The Effect of 'Power' As An Instructional Writing Strategy on Students' Writing Skill Across Gender

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A R T I C L E I N F O

A B S T R A C T

The study aimed at: (1) investigating the effect of POWER as an instructional writing strategy on students' writing skill; (2) analyzing the different effect of POWER across gender; and (3) analyzing problems of writing faced by the students. The explanatory design was applied in this study. A writing post-test was used to obtain the data and were analyzed using One-Way ANOVA. The findings of the study revealed that (1) there was a significant effect of POWER on students' writing skill: p = .001 with a large effect size (eta = .17); (2) there was a significant difference on the effect of POWER on the students' writing skill across gender: p = .013 with a large effect size (eta = .18); and (3) the males struggled in editing and revising rather than females. Then, those resulted in the differences quality of their writing, in which point female participants surpassed the males. Therefore, teachers are expected to implement POWER as one of their variants in EFL writing instruction

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1. Introduction

In foreign language context, that is a must for learners to master four main language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Those skills should be addressed in such a way to help the students in achieving the standard of English learning (Lorena & Sadiku, 2015). Among the mentioned English skills, writing plays an important role as the features of communicative language teaching in the contents of foreign and second language (Tosuncuoğlu, 2018). As a consequence of communicative language teaching, writing is recognized as a method of thought and composition that should be advanced in language teaching and learning.

Writing is defined as a process of generating ideas, organizing and expressing ideas in a paragraph (Nunan, 2003). Harmer (2004) adds that writing can be used as a means of encouraging learners to focus on accurate language use. It means that writing is not merely intended to put words together but it should have communicative purposes. Writing aims at helping the learners to express their ideas in written form through involving activities such as generating ideas, focusing, planning, goal-setting, monitoring and evaluating.

Writing is not an automatic process that can be done instantly (Langan, 2008; Oshima & Hogue, 2006). According to Lincoln & Idris (2014), a whole writing process comprises some stages namely prewriting, writing, and post-writing. Prewriting is designed in order to generate background knowledge, selecting and narrowing appropriate topics, brainstorming ideas, and organizing thoughts (Wang, 2014). Additionally, Karim & Abu (2017) affirm that the students can be guided to overcome some problems in writing tasks through brainstorming activities. Then, it is continued by writing stage which is a stage of actual composing paper by constructing all collected ideas in prewriting. After that, in post-writing, there is editing and revision of the text in order to produce good quality text. These writing stages should be performed in assisting and developing the student's writing skill. Therefore, the teacher's role is shifted to help the students advance their writing skill in all writing stages rather than correcting and editing errors on the students' writing.

However, in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), writing as a communicative activity presents an enormous challenge for both EFL teachers and learners because of its complex process involving cognitive and metacognitive activities such as planning, organizing, drafting, editing, and revising (Mohseniasl, 2014). This complex process enables to create anxiety in many learners (Richards, 1990). Thus, due to the anxiety, then the learners tend to procrastinate in writing since they confuse where and how to start or copy text directly from many sources. Moreover, the students' problems in writing also could be seen from the quality of writing produced (Chamot, 2005; Liu, 2018; Maznun, Monsefi, & Nimehchisalem, 2017). It was revealed that there were also some problems found in the students' writing such as poor text organization, grammatical mistake, limited vocabulary usage, and sometimes there is no coherency in the text. Based on the mentioned problems, it shows that writing became a tough case for foreign language learners because they still felt anxious and struggled when performing writing.

Furthermore, the phenomenon of writing anxiety is not only come from the individual but it also deals with the type of instruction, the teacher itself, and tasks given (Daly & Wilson, 1983 in Kusumaningputri, Ningsih, & Wisasongko, 2018). It means that apart from the students' individual problems, external factors also influences the students' writing skill. It refers to the limited exposure of learners to writing strategy instruction and the awareness of teachers about the wide range of writing strategies (Kusumaningputri et al., 2018; Mastan, Maarof, & Embi, 2017; Suriyanti & Yaacob, 2016). In teaching writing, the teacher commonly applies conventional strategy in which the students are asked to write directly then collecting their writing after they finish it. In this case, the idea of writing strategy used by the teacher is quite the same as the strategy called POW (Pick topic, Organize the note, and Write and say more of modify). Recently, this kind of strategy is frequently implemented in teaching writing. The students are asked to pick a topic, organize their notes, and write. During the implementation of this strategy, the teacher does not control the students during writing as they are asked to write freely. Therefore, the writing process is not conducted based on appropriate writing stages that are started from prewriting, writing, and post-writing.

