

The Factors Contributing To EFL Students' Difficulties In Paragraph Writing Course (Students' Perspectives)

Alwafa Amrullah

English Education Study Program, Language Department, FTIK, IAIN Palangka Raya

Rahmadi Nirwanto

English Education Study Program, Language Department, FTIK, IAIN Palangka Raya

Hesty Widiastuty

English Education Study Program, Language Department, FTIK, IAIN Palangka Raya

Korespondensi penulis: alwafaamrullah14@gmail.com

Abstract: Writing is significantly essential for English as a foreign language and English as a second language. Students' language learning has constantly been regarded as essential ability contributing to English learning. The purpose of this study was analyze factors contributing to students' difficulties in paragraph writing course based on the students' perceptions. This study used a descriptive qualitative method. The instruments used were interview and documentation. This study, the participants' answers were purposive sampling and analyzed descriptively. The participants were 60 students who were taking paragraph writing course in second semester academic year 2022/2023 in English Language Education Program at IAIN Palangka Raya. The data analysis procedure of the research analysis were data condensation, demonstration, and verifying conclusion. The overall result based on the questionnaire, students found difficulties to use grammar. Based on the findings, there were two factors that caused students' difficulties in writing. The two factors were internal and external. Internal factors consisted of self-motivation, self-confidence, lack of knowledge and feeling of under pressure External factors consisted of the teacher's teaching style, classroom atmosphere, materials, and writing aspects. This research hopefully can help lecture in developing appropriate teaching techniques in writing and minimize students' difficulties in paragraph writing course.

Keywords: Internal factor, External factors, EFL Students, Paragraph writing

Abstrak: Menulis sangat penting untuk bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing dan bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa kedua. Pembelajaran bahasa siswa secara konstan dianggap sebagai kemampuan penting yang berkontribusi terhadap pembelajaran bahasa Inggris. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis faktor-faktor yang berkontribusi terhadap kesulitan mahasiswa dalam mata kuliah menulis paragraf berdasarkan persepsi mahasiswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif. Instrumen yang digunakan adalah wawancara dan dokumentasi. Dalam penelitian ini, jawaban partisipan diambil secara purposive sampling dan dianalisis secara deskriptif. Partisipan penelitian ini adalah 60 mahasiswa yang mengambil mata kuliah penulisan paragraf pada semester kedua tahun akademik 2022/2023 di Program Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris IAIN Palangka Raya. Prosedur analisis data dari analisis penelitian ini adalah kondensasi data, demonstrasi, dan verifikasi kesimpulan. Hasil keseluruhan berdasarkan kuesioner, siswa menemukan kesulitan dalam menggunakan tata bahasa. Berdasarkan hasil temuan, ada dua faktor yang menyebabkan kesulitan siswa dalam menulis. Kedua faktor tersebut adalah faktor internal dan eksternal. Faktor internal terdiri dari motivasi diri, kepercayaan diri, kurangnya pengetahuan dan perasaan tertekan. Sedangkan faktor eksternal terdiri dari gaya mengajar guru, suasana kelas, materi, dan aspek penulisan. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat membantu pengajar dalam mengembangkan teknik pengajaran yang tepat dalam menulis dan meminimalisir kesulitan mahasiswa dalam mata kuliah menulis paragraf.

Kata kunci: Faktor Internal, Faktor Eksternal, Siswa EFL, Penulisan paragraf

INTRODUCTION

Writing is essential for English as a foreign language and English as a second language beginners, mainly for students at the tertiary stage, as one of the effective English

abilities that must be masterly skilled. Students' language learning has constantly been regarded as an essential ability contributing to English learning. Sari (2019).

In this study, researchers have conducted the preliminary observation on interview to students who have taken a Paragraph writing course in the second semester in English education IAIN Palangka Raya and found some students have problems in writing, such as grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, organization, and supporting ideas so that researchers want to know more and more in-depth related to the factors that influence the contribution in following their difficulties in paragraph writing course from external factors and internal factors. Researcher are also interested three important issues faced by EFL students in writing, mainly linguistics, cognitive, and psychological problems. And pointed out that instructors want to motivate the students to write down a paragraph by offering numerous writing activities consisting of peer correction and the common use of dictionaries.

