



## The Students' Emotional Engagement with Technology-Assisted Self-Regulated Learning Approach in EFL Writing

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**Abstract.** This study aims at exploring the emotional engagement of students in the context of technology-assisted self-regulated learning for EFL writing. This study employed a qualitative method with case study blended ethnographic approach. Nine EFL students and 2 EFL lecturers were conveniently recruited, and the data were analyzed using thematic analysis technique. Based on the results, it is evident that students exhibit high levels of interest, enthusiasm, and curiosity in technology-supported learning environments. Their active participation, problem-solving abilities, and eagerness to utilize technological tools reflect their engagement in self-regulated learning processes. Further research on exploring the challenges and barriers associated with technology integration in EFL classrooms would provide practical guidance for educators seeking to maximize the benefits of technology in language learning.

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## INTRODUCTION

English as a Foreign Language learning has become increasingly important in today's globalized (Salih & Holi, 2018; Smokotin et al., 2014; Yaccob et al., 2023). As individuals seek to improve their language skills for academic, professional, and personal reasons, the need for effective and engaging EFL learning approaches has grown significantly (Alemi, 2016; Liu, 2022). In this context, emotional engagement plays a crucial role in shaping the learning experiences of EFL students (Huang, 2022; Zhang, 2021). When students are emotionally engaged in their learning process, they are more likely to be motivated, focused, and persistent, leading to

improved learning outcomes (Bryson & Hand, 2007; Lackmann et al., 2021; van Alten et al., 2020). Therefore, understanding the students' emotional engagement in the technology-assisted self-regulated learning approach specifically applied to EFL writing is essential.

The concept of "student engagement" has been thoroughly studied. In previous decades, researchers have given it a great deal of attention (Finn & Zimmer, 2012; Ulmanen et al., 2014). Affective, academic, social, and cognitive involvement are some of the conceptualizations that have been proposed (Jimerson et al., 2014; Reschly & Christenson, 2012). The concept of "student engagement" is complex, and several scholars have attempted to define it. Different definitions have been

given to it by academics and researchers. According to Fredricks et al. (2019), student engagement is comprised of three interrelated dimensions: emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement. Among these, the emotional component consists of the student's attitude toward the class or school, their connections with teachers and peers, and their sense of belonging to their academic institution. The emotional component of student engagement in EFL learning is particularly important as it can significantly influence students' motivation, effort, and overall learning experience. The emotional engagement of students plays a crucial role in shaping their EFL learning experiences (Fredricks et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2022).

Technology-assisted self-regulated learning has emerged as a promising approach in EFL education, empowering students to take control of their learning processes with the support of technology. This approach encourages students to set their own learning goals, monitor their progress, and reflect on their learning experiences. By integrating technology into the learning process, TASRL provides students with a wide range of resources and tools to enhance their language proficiency and writing skills. Furthermore, technology-assisted self-regulated learning can also enhance emotional engagement in EFL learning. When students have the opportunity to utilize technology in their language learning, it can create a more interactive and dynamic learning environment (An et al., 2021). This can increase students' emotional engagement by promoting a sense of excitement, curiosity, and enjoyment in the language learning process.

The research on technology assisted self-regulated has been researched in various context (An et al., 2021; Bahari & Gholami, 2022; Lai & Gu, 2011; Shyr & Chen, 2018). Despite the growing interest in TASRL, there is a research gap when it comes to investigating emotional engagement within this approach, particularly in the context of EFL writing. Understanding the emotional aspects of TASRL in EFL writing is essential for identifying effective strategies to support and enhance students' emotional engagement, thus, optimizing their learning experience and outcomes. By examining the emotional dimensions of TASRL in EFL writing, researchers can gain valuable insights into how

technology can be effectively utilized to foster students' emotional engagement and improve their overall learning experience. Furthermore, exploring the emotional dimension of TASRL in EFL writing can also contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between emotional engagement and academic achievement. This understanding can inform educators and policymakers in designing and implementing effective interventions and instructional strategies that promote students' emotional engagement, ultimately leading to improved EFL writing performance and language proficiency. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the emotional engagement of students in the context of technology-assisted self-regulated learning for EFL writing.