In respect to those phenomena, understanding the process of teaching writing should be started by acknowledging several writing strategies that can facilitate the students in the writing process. Instructional writing strategy plays an important role as one of the writing strategies that can assist the students' writing in step by step. According to Mohseniasl (2014), instructional strategies are considered as techniques that can be used by the teacher in helping the students to become independent in selecting learning styles and use them effectively to accomplish tasks or meet goals. The use of instructional writing strategy provides support to assist the students in becoming autonomous learners who control their own

writing (Chen, 2011). In addition, instructional writing strategy also enables the students to produce better writing pieces (Bakar, Awal, & Jalaluddin, 2011). In brief, the instructional writing strategy needs to be implemented in assisting the students to develop their writing starting from prewriting, writing, and post-writing until they can produce qualified writing.

POWER as an instructional writing strategy is more effective among the other kind of instructional writing strategies because POWER can facilitate the writing process by involving three stages in writing, namely prewriting, during writing and post-writing. In comparison to other instructional writing strategies, the steps of POWER are clearer, more logical, and very supportive (Rizqiya, Pamungkas, & Inayah, 2017). The students can remember and adapt the steps easily. Besides that, it also can be implemented to teach all text genres. Istianah (2016) found that the POWER strategy can develop the students' creativity in writing. Besides that, the implementation of POWER is effective for the students to select appropriate learning styles and enhancing motivation in learning (Rizqiya et al., 2017). In addition, it is also found that the POWER strategy helps the students in improving the students' ability in writing based on certain writing components such as content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanic (Muhari, Widiati, & Furaidah, 2017). From those previous studies, it can be seen that POWER as an instructional writing strategy can be used in assisting the writing process and developing students' writing skill.

In respect to the effectiveness of POWER, this present study attempts to investigate the effect of POWER as an instructional writing strategy on students' writing skill and it extends the line of the research exploring the effect of POWER as an instructional writing strategy on student's writing skill across gender differences. Gender differences come into account as moderator contributed to this study because it is considered as one of the internal factors affecting someone's success in learning, including in writing performances (Chung & Chang, 2017; Hadjar, Krolak-Schwerdt, Priem, & Glock, 2014; Marc Jackman & Morrain-Webb, 2019). Another reason is as a response to a stereotype about female's superiority in learning the language.

Some previous researches have reported that the language skills of females are more highly developed across many fields in a foreign language, and often more complex than the language skills of their male counterparts (Adams & Simmons, 2019; Cornett, 2014; Ishikawa, 2015; Suganob-nicolau & Sukamto, 2016). The male and female write differently in L2 with respect to process and product (Kubota, 2003 in Bijami et al. 2013). Research on gender differences in the writing process may consider a number of issues, such as selection, planning, writing, peer editing, and revision; on the other hand, as a product focus, it may also explore the choice of words, grammar, speech organization, public awareness, and so on (Kubota, 2003 in Bijami et al. 2013). Meanwhile, a study by Fidelia (2015) revealed that good performance does not rely on gender in any subject, but mostly on the use of effective instruction. Henceforth, in this current study, the researcher initiates to conduct research that can fill the gap about gender differences in writing performances and obtain further information whether or not there is a significant difference in the effect of POWER as an instructional writing strategy on student's writing skill across gender differences.

2. Methods

This current study applied explanatory design that belongs to an embedded mix-method because qualitative data help build upon initial quantitative results and the researcher places greater emphasis on the quantitative methods than the qualitative methods.

There were two groups in this study: an experimental which was taught by POWER and a control group which was taught by POW. There were 68 eleventh grade students of favorite senior high school in the academic year 2018/2019 in Singaraja, that were selected as the sample by means of cluster random sampling.