Based on previous a lack of interest in writing negatively affects one's vocabulary comprehension. This causes problems with activity and health when paragraph writing course. Because it is difficult to think clearly about how to convert a literacy idea into writing. As a result, students know the factors contributing to difficulties in paragraph writing courses, allowing them to thrive. This research targets the influence of students in a second semester of English education at the Islamic Institute of Palangka Raya.

Considering those problems and difficulties, The researcher conducted this research with the aim to find out and analyze what possible factors contributing to students' difficulties are in Paragraph Writing course. Two research questions were addressed: (1) What are the difficulties faced by the students in Paragraph Writing course? (2) What are the factors that contributing to EFL students' difficulties in Paragraph Writing course? Hopefully, this research will help students gain a better understanding of the factors and efforts in handling those difficulties. Besides, it can also provide meaningful information for lectures to create a better learning atmosphere suitable for students

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Definition of Paragraph Writing course

Writing is an essential capability for beginners to specify their minds and ideas with readability. The primary part of a writing composition is a paragraph. A paragraph includes a collection of related sentences that address a subject sentence that introduces the paragraph's large concept, follows supporting information that provides other examples and reasons for the primary idea, and a conclusion that summarizes the paragraph's inside idea. Aldera (2016).

Furthermore, properly and consistently going through one sentence to another and from one paragraph are both helped by the right idea organization in writing. Students' writing strategies are the elements that impact students' writing techniques and production material. In addition, Winarto (2015) showed that EFL students' writing strategies affect their writing performance. Strategies may be effectively carried out depending on the language learning context in which they may be included.

Definition of Writing

Writing is an interest to explicit writer's mind or emotions through written form through the use of correct words to give a clear message to the reader Mayistha (2015, as cited in Hidayat et al., 2018). One of the complex process skills is writing skills Mardini, (2018). Writing skill needs hard thinking to find ideas to be written and rich grammatical knowledge to choose and filter the sentences used to make a paragraph.

The Purpose in Writing

According to Ranabumi et al. (2017), writing skill is one of the related skills to learning that requires much attention from both teachers with related curriculum elements.

- a. To express the writers' felling

The writer desires to utilize written forms, such as a journal or a love letter, to express his thoughts and feelings. It contains what can be referred to as expressiveness

- b. To entertain the readers

The readers will read the writers' key ideas or terms. Similarly, readers will affect the writer's decision on what to put in writing and how to write. Nirwanto, R. (2015)

- c. To persuade the readers

The author aims to influence or persuade the readers about this opinion, concept, or idea. Its kind is referred to as persuasive writing. In cited Yuliana (2020) as an example, diaries, purchasing lists, and similarly recording of factors to consider are needed

Difficulties in Writing

There are three categories of writing difficulties, namely, linguistic problems, psychological problems, and cognitive problems.

The First is linguistic problem includes grammatical problems, mechanical problems, and sentence structure problems, linguistic issues impeding the learners' power in English writing Alfaki (2015).

The Second is Psychological problems the students lack motivation in a specific learning situation, they will also lose their attention to learn writing skills, misbehave, and face discipline problems. Octaviana (2016).

The Third is Cognitive problems include content problems and problem organization. What is supposed to be a content problem is the problem of learners exploring their ideas during a paragraph writing course.

Furthermore, problem organization is also included in cognitive problems states that the opposite assignment of student writing structure is the incapability to distinguish a topic and to guide ideas or generalizations and specific information. There can be several reasons for the reasons of those cognitive problems. One among them is lack of extensive reading, lack of available writing sources, lack of education, and lack of practice. Alfaki (2015).

