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WRITING DIFFICULTIES FACED BY ENGLISH FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDENTS

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Abstract
This abstract provides a summary of the main points related to writing difficulties, writing problems, lack of vocabulary, grammar errors, and a lack of interest in reading. These obstacles significantly impede students' writing skills and overall literacy development. This researcht highlights the interconnections between these challenges and their impact on students' ability to effectively express themselves in writing. It underscores the importance of addressing vocabulary limitations, grammar errors, and promoting reading engagement to improve students' writing proficiency and cultivate a deeper appreciation for language and literacy. By recognizing and tackling these challenges, educators can effectively support students in overcoming writing difficulties and fostering their growth as proficient writers.
Keywords: Grammar Errors, Lack Of Interesting In Reading, Lack Of Vocabulary, Writing Difficulties

INTRODUCTION

Writing is an essential skill for academic success and is needed in all walks of life. However, many students struggle with writing issues and difficulties that can negatively impact their academic performance. These difficulties may be due to a variety of factors, including language skills and cognitive development, one of important aspect is student involvement, as stated by Aminah and Maulida (2021) Student involvement in learning is a necessity, both in the form of attention and producing a product.

The importance of mastering writing as one of the English language skills for English learners has been acknowledged. Writing proficiency is seen as an indication of a student's success in learning English and their future professional endeavours. According to Kingston et al. (2002:3), a student's proficiency in English largely depends on their ability to produce written materials, particularly in writing. Moreover, written communication has become the preferred mode for exchanging information compared to oral communication.

The primary indicator of the struggles in teaching writing is the students' lack of enthusiasm for writing in comparison to their interest in speaking. Students tend to prefer expressing themselves orally rather than in writing, resulting in fluent speaking skills but poor writing skills. Another significant indicator is the difficulty students face in correctly using grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation to structure English sentences into coherent and comprehensible text. These difficulties contribute to the challenges in teaching writing effectively.

The first category of difficulties in writing is lack of ideas in writing. There are lots of students who feel they lack insight in writing so that their ideas become deadlocked and look for ways, one of which is by copying from a book or article on the internet. This causes a lack of student interest in writing and a crisis of original and creative writing.

Other difficulties in writing are lack of vocabulary, grammar errors, incorrect use of punctuation and lack of interest in reading. Often, I meet students who only rely on the tenses structure without seeing whether the grammar is correct or not. The students who

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had never studied tenses before were still having difficulties when doing writing assignments, so they became lazy when they had to deal with writing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Dewi (2015), English is widely used as a global language for communication between individuals from diverse cultural, ethnic, and social backgrounds. Consequently, it is crucial for English teachers to possess effective writing instruction skills, particularly at the elementary school level. Writing plays a significant role in English education, and instruction in writing begins early on, when students are taught the correct formation of letters.

According According to Muhammad Fareed et al. (2016) students make mistakes in subject-verb agreement, pronouns, tenses, articles, prepositions, and basic sentence structures. Grammar ability can be improved through reading activity and grammar related activities.

There was also a lack of writing experience among students (Kobayashi and Rinnert 2002; Ismail 2011; Pradhan 2016). The task of composing an English paper can induce stress, feelings of being overwhelmed, and confusion among students who have little to no prior experience in tackling such extensive writing assignments. As a result, it becomes crucial to identify effective strategies that can assist students in attaining writing success and surmounting the obstacles they face in their writing endeavours. Writing strategies, which have been the subject of extensive research, are one solution (Arndt 1987; Riazi 1997; Sasaki 2000; Victori 1995; Wenden 1991).

Interestingly, the metacognitive strategies had been reported to be significantly used among successful writers for example "I go back to my writing to edit and change the grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation" (Baker and Boonkit 2004; McMullen 2009; Mullin 1992; Peacock 2001). The current research found no relationship between writing ability and writing strategy usage. This was not in accordance with the previous studies conducted by Baker and Boonkit (2004), McMullen (2009), Mullin (1992), and Peacock (2001) which found that proficient students use writing strategies at the considerable level.

Another cause of students' writing problem might be that Asian students are exposed to writing at a later stage in education and some are even introduced to formal writing when studying at tertiary level (Tangkiengsirisin 2010). Those two factors are what cause the writing difficulties which have been reported to the same results with Pawapatcharaudom (2007) and Iamla-Ong (2013), however, the research reported by this author shows that the problem that had the least difficulty by the students was being able to write within a specific period. Thus, it was concluded that the results contradicted with Pawapatcharaudom's (2007) research finding.

Writing strategies were used less frequently by students in lower grades. These findings indicated that students' writing outcomes can be improved by applying specific writing strategies. High-proficiency students and their use of language-learning strategies were found to have a direct effect that resulted in variation in each strategy by Bremner (1999). Highly skilled writers used both metacognitive and cognitive strategies, according to a case study of writing strategies published in Good Language Learner (Maftoon and Seyyedrezaei 2012). Good language learners are more likely to use effective language learning strategies for their stages, as stated by Oxford and Nyikos (1989).