The data were collected through writing post-test and survey. The writing test was developed based on the competency base, indicator, learning objective, and assessed writing components. Meanwhile, a questionnaire was develop based on the theory of gender differences in writing (Kubota, 2003 in Bijami, Kashef, & Khaksari, 2013), POWER activities (Englert, Raphael, Anderson, Anthony, & Stevens, 1991), and writing components (Brown, 2003; Harmer, 2007). Then, those instruments were tested their validity and reliability.

The data analysis involved descriptive and inferential analysis. Descriptive analysis aims at describing data by measuring mean and standard deviation. Meanwhile, inferential analysis by using One-way ANOVA aims at testing hypothesis. Additionally, the qualitative data were analyzed by using Miles and Huberman Model.

3. Result And Discussion

This study found that the use of POWER as an instructional writing strategy has a significant effect on students' writing skill. In answering the research problems, the inferential analysis by One-way ANOVA was applied. Since One-way ANOVA is a parametric statistic test, therefore, normality and homogeneity tests must be conducted as the prerequisite tests. The result of the normality test showed that the values of probability for all groups were 0.200. Since the significant values exceeded 0.05, meaning that the data were distributed normally. Then, the result of the homogeneity test showed that all significant values of each group were greater than 0.05, which meant that the variances for the groups are equal. It was assumed that the data of students' writing scores were homogeneous. Hence, One-way ANOVA could be performed.

Table 1. The Summary of The Result of Hypothesis Testing by One-Way ANOVA

Source	F	Sig. (probability)
Teaching Strategies	13.331	.001
Gender Differences	6.871	.013

Based on the result of hypothesis testing through One-Way ANOVA in Table 1, it was discovered that there was a significant effect of POWER on students' writing skill. It could be proven by a probability value of 0.001 which was less than 0.05, with a large effect size (eta = 0.17). Additionally, the result of descriptive analysis of students' writing scores revealed that the mean score of students taught by POWER was 82.12, while the average score of the students taught by POW was 74.65. These findings showed that the students taught by using POWER as an instructional writing strategy had better writing skill than those taught by using POW. These results approved prior studies (e.g. Istianah, 2016; Mastan et al., 2017; Mohseniasl, 2014; Muhari et al., 2017; Rizqiya et al., 2017; Yuliana, 2015) which revealed that POWER as an instructional writing strategy assists the students to enhance their writing skill.

The further explanation for the significant effect of the POWER as an instructional writing strategy can be elaborated as follows. The first explanation is that POWER provides the students with instructional practices that can facilitate them in the writing process. The writing process is done in three stages namely prewriting, writing, and post-writing. The POWER strategy enables the students to conduct the writing stages starting from planning, organizing, writing, editing, until revising (Englert et al., 1991). In the prewriting, steps of planning and organizing enable the students to generate ideas as many as possible, then write down a list of those ideas and organize it in outline or mapping. In the writing stage, the students can expand and elaborate their outline by writing those ideas into a paragraph with a clear description and details. At the last stage, editing and revising enable the students to examine the important components of writing separately. The students can correct mistakes in terms of grammar used, spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure. Besides that, the students are also allowed to add or edit the information in order to convey clearer, more interesting, or more convincing ideas. After conducting those steps, the students are expected to produce final qualified writing. Contrary, those essential steps are not found in conventional teaching strategy, thus results in the students' dissatisfaction writing performances.

Planning was the first step in POWER strategy that aims at helping the students to produce the ideas on a certain topic at the beginning of the writing process. According to Wang (2014), in prewriting through planning, the writers can brainstorm about the topic by sharing ideas, learning from each other, and constructing new ideas. After planning the ideas, the students were asked to organize their ideas in the form of an outline or mapping. Karim & Abu (2017) affirm that through brainstorming activities, students can be guided to overcome some problems that they face in writing tasks. Thus, through organizing their writing, the students are able to overcome the problems of losing the track of mind, prepare a fair plan in order to continue the next stages. In the implementation, the students made their mapping by deciding the title first, then continuing by dividing each paragraph based on the generic structure of the text, deciding the main idea of each paragraph, and providing short support sentences.