Nature of Process Writing

Writing is a more complicated skill for both native and non-native speakers since they're needed to complete along with the content in English writing skills. Therefore, there is a requirement for instruction so that students may successfully master these skills during the writing process.

a. Lack of Knowledge about the Writing Stages

The essential information in this text is that grammar, mechanical, sentence structure, and vocabulary troubles are language problems that prevent students from writing successfully in English. English language competencies include vocabulary, grammar, writing talents, and accurate paragraphs. Hidayati (2018) Students discover it challenging to apply a second language to write down due to different language structures and vocabulary; however, intrinsic motivation also impacts their instructional performance.

b. Lack of Students' Motivate

The most important thing in developing the writing is the subject. Learners need clarification and having trouble in their writing process cause they need to become more familiar with unusual topics. Students with intrinsic motivation would have pleasure from the challenge itself or the experience of joy in finishing or working on a task. Widiastuty, H. (2019).

c. Lack of Time to Write

Writing is part of the crucial elements of language ability and requires a lot of time to consider topics. This indicates that students often need more time limits because they need to brainstorm, arrange ideas, edit, and reread their writing as they write.

d. Lack of Writing Practice

Writing is a medium someone uses to specify their mind and emotions, write them down, and send them to others, in step with Tortorelli (2021). Like other language

abilities, writing requires students to exercise the language they're learning. While students most effectively learn abilities without practicing them, knowledge is meaningless

e. Feedback on the Learning Teacher

Feedback is essential in helping students' independent learning, consisting of producing products, setting learning goals, adopting new techniques, and dealing with sources as it could help students deepen their knowledge of development and learning. Hattie & Gan (2017).

RESEARCH METHOD

Method

In this study, the researcher used the descriptive qualitative method. The researcher chose a qualitative method as it was interested in investigating deeply the difficulties that students had with paragraph writing. In this study, the researcher investigated students' psychological and cognitive problems besides the linguistic difficulties with writing. In the sense of, Creswell (2018) indicates that qualitative research explores the issues or difficulties made by participants and conducts research to obtain current information on them. The researcher used several instruments to collect data. The instruments used document refers to a wide range of written, tactile, and visual items in this study and semi-structured interviews.

Technique of Data Collection

Data collection procedures are important because the researcher's and analysis techniques would decide how the data collected could be used and what causes may be provided. The techniques of data analysis that will be use in this research is:

Documentation

The documentation method is a data collection technique by studying data that has been documented. From the origin of the word, documentation, namely documents, means written items. In carrying out the documentation method, researchers investigate a variety of written, tactile, and visual objects

Interview

To Collect the data researcher selected by using the problem, First, the interview was transcribed for interview analysis as supporting data to confirm the questionnaire results and document results. Second, Questionnaires have been distributed to all students. Before distributing the questionnaire to students, the researcher consulted a paragraph writing course and requested permission to conduct the research.

Participant

The participants of this study were the second semester in the educational year 2022/2023 of the study program of English education at IAIN Palangka Raya. The researcher focused on 60 second-semester students (15 males and 45 females) in two classes (A and B) Those who had passed the paragraph writing course.

Technique of Data Analysis

Two instruments were employed in this study: documents from student paragraphs and semi-structured interviews the researcher used three techniques to get the data analysis. The activities of the research analysis were data condensation, data demonstration, and verifying conclusion.

First, Data condensation refers to returning to the methods of data selection, direction, simplification, abstraction, and transformation display with writing skill disciplinary drafts, interview transcripts, documents, and other data.

Second, Data demonstration refers to data display that allows conclusions and actions to be taken. The material is provided in structured records units, and the possibility of summarizing the data acquired through.

Third, Drawing and Verifying Conclusions refers to confirmed throughout the analysis. It can be as simple as a quick reflection is followed by a brief return to the notes in the field, or it can be as intensive and comprehensive as it requires discussion, evaluation, and feedback among the fellows.

The other data provide from researcher is the student paragraphs on a topic as a document data provide other information. The document served as an archive for the data analysis. The learners were asked to complete their paragraphs using a soft document by the researcher and considered what the learners mentioned during the interviews what needed to be removed or changed when transcribing the interviews As a result, the researcher used a narrative to explain the interview results.

RESULT AND DISSCUSION

The Result of Interview

The results of interview show that EFL Students of the study program English education at IAIN Palangka Raya had problems in the students difficulties.

The students difficulties. The researcher found six indicators of students' difficulties in paragraph writing, namely, grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, organization, and supporting ideas. It attempted to analyze the difficulties that second-semester English language learners at IAIN Palangka Raya wrote about writing paragraphs. The factors that contributing

difficulties. The researchers want to know more in-depth about the factors that influence the contribution following their difficulties in paragraph writing courses from external factors and internal factors.