## **METHOD**

I applied an ethnographic research which involves observing and immersing oneself in the cultural and social context of the participants to gain a deep understanding of their experiences. In this study, the ethnographic approach allowed me to observe EFL students in their natural learning environment, providing valuable insights into their emotional engagement with the technology-assisted self-regulated learning approach. Through participant observation, I observed EFL students as they engaged in TASRL activities for EFL writing. I decided to adopt blended ethnographic study (Kozinet, 2010) which combines both traditional ethnographic methods and digital data collection techniques. The traditional ethnographic methods included direct observations of classroom activities, interviews with students to gather their perspectives and experiences, and field notes to document observations and reflections on the research process. Additionally, digital data collection techniques were used to complement the traditional methods. These techniques included collecting students' online interactions and engagement with the technology-assisted self-regulated learning platform, analyzing their written reflections and feedback on the TASRL activities, and capturing screenshots or videos of their interactions with the technology. In order to select research participants based on specific criteria, I used the convenient

sampling technique (Kothari, 2004). Both the lecturers and the students agreed to participate in a maximum of three interview sessions; the lecturers were assigned to teach essay writing classes, and the students were enrolled in an essay writing course; both groups made use of technology to learn and teach EFL essay writing. A minimum of five years of expertise teaching writing skills and knowledge with self-regulated learning-based instruction were also factors in the recruitment of the lecturers. There were twenty-five students based on the aforementioned criteria, but only nine of them expressed interest in taking part. Furthermore, out of the four invited lectures, only two of them fulfilled the requirements.

Face-to-face and virtual observation sessions were conducted to collect data from the participants. I used a combination of direct observation, interviews, and digital data collection to gather information about the participants' engagement with technology-assisted self-regulated learning activities for EFL writing. The data collection process included observing the participants in both face-to-face and virtual settings, conducting interviews to gather their perspectives and experiences, and collecting digital data from their interactions with the technology. In-depth face to face, virtual interview and virtual learning diary were also conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' engagement with technology-assisted self-regulated learning for EFL writing. The researchers took steps to ensure that the data collected was accurate and thorough. This involved using multiple data collection methods, ensuring that the observations and interviews were conducted in both face-to-face and virtual settings, and implementing protocols to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of the participants' data. I also analyzed student artifacts such as writing samples and journals to gain insights into the emotional expressions and reflections embedded within the written content. This analysis complement the observational and interview data, offering a comprehensive view of the students' emotional engagement in the EFL writing process.

I used thematic and qualitative content analysis methods. By analyzing themes, meanings, and patterns that may be overt or covert in a text, qualitative content analysis broadens the scope of the inquiry (Grbich,

2013). Thematic content analysis was deemed an appropriate method for a textual inquiry since blended ethnography employs an inductive approach to analyze qualitative data (Silverman, 2019). The process of carefully coding and classifying textual data into constituent trends of agreement is known as thematic content analysis (Braun et al., 2019; Grbich, 2013; Kozinets, 2010; Tam & Leung, 2019). Coding for qualitative research can be done electronically using software or manually (Liamputtong & Serry, 2013) and in this study I used manual data coding. The manual data coding method allowed for a thorough and in-depth analysis of the participants' engagement with technology-assisted self-regulated learning for EFL writing.

## HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN

### Interest and Enthusiasm

The 'Interest and enthusiasm' theme is labeled as such as EFL students expressed a high level of interest and enthusiasm when engaging in technology-assisted self-regulated learning for EFL writing. They were excited about using technology tools such as online writing platforms, grammar checkers, and language learning apps to improve their writing skills. This theme indicates that EFL students were motivated, enjoy and actively engaged in the learning process when utilizing technology for writing tasks.

#### Extract 1

"Actually, I love this lesson because I like writing." (Learning diary 2023)

"Today's class is very enjoyable, we have a new lecturer who will provide her knowledge."(Learning diary 2023)

In the qualitative research results, two quotes from the learning diary show students' emotional responses to their learning experiences. The first quote reflects a deep sense of joy and interest in the writing process, indicating positive emotional engagement with the learning material. Meanwhile, the second quote highlights the positive influence of the presence of new teachers, emphasizing the importance of interpersonal relationships between teachers and students in increasing students' emotional involvement in learning.