The next step after organizing their ideas, the students were asked to develop their writing based on the outline and mapping. During the writing, the students were asked to consider components of good writing namely content, organization, structure, vocabulary, and mechanics (Brown, 2003; Harmer, 2004). The students started by deciding the title, main idea, supporting ideas, and details. They also considered the organization based on the generic structure of hortatory exposition text namely thesis, arguments, and recommendations. In writing the text, the students also considered the structure that referred to the use

of complex and effective sentence construction. Besides the structure of sentences, the students selected vocabularies and expressions that were suitable for their selected topic. At last, the students considered about mechanics of writing that referred to the mastery of the rules of writing involving handwriting, spelling, and punctuation.

After finishing their rough writing, the students were allowed to edit their writing. Through editing, the student could do review evaluating the writing in terms of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, the order of words, and grammar (Englert et al., 1991). At first, the students were allowed to do peer editing. The students were asked to exchange their drafts with their partners and asked to edit their friends' drafts or even their drafts in terms of punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and grammar. Through peer editing strategy, the students were motivated to learn the structure mechanical component in a good way. By having an understanding of it, the students could find or show the mechanical errors on their friends' draft or even their drafts. In the next meeting, the students were expected to edit their own writing individually, since they already had the experience of editing.

Revising is the last step of POWER strategy that focused on rewriting the final draft before it was shared or submitted to the teacher. The students were asked to pay attention to feedback and also a suggestion that had been done in the editing stage. For the first time, the students would get feedback from their friends or from the teacher. After they had experience in editing, they could revise their writing individually. It is obvious that the students found it easier to find as many as possible ideas, sentences, and words because the teacher prepared enough time and appropriate feedback during this research. In every meeting, few students were allowed to read their writing in front of the class. The other students were allowed to give comments to their friends. This activity was done in order to convince them that they could produce a piece of good writing if they put an effort to do it.

The second explanation for the significant statistically effect is that the students get engaged directly in each writing process by following all steps of POWER strategy. In contrast with conventional teaching strategy which is dominated by the teacher at first then continuing by asking the students to write freely, the students were demotivated and confused because they did not facilitate through certain steps. Balta (2018) argues that the students need to have both reflection and control strategies as the strategy in the meaning production so that the students might consistent with their purpose of writing and the meaning production itself. The reflection strategy includes reading, reflecting, and reviewing, meanwhile the control strategy includes editing, drafting, idea generation, word production, translation, and revising. Relating to the present study, the students were engaged at the first time of the activity starting from planning their ideas, organizing their ideas into outline or mapping, writing their ideas into a rough draft, then editing their writing considering to writing components, lastly revising it into final qualified writing. The students were allowed to take their time in following those activities. Thus, the absence of these meaningful activities in the conventional strategy resulted in dissatisfied writing performances of the students in the control group.

The third explanation for the critical result is that POWER as an instructional writing strategy enables the students to become autonomous learners. According to Chen (2011) and Mohseniasl (2014), the use of instructional writing strategy provides support to assist the students in becoming autonomous learners who control their own writing. Autonomous learning leads the students to be actively involved in deciding their learning including what is learned, when, where, and how it is learned. Thus, this applied strategy provided an opportunity for the students to practice inside or outside the classroom. Thus, POWER strategy could facilitate the students in becoming autonomous learners who control their own writing from planning, organizing, writing, editing, until revising.

Moreover, another reason that explains the students' better-writing performance in the experimental group is the presence of teacher guidance. In this case, the teacher monitors the students during prewriting, during writing, and post-writing. Before the students worked independently, the teacher assisted them by precisely modeling each step. Once the students had learned the five steps (i.e. planning, organizing, writing, editing, and revising) and have developed proficiency in doing the steps, then the students were allowed to write individually and autonomously. During the POWER activities, the teacher's role was to circulate and monitor the students, redirect students to remain on-task and provide assistance when needed especially in editing and revising. In the conventional class, on the other hand, the students remained passive and quiet. The teacher took control of the classroom and its activities at first, then the students were asked to write freely.

The second hypothesis done by One-Way ANOVA revealed that there was a difference between male and female students' writing performances taught by POWER as an instructional writing strategy. It was shown by the probability value of 0.013, with a large effect size (eta = 0.18). Referring to the descriptive analysis of the writing score revealed that the mean score of the male students taught by POWER was 78.63, while the average score of the female taught by the equal strategy was 85.22. This

finding indicated that the female students performed better in writing rather than their male counterparts. The result of this present study approved numerous investigations indicating that females perform better in writing (Adams & Simmons, 2019; Cornett, 2014; Ishikawa, 2015; Suganob-nicolau & Sukamto, 2016).