Concerning the issue of writing problem above, it indeed claimed that writing is the hardest skill for students, since it does not only generate the ideas but also these ideas could be translated into perceived text (Richards & Renandya, 2002), and requires to combine the competencies of neurological, physical, cognitive, and affective (Murray & Moore, 2006). It identified the two factors why the EFL students faced the trouble in writing; internal and external factors, in which internal

factor dealt with their low English writing proficiency, meanwhile external factor referred to their inadequate quality in studying the writing skills (Husin & Nurbayani, 2017). As a result, their writing ability was unsatisfied.

Furthermore, Folse (2004) stated that whilst there is a large body of data detailing visual, reading, and writing difficulties in children with reduced intellectual ability or specific learning difficulties, there is little data in the literature concerning the visual status of neurologically normal children with reading and writing difficulties, especially in a European population. Several studies that have been conducted have examined only one aspect of visual function (e.g., accommodative amplitude) and have not considered the range of measurements required for a functional assessment of vision.

In an academic context, it is a well-known fact that writing involves several complex rhetorical and linguistic capabilities. It also requires the writer's full attention and concentration. Effective writing involves conveying a message in such a way as it affects the audience as the writer intends. An effective writer is always aware of the readers' competence level. He/she gives a sense of thoroughness and wholeness to his/her writing and knows the conventions of every genre. As writing involves lower order skills, such as forming letters, as well as higher order cognitive skills like cohesion and coherence which makes writing a complex process to teach (Lahore et al, 2020)

However, lack of vocabulary has caused the students to face challenges in acquiring writing skills claimed Misbah et al. (2017). Vocabulary is the fundamental element in constructing sentences which is the core of effective writing skills Asep (2014). Students use spoken and written words almost every single day to communicate their ideas, beliefs, and feelings with people around them. Good vocabulary repertoire can help students to speak or write to deliver their thoughts. Usage of electronic dictionary and more reading activities can help students with limited vocabulary.

Poor spelling is another cause of anxiety for students in learning writing skill and this is supported by Nyang'au Benard (2014). Difficulties in spelling can indeed hinder students' progress in moving forward. The students have the habit to spell according to their pronunciation and this will lead to wrong spelling as mentioned by Afrin (2016). The students will either add or leave letters of the words. According to Nyang'au Benard (2014) memorization of the spelling will help the students to have good spelling.

Writing Students' readiness is another challenge in learning writing, and this was supported by Foster (2015). According to Winarso (2016) to complete a task successfully, readiness is very important. The readiness can either be physical readiness and mental preparedness. If this does not occur, students will be having challenges in writing. Students will not be mentally prepared to learn in the classroom if they are not ready. It is very important for the students to be ready before they enter the classroom. According to Foster (2015) motivating and attracting the students' attention can help students' readiness in learning writing.

Jalaluddin et al (2008) claimed that there are challenging constraints in comprehending the English language. In this case, however, there have been reports that many EFL students are lack of EFL reading proficiency and thus are not able to read and understand well materials in the English language (David & Govindasamy, 2006; Stapa et al., 2007).

Goodson et al. (2009) highlighted the role of parents, teachers, and society in helping these young children build a larger vocabulary through support and exposure to the target language. In addition to providing opportunities for children to communicate in the target language, engaging them in meaningful reading activities can also contribute to enhancing their vocabulary skills. According to Abdul Gafoor & Remia (2013), children will be more confident in speaking and writing in the target language if

they have a wide range of vocabulary. Other contexts of EFL students' writing problems have also been established. Embi (2010) reported the Egyptian students encountered the problems of cohesion and coherence in their essay writing. Al-Jaro, Al-Quiadhi, & Ramadhbeen establishedishedishedointed out that Yemen EFL students perceived the mistakes and errors in writing skills because of traditional methods and techniques employed by writing instructors in teaching writing at Sana'a University.

Some studies had conducted to investigate the Indonesian EFL students' problems in writing. Rahmatunisa (2014) investigated the Indonesian EFL learners' problems in writing argumentative essay. This study revealed that the EFL students had problems in terms of linguistics, cognitive, and psychological. Bernat & Gvozdenko (2005) claimed on how the learners' conceptualisations on their learning will either facilitate or hinder their language learning activity.

This is supported by Pal, Halder, & Guha (2016) that ineffective classroom communication occurs when learners and teachers are not at the same level of understanding, which thus hinders the messages to be conveyed by the teachers in classroom activities. As asserted by Embi & Mohd Amin (2010), it is essential for language learners to have a wide range of vocabulary as it helps them communicate effectively in the language. Consequently, an improved vocabulary not only boosts the learner's confidence but also enhances their motivation to practice and further their understanding of the language.

Lam (2016) affirmed that students' intrinsic motivation to learn and speak English could be developed through various types of activities conducted by the teacher. By engaging in these activities, students could acquire knowledge both inside and outside the classroom. They can learn through enjoyable activities, creating a stress-free environment that promotes effective learning. According to Charles (2011), children tend to engage in activities that please them. Therefore, as the students enjoy the activities, they would also benefit by learning the language. Furthermore, Sillanpää (2012) verified that it is undeniable that motivation has a great impact on how well a certain language is learned.