These two quotes illustrate the close relationship between students' emotional involvement in learning and their interest and enthusiasm for learning material and interactions with teachers, both directly and through technology. Therefore, the use of technology in learning can be an effective tool to strengthen students' emotional engagement with the learning material and the overall learning process.

#### Extract 2

*"saya sangat bersemangat juga senang karena mendapatkan pengetahuan baru yang berbeda dari sebelumnya" (interview LSN 2024)*

"I am very excited and happy because I am gaining new knowledge that is different from before." (Interview LSN 2024)

Extract 2 shows students' emotional responses to independent learning supported by technology. Students feel very excited and happy because they gain new and different knowledge, showing strong emotional involvement. It highlights how technology can facilitate engaging learning experiences, increase students' interest and enthusiasm, and encourage them to engage more deeply in the learning process.

#### Extract 3

*"Kami semangat dalam menggunakan berbagai teknologi dalam penulisan, dengan belajar menggunakan teknologi kami menjadi tahu fungsi setiap teknologi." (Interview FL 2024)*

"We are enthusiastic about using various technologies in writing. By learning to use technology, we become aware of the functions of each technology." (Interview FL 2024)

#### Extract 4

*"Kami sangat antusias dalam menyelesaikan tugas menulis dengan menggunakan teknologi sebab kami dapat dengan mudah menyelesaikan penulisan kami tanpa butuh waktu yang lama." (Interview FL 2024)*

"We are very enthusiastic about completing writing tasks using technology because we can easily finish our writing without needing a long time." (Interview FL 2024)

#### Extract 5

*"Kami merasa senang menggunakan teknologi dalam penulisan sebab bukan hanya karena hal tersebut memudahkan dan tidak perlu waktu lama untuk menyelesaikan penulisan, tapi juga dengan belajar menggunakan teknologi kami merasa tidak ketinggalan zaman." (Interview FL 2024)*

"We feel happy using technology in writing because not only does it make the process easier and faster, but also by learning to use technology, we feel up-to-date with the times." (Interview FL 2024)

The interview excerpts reveal students' enthusiastic embrace of technology for writing tasks, reflecting their interest and engagement in technology-assisted self-regulated learning. They express excitement about utilizing various technologies, noting how learning them enhances their understanding of their functions (Extract 3). Moreover, they are keen on completing writing assignments with technology due to its efficiency in expediting the writing process (Extract 4). Additionally, the students derive happiness from using technology in writing, as it not only simplifies the process but also keeps them updated with contemporary trends (Extract 5). These sentiments highlight the students' emotional engagement with technology-assisted self-regulated learning, particularly in terms of their interest and enthusiasm. Such positive attitudes likely contribute to their active participation and investment in learning activities, emphasizing the importance of considering emotional engagement in promoting effective technology integration in education.

These evidences were supported by the following lecturers' statements that the students are enthusiastic in the learning process. The lecturers noted that the students exhibit a high level of enthusiasm and motivation in their learning process, especially when technology is involved.

#### Extract 5

*"Hal lainnya yaitu siswa terlihat antusias dan dapat memecahkan masalah dan mengambil keputusan menurut pandangannya sendiri" (Interview Mrs. AGN 2024)*

"Another thing is that students appear enthusiastic and can solve problems and make

decisions according to their own perspective." (Interview Mrs. AGN 2024)

Extract 6

*"Salah contoh yang bisa saya berikan yaitu ketika mahasiswa diperlihatkan atau diberikan prompt yang mungkin berkaitan dengan pengalaman mereka dulu, mereka akan antusias membahas bersama teman temannya, hal itu merupakan bagian dari brainstorming untuk mereka tanpa mereka sadari." (Interview Mrs. AGN 2024)*

"An example I can give is when students are shown or given prompts that may relate to their past experiences, they will enthusiastically discuss with their friends, which is part of the brainstorming process for them without them realizing it." (Interview Mrs. AGN 2024)