The previous study revealed that males and females write differently with respect to process and product (Kubota, 2003 in Bijami et al. 2013). The writing process referred to writing activities including planning, organizing, writing, editing, and revising. Female students tended to carefully select and plan the topic that they want to write. They tended to select a topic related to the issues in education, children's health, beauty, and environment. Meanwhile, the male student could directly select their topic related to the issues about technology, health, game, and sport. This result was in line with a study conducted by Ning et al. (2010) indicating that males and females were different in selecting the topic. Politics, economics, stocks, sports, and current news are the most common and major topics selected by males for discussion. On the other hand, females have more interest in talking about family, clothes, cooking, fashion, etc.

Regarding the writing process involving stages of prewriting, writing, and post-writing, the studies show that female students outperformed male students in both prewriting and revising (Naglieri & Rojahn, 2001; Sterkel, 1988). Based on the writing activities done in the present study, female students liked to plan and organize the ideas before starting their writing. They wrote their mapping neatly and organized their ideas carefully. On the other hand, the male students wrote their mapping shortly. They tended to put their headlines only and kept the list of their ideas in brief. Therefore, during the writing, the female students elaborated their writing following their mapping easily and faster than the male students. The male students needed more time in elaborating their writing rather than the female students. In the end, female students checked their writing and revised if they noticed mistakes in spelling or grammar. The male students still found struggle in doing this activity. Thus, they tended to do peer editing and revising. In brief, it could be seen that practices in writing activities gave a contribution to the differences between male and female writing performances in this study.

Moreover, another explanation of differences between male and female writing skill could be seen from the product of their writing. Female students were reported to display a higher level of competence in their oral as well as written products in comparison to their male counterparts (Bijami et al., 2013; Cornett, 2014; Suganob-nicolau & Sukamto, 2016). In this study, their writing was differed based on writing components namely content, organization, structure, vocabulary and mechanics (spelling and punctuation). Regarding the content, female students tended to respond to instructions carefully. They used the instruction as guidance for their writing. This kind of act has affected the quality of their writing. Meanwhile, male students tended to write less than expected. Therefore, the quality of females' writing was better than their counterparts in terms of content.

In an organization, the female students liked to organize their writing based on the generic structure of the selected text. They liked to prepare their writing carefully in order to make them easier in writing the draft of their writing. It could be seen that one sentence to another was smoothly connected in their writing. Thus, it was easier to understand the main idea of females' writing. On the other hand, the male students' writing was less organized rather than the females' writing.

The writing of male and female students was also differed in the term of vocabulary used. In expressing their feeling, they tended to choose different words such as different color words, adjectives, adverbs, swear words, diminutives, and pronouns (Lakoff, 1973; Xia, 2013). In this present study, the female students tended to use adjectives that show their sensitive feeling towards the readers. Meanwhile, male students tended to use common adjectives related to their topic. It could be seen that females' adjectives sometimes were more interesting than males. In using an adverb, female students liked to used *quite* or *terrible*. On the other hand, male students rarely used those adverbs. The female students preferred to use first-person plural pronouns (i.e. *we*) when they suggest something, while male students tended to use the first-person singular pronouns and the second person pronoun when they suggested the other person. Additionally, the female students tended to use more variance of the word rather than male students.

Regarding the production of sentence complexity between the male and the female students, the findings uncovered the reality that the females outperformed the males (Suganob-nicolau & Sukamto, 2016). The study revealed that female students were more imaginative and creative in building complex sentences. In the present study, female students tended to write complex sentences while expressing their ideas. They also pay more attention to the correctness of grammar. Thus, they convey their idea in precise grammar. The female students used both active and passive sentences in their writing. Meanwhile, the male students mostly produced a short active form of sentences. In brief, in this study, the female students

tended to produce lengthier, more detailed compositions by using long and complex sentences while male students repetitively tended to use short sentences.