Then, drafting deals with the writer writing the first rough draft using an outlining and/or diagram as a guide without worrying about grammar, punctuation, or spelling. Revising is the process of rewriting and reorganizing the ideas that have already written in the previous draft to make it stronger, consisting of correcting spelling mistakes, adding missing information, and checking unity, coherence, and logical organization and writing content; in which writer might be changed, rearranged, added or deleted the ideas until getting clearly, effectively and interestingly ideas. Finally, editing is the process of editing a final draft that involves checking the small unit of writing, such as grammar, spelling, mechanics, and other errors such as eliminating wordy phrases and rewriting confusing or weak sentences, until getting the satisfied writing result.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research aims to identify the writing difficulties of English Foreign Language students, with the intention of determining the students' exposure writing and the data were determined using a descriptive-quantitative approach. Quantitative research, according to Babbie (2010), is a technique that focuses on collecting numerical data and generalizing it by groups of individuals or understanding a specific phenomenon.

The data was obtained from an essay project made by students and paired with the results of interviews related to students' writing difficulties in learning English. The data obtained is used to ascertain student difficulties and possible causes of these difficulties, so that the analysis will try to provide an overview and hopefully facilitate alternative solutions for students' writing difficulties.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the data reveal a comprehensive understanding of the challenges students face in writing, encompassing issues such as grammar errors, lack of vocabulary, and a lack of interest in reading. The findings highlight the negative consequences of these factors on students' writing proficiency and overall language development.

1. Grammar Errors

The numbers of the participants face difficulties with the use of tenses in their English language writing, where 48% of the essays contained errors while using tenses. A list of examples of the incorrect use of tenses is listed below:

Students' errors:	The correct way of spelling:
This event is to make it easier	This event made us easier
We were asked to make to a video about a day in my life	We were asked to make a video about a day in my life
And in the end we wached a motivating biopic	Thus, in the end of the event we watched a motivating biopic
Closed with an art performance	It closed with an art performance
Which includes various activities of singing, poerty, and dancing	Which includes of various activites such as singing, poetry reading and dancing

2. Lack of Vocabulary

It shows that the majority of the participants struggle with identifying the correct word based on the meaning of it, whereas 25% of the students had made this mistake. For example:

Students' Errors:	Correct Sentence:
A talent search event	A talent show
Organized by Subang University every year	Anually organized by Universitas Subang
This event is specialized for high school students	This event is dedicated for high school students

3. Lack of Interest in reading

Based on the results of interviews as much as 58% of students rarely do reading activities outside of textbooks, so they are not familiar with many types of paragraphs, storylines, written diction and so on so that it affects their writing skills, and becomes an obstacle to writing difficulties they face in compiling a good text.

Furthermore, The research finding highlight the significance of cultivating an interest in reading, as it exposes students to different writing styles, enhances vocabulary acquisition, and fosters creativity in writing. Promoting reading engagement through diverse and relevant materials, book discussions, and integrating reading activities into writing instruction is considered crucial.

Thus, The research finding emphasize the importance of expanding students' vocabulary through activities like extensive reading, utilizing vocabulary lists, and practicing word usage in context. Furthermore, explicit grammar instruction, interactive exercises, and peer editing are recommended to improve grammar skills and reduce errors.

In conclusion, addressing writing difficulties requires a multi-faceted approach that includes vocabulary expansion, grammar instruction, and promoting reading engagement. By implementing these strategies, educators can support students in overcoming these challenges, improving their writing skills, and nurturing a lifelong passion for effective written communication.

CONCLUSION

The findings underscore the interplay among these factors. The lack of vocabulary, grammar errors, and a lack of interest in reading mutually reinforce each other, creating a cycle of writing challenges. By addressing the challenges associated with limited

vocabulary, grammar errors, and a lack of interest in reading, educators can support students in developing stronger writing skills.

The research findings highlight the writing difficulties experienced by students, specifically in relation to grammatical elements. These challenges are attributed to a lack of vocabulary, insufficient grammatical knowledge, and an underlying lack of interest in reading. Additionally, the presence of grammar errors further contributes to the overall writing problems. It is crucial to address these issues by implementing effective strategies and interventions aimed at improving vocabulary, enhancing grammatical skills, fostering an interest for reading, and providing adequate support and resources to help students overcome their writing challenges. By addressing these underlying issues, educators and stakeholders can empower students to develop stronger writing abilities and excel in their academic endeavors.

The findings show the significance of addressing writing problems related to limited vocabulary, grammar errors, and a lack of interest in reading. The research emphasizes the need for comprehensive strategies that integrate vocabulary development, explicit grammar instruction, and the promotion of reading engagement. By targeting these areas, educators can assist students in enhancing their writing skills, effectively expressing ideas, and cultivating a lifelong passion for reading. By recognizing the interplay of these factors and implementing comprehensive strategies, educators can help students overcome these challenges, enhance their writing proficiency, and cultivate a lifelong passion for effective written communication.

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