Extract 7

*"ee...teknologi atau dalam hal ini adalah misalnya untuk jenni ai kecerdasan buatan untuk grammarly atau quillbot Nah itu semua membutuhkan bantuan perangkat atau device seperti laptop dan atau HP ya seperti itu. Jadi mereka apabila tingkat partisipasinya tinggi mereka antusias menyiapkan laptopnya menyiapkan hp-nya kemudian mereka lebih sering duduk di depan lebih sering menjawab pertanyaan dan juga terlihat dari kehadiran mereka di dalam perkuliahan." (Interview Mrs. YL 2024)*

"Uh... technology, or in this case, for example, for Jenni AI artificial intelligence like Grammarly or Quillbot. Well, all of that requires the assistance of devices such as laptops and/or phones, yes, like that. So, when their level of participation is high, they enthusiastically prepare their laptops, prepare their phones, then they sit in front more often, answer questions more frequently, and also seen from their presence in class." (Interview Mrs. YL 2024)

The interview excerpts highlight students' enthusiasm and active engagement with technology-assisted self-regulated learning, particularly in terms of interest and enthusiasm. In the first excerpt, Mrs. AGN notes that students demonstrate enthusiasm in problem-solving and decision-making, indicating a proactive approach to learning (Extract 5). Similarly, in the second excerpt, Mrs. AGN illustrates how students eagerly

engage in discussions related to their past experiences, showing enthusiasm for collaborative brainstorming activities (Extract 6). Furthermore, Mrs. YL emphasizes the students' enthusiastic preparation and active participation in class discussions when utilizing technological tools such as laptops and phones, indicating a high level of engagement and investment in the learning process (Extract 7). These findings highlight the significance of students' emotional engagement, particularly their interest and enthusiasm, in fostering effective technology-assisted self-regulated learning practices. Such positive attitudes likely contribute to students' motivation, participation, and overall academic success.

### Curiosity and Excitement

The 'Interest and enthusiasm' theme is labeled as such as EFL students demonstrate a sense of curiosity and excitement when engaging with technology-assisted self-regulated learning.

Extract 8

"Learned about persuasive writing which this part is important if we wanna write something and put our own opinions." (Learning diary 2023)

Extract 9

*perkembangan teknologi yang semakin canggih membuat orang semakin tinggi rasa ingin tahu untuk mengaplikasikannya di kehidupan sehari-hari. (observasi kelas 2023)*

"The advancement of increasingly sophisticated technology has heightened people's curiosity to apply it in their daily lives." (Class Observation 2023)

Extract 10

*"Mahasiswa memiliki rasa ingin tahu yang tinggi membuat mereka terus mempertahankan kegiatan menulisnya" (observasi kelas 2023)*

"Students' high curiosity encourages them to continuously maintain their writing activities." (Classroom Observation 2023)

The interview excerpts shed light on students' emotional engagement with technology-assisted self-regulated learning, particularly in

terms of curiosity and excitement. In the first excerpt, the learning diary entry reflects the student's curiosity and excitement about learning persuasive writing, recognizing its importance in expressing personal opinions (Extract 8). Additionally, the class observation notes that the advancement of technology increases people's curiosity to apply it in daily life, indicating a sense of excitement and eagerness to explore new technological advancements (Extract 9). Moreover, the observation highlights how students' high curiosity motivates them to maintain their writing activities, suggesting a sense of excitement and enthusiasm for the learning process (Extract 10). These findings suggest that students' emotional engagement, characterized by curiosity and excitement, plays a vital role in driving their participation and commitment to technology-assisted self-regulated learning activities, ultimately contributing to their academic growth and development.

The theme of interest and enthusiasm is in line with research that emphasizes the importance of intrinsic motivation and positive affect in learning DePasque 2015. Studies have shown that when students are intrinsically motivated and exhibit enthusiasm towards learning tasks, they are more likely to engage actively, persist in their efforts, and experience greater learning outcomes (Fredricks et al., 2004). Furthermore, findings from studies on technology integration in education highlight how the use of interactive and engaging technological tools can foster students' interest, enthusiasm, and enjoyment in learning activities Hayden 2011.