Adams & Simmons (2019) argue that there are differences in cognitive skills such as handwriting, spelling, and punctuation. Female students mostly had neat handwriting rather than man. It seemed that female students expressed their ideas carefully into their writing. Meanwhile, male students tended to express their ideas directly into writing. In using punctuation, the female students thoughtfully used capital letters, comma, and full stop in their writing. As stated previously that the female students tended to write complex sentences rather than male students, they were good at using comma and conjunction to connect sentences. On the other hand, male students mostly preferred to use short sentences. Sometimes, they did not pay attention to the use of the capital letter of the full stop. Punctuation is an important aspect that can affect the meaning of the sentences. Therefore, female students did pay more attention to the use of punctuation rather than male students. This could explain the difference in writing quality between male and female students.

Furthermore, the result of the questionnaire revealed that POWER could overcome the students' problems in writing. The comparison of problems faced by the students before and after treatment by using POWER can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. The Comparison of Students' Problems

No	Student's Problems in Writing	Before		After	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
1	Problems in Planning	Medium	Medium	Low	Low
2	Problems in Organizing	Medium	Medium	Low	Low
3	Problems during Writing	Medium	Medium	Low	Low
4	Problems in Editing	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low
5	Problems in Revising	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low
6	Poor Content	Medium	Medium	Low	Low
7	Poor Organization	Medium	Low	Low	Low
8	Grammatical Error	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
9	Problems of Word Choices	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low
10	Mechanics Problems	Medium	Low	Low	Low

Table 2 showed that problems in editing, revising and grammatical error were being problems that still faced by the students since the level of problems were medium compared to other types. It was also found that male and female faced different problems in writing. Based on the questionnaire result, observation and group discussion, it was found that during the implementation, the male and female students faced different problems in writing. The male students admitted that they still faced an obstacle in finding mistakes and correcting the mistakes. They also still needed guidance in revising their writing. Meanwhile, the female students tended to review their writing first, then taking note of the mistakes that they found. In the end, they corrected the mistake and rewrite their writing into a better version. Then, the male students struggled in choosing vocabularies rather than females.

Despite all those problems, the students could complete the task by writing a good quality of hortatory exposition text. Table 2 showed that the levels of students' problems were decreased after the treatment of POWER. It can be seen that the levels of mean were decreased from medium to low. It means that POWER as an instructional writing strategy could overcome students' problems in writing. It is supported by the result of the questionnaire that the students did not face many difficulties in writing since more items were indicated as low and other items were still indicated as medium. There are some considerations why the implementation of POWER as an instructional writing strategy could help the students to overcome their problems in writing. Firstly, POWER strategy could involve the students actively in the writing process through the following steps of the strategy. Based on the result of group discussion after the treatment, the students admitted that it helps the students to focus on the writing as they practice to prepare everything through planning and organizing. After listing all the ideas, it was easier for them to write the first draft. Step of editing and revising helped them to pay more attention to writing components that could affect the quality of their writing. Secondly, they admitted they after being common to the steps of POWER, they felt more confident in their writing. It was because, during the writing process, they get accustomed to following steps of POWER strategy that cover all writing processes. They became more focused on writing by following all the steps. In addition, at the end of the step, they have time to evaluate what they are writing. Lastly, the strategy affects students to be more

effective in writing by helping them to understand the writing process, to improve their responsibility and to develop critical thinking skills in line with the stage. Thus, it could be concluded that the POWER as an instructional writing strategy could assist the students in the writing process and help the students to overcome their problems in writing.

4. Conclussion

Based on the result of this research it can be concluded that there is a significant effect of POWER as an instructional writing strategy on students' writing skill, there is a significant difference on the effect of POWER as an instructional writing strategy on students' writing skill across gender differences, in which point female participants surpassed the males. Additionally, the findings described that male and female students faced different problems in writing, where males struggled in editing and revising rather than females. Then, those resulted in the differences quality of their writing. In conclusion, the study proposed that POWER as an instructional writing strategy is effective in enhancing students' writing skill.

The implications of the current study's findings are projected to be beneficial insights for teachers and future researchers. Then, it would be better if teachers also could do a study investigating their personal experiences in implementing POWER strategy in the classroom. Since the current study is precisely limited in investigating the effect of POWER on students' writing skill of eleventh graders across gender. Hence, conducting further research for ensuring the validity of the findings is proposed for future implications in EFL studies especially in administering better learning techniques or strategies. Associating different variables and a wider range of samples with varies levels would be highly suggested to recommended to support and build up the findings.

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