time constraints.

Interview 4

Respondent Number: 69

Strategy Total: 122, Mark: 7 points (70%). The weak point in writing: Grammar.

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<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Variety</th>
<th>Accuracy</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This student achieved a high mark and had a high strategy total. She preferred writing in Polish to writing in English; she claimed she made less mistakes and she had a more extensive vocabulary available to her when she wrote in Polish. She planned for her writing tasks and she compiled a list of messages which she wanted to communicate in her text. She reported that this strategy allowed her to produce coherent writing. She also stressed that she could find easily a range of writing ideas, out of which she selected the best to be developed further. She admitted that reading in English helped her in writing, especially when she could read in English those books and articles which she had previously read in Polish. She believed that good vocabulary was the most vital element of the EFL writing competence since it allowed the writer to express their ideas in a clear and comprehensive manner. She indicated she would require more help with the grammar. She preferred the teacher help over the peer help. She did not find the peer discussions to be useful for her either, and she preferred her own ideas to those of other students. She did not give her works to other students because she claimed that her works were usually among the best ones. She argued that grammatical exercises in the classroom were conducive to the development of her writing competence. If she missed the right word, she substituted it with another one which she knew well. She used the guessing strategy when she was not sure about grammatical structures. She claimed she did not require help with the paragraph contents. She would have liked to receive constructive teacher feedback though, which she viewed as helpful in identifying and eliminating the mistakes, which she otherwise kept repeating. She proof-read texts herself and corrected any mistakes which she identified in the process. Overall, she was confident about her writing competence. She showed no interest in the after school writing classes due to the time constraints.

**Interview 5**

**Respondent Number: 1**

**Strategy Total: 102, Mark: 9 points (90%). The weak point in writing: Ideas.**

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<th>Accuracy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This student achieved a high mark and had a low strategy total. She preferred writing in Polish to writing in English because her vocabulary was more limited in English. In the
planning stage, she claimed to read relevant writing samples and she prepared useful vocabulary items and grammatical structures. This student also referred to the task difficulty and how this affected her planning; she reported that the higher the difficulty level the longer the planning took her. She identified reading as useful for the vocabulary and grammar acquisition. She admitted that she would require help with generating the ideas for writing. She did not consider peer collaboration strategy to work for her. She was afraid that the fellow students were not competent enough and she could have become affected by the negative transfer of their mistakes. Therefore, she preferred to ask her teacher for help or she consulted written by professionals study guides. Those two options she considered as the resources of reliable information. She used the substitution strategy when she was not sure about the right word or grammatical structure. She was not interested in the guidelines on the paragraph contents. She did not devote much time to the final revision of her texts because she conducted ongoing checks while writing. She reported she would have liked to receive the teacher’s corrective feedback and error correction. She did not require the after school EFL writing classes because she already had her individual private tuitions.

Interview 6

Respondent Number: 66

Strategy Total: 118, Mark: 6 points (60%). The weak point in writing: Grammar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Variety</th>
<th>Accuracy</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
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</table>

This student achieved an average mark and had a high strategy total. He preferred writing in Polish to writing in English because his vocabulary was more extensive in Polish. His planning strategies were to think about the topic and the beginning of a text and to prepare the required vocabulary. He claimed he liked to read articles in English, which he found conducive to learning useful phrases. He considered the ideas and the contents to be the most important factors in writing and he discussed the ideas with the peer students. At the same time, he indicated he would require more help with the grammar. He read other students’ works and he tried to help them with the contents; he also shared his works with others and asked for their opinions. He preferred the teacher help to the peer-help; he claimed that the teacher would always provide a solution to a problem. He reported he asked the peer student
for help with the vocabulary whereas when he required help with the grammar, he asked the teacher. Overall, he was confident about his writing competence; he argued he did not require help with the paragraph contents. He had a positive attitude towards the teacher's feedback and the error correction because he believed that these would help him stop repeating his mistakes. He did not spend much time on the revision; he proof-read his texts himself. He commented positively on the suggestion of the after school EFL writing classes.

Interview 7

Respondent Number: 58

Strategy Total: 121, Mark: 10 points (100%). The weak point in writing: Grammar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Variety</th>
<th>Accuracy</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

This student achieved a high mark and had a high strategy total. She preferred writing in Polish to writing in English because her vocabulary was more extensive in Polish. She planned for her compositions by finding ideas first and then, she considered how to organise the contents. She reported a frequent usage of the social strategies; she collaborated with the peer students when planning her texts however; for any grammar related problems she consulted the teacher. She also asked the fellow students or the teacher to proof read her texts and she helped other students by providing comments on their works. She considered the ideas and the contents to be the most important factors in writing. She considered reading in English as conducive to the enrichment of her vocabulary. She also mentioned watching English movies in their original version and with subtitles as another strategy for the vocabulary acquisition. She would use the guidelines for the paragraph contents, should these become available. However, she was against the after school classes which would focus solely on the EFL writing.