The theme of curiosity and excitement aligns with research on the role of curiosity in learning and cognitive development Roberts 2022. Studies have shown that curiosity serves as a potent motivator for exploration, engagement, and deep learning Arnone 2011, Oudeyer 2016. Moreover, research on technology-enhanced learning environments has highlighted how technology can stimulate students' curiosity and excitement by providing opportunities for exploration, experimentation, and discovery Norris 2011. For example, multimedia learning environments and interactive simulations have been found to evoke students' curiosity and engagement, leading to enhanced learning outcomes Shangguan 2020.

The findings on students' emotional engagement with TASRL contribute to the broader literature on self-regulated learning (SRL) and technology-enhanced learning. Previous research has demonstrated the effectiveness of self-regulation strategies, such as goal setting, planning, monitoring, and reflection, in promoting academic achievement and learning outcomes (Zimmerman, 2008). Moreover, studies on technology-supported SRL have highlighted the potential of digital tools to scaffold and enhance students' self-regulatory processes (Winne & Hadwin, 2010). By integrating technology into self-regulated learning environments, students can gain greater control over their learning processes, develop metacognitive awareness, and experience heightened engagement and motivation (Efklides, 2008).

The research findings on students' emotional engagement with TASRL build upon a robust body of literature on motivation, curiosity, self-regulated learning, and technology-enhanced learning. By highlighting the importance of interest, enthusiasm, curiosity, and excitement in students' engagement with technology-supported learning activities, the findings contribute to our understanding of how to design effective learning environments that promote meaningful and engaging learning experiences.

The study's findings contribute to the theoretical framework of self-regulated learning by highlighting the pivotal role of technology in stimulating students' curiosity, interest, and enthusiasm. It underscores the importance of integrating technological tools and resources into EFL pedagogy to enhance students' motivation and engagement. Furthermore, based on the results, practical recommendations include the implementation of technology-infused activities, such as utilizing AI tools for language enhancement and integrating persuasive writing tasks to capitalize on students' eagerness to express their opinions. These recommendations aim to capitalize on students' enthusiasm and curiosity, fostering a more dynamic and effective EFL learning environment.

## **SIMPULAN DAN SARAN**

Through the qualitative research and

observations conducted, it is evident that students exhibit high levels of interest, enthusiasm, and curiosity in technology-supported learning environments. Their active participation, problem-solving abilities, and eagerness to utilize technological tools reflect their engagement in self-regulated learning processes. The study underscores the pivotal role of technology in stimulating students' curiosity, interest, and enthusiasm, thereby enhancing their motivation and engagement in EFL writing activities.

The findings reaffirm the significance of emotional engagement in technology-assisted self-regulated learning for EFL writing. Students' interest, enthusiasm, and curiosity underscore the role of emotions in driving their learning processes. Emotional engagement not only fuels their motivation but also contributes to their active involvement and eagerness to utilize technological resources in developing their writing skills.

The blended ethnographic approach employed in this study has offered valuable insights into students' experiences and interactions within technology-supported learning environments. By combining qualitative research methods with observational data, the study has provided a comprehensive understanding of how students engage with technology and the impact of emotional factors on their learning experiences. This approach has enriched the study by capturing the multifaceted nature of student engagement in EFL writing within contemporary educational settings.

The implications of this study extend to both educational practice and research in EFL contexts. Educators can leverage the findings to create dynamic and interactive learning environments that capitalize on students' enthusiasm for technology. Furthermore, the study calls for future research to explore the long-term effects of technology integration on students' language proficiency and learning outcomes, as well as to address the challenges and barriers associated with technology integration in EFL classrooms.

While the current study provides valuable insights into the impact of technology on student engagement and interest in EFL learning, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations. One limitation is the reliance on qualitative data, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future

research could employ a mixed-methods approach to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between technology and student engagement in EFL contexts. Additionally, examining the long-term effects of technology integration on students' learning outcomes and language proficiency would yield valuable insights. Furthermore, exploring the challenges and barriers associated with technology integration in EFL classrooms would provide practical guidance for educators seeking to maximize the benefits of technology in language learning.

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