The Students Difficulties

Based on the records that the researchers discovered while accomplishing preliminary studies, the most effective 42 respondents out of 10 students who struggled in paragraph writing courses from essay format in Google Forms, meaning they needed help with writing. The researcher discussed six indicators of students' difficulties in paragraph writing, namely, grammar, vocabulary, organization, supporting ideas, punctuation, and spelling.

The Factors that Contributing Difficulties

Based on the interview's findings, questions were developed regarding which contributes to students' learning through English writing. The researchers focused on three main categories of students' paragraph writing difficulties following the research's investigate the way of students' linguistic, psychological, and cognitive problems are related to their difficulties in writing paragraphs.

The Result of Documentation

Consequently, primarily based on the records from the documentation that the researchers discovered while accomplishing preliminary studies on the students' difficulties and the factors that contributed to using the Zoom application and What Sapp group, there were ten students out of 42 students from both classes who had struggled in paragraph writing course, and they got difficulties while writing.

Internal and External factors contributing to writing difficulties

In this study, it became proven that the student respondents confronted each internal and external factor inside the interview. Self-motivation, self-belief, lack of knowledge, and a sense of strain have been each internal factors. The lecture teaching technique, classroom environment, substances used, and writing-related elements have been external factors. Below is a more thorough explanation of these factors.

Internal factor

The research found 10 respondents in paragraph writing, students who decided internal factors contributed to their various writing difficulties. Four internal factors, consisting of self-motivation, self-confidence, lack of knowledge, and the feeling of pressure, has consequences on students' writing skill.

The major problem that the student respondents encountered was grammar, it found. Students could easily spend time checking whether the grammar was proper. This problem influenced their motivation in writing.

Respondent I:

"I have confused and worried because I wouldn't be able to write a idea easily. besides I had experience difficulties with grammar and lack of vocabulary. It seems that I have lots of trouble with grammar and ideas."

Similar difficulty was expressed by respondent II.

"I had no experience with paragraph writing courses, I feel afraid of being incorrect. In addition, my vocabulary and grammar are currently weakened."

It showed that those participants lacked vocabulary, grammar, and ideas besides having competence. One of the reasons students have difficulty with good writing is a lack of writing purpose. Students need to create their ideas before are able to compose in order to determine the topic of their issue. students are able to benefit from brainstorming. One of them was respondent III.

"I think writing is more difficult because I need to be careful of all the writing things such as grammar, content, quotation explanation. Grammar is also very difficult."

The students who lacked motivation got lazy and lacked writing confidence. Intent is one of the factors that motivates that causes students to work hard to progress. It was mentioned by respondent IV.

"At once. I felt natural but was just a bit afraid to improve the idea and grammar. Also, I feel it difficult to convey my objective while creating a topic for my writing"

Lack of writing intentions among students could cause them to feel under pressure. Students could have difficulties developing their ideas and writing thousands of words when they're feeling under pressure. It was stated by respondent V and VI

"I'm going to write for the first time, therefore I feel confused and pressured. I have difficulty with grammar"

"I felt under pressure when the lecturer asked for me to write thousands of words and develop the ideas"

The other factor that affected students' writing difficulties was the need for students' background knowledge. The difficulties were a lack of background knowledge, and the low level of English ability greatly influenced the writing process.

Internal Factor	The cause of problems felt by students
Student's self-motivation	lack of an interest in reading reference-related subjects, the choice to write down, the assignment of conducting writing, confusion, and problems paying interest
Student's self-confidence	the excellent feeling of anxiousness, fear, and uncertainty
Student's lack of knowledge	The tension of considering a subject, grammar errors and phrases, a loss of ideas, and problems finding the proper conjunctions
Student's feeling of under pressure	Paragraph revisions are dependent on lecture feedback, the requirement to write down plenty of words, and the difficulties of developing provide you with thoughts

External factor

The external factors also contribute to the problems students face. It was found that there have been four factors included in external factors: the lecture teaching style, classroom environment, materials, and writing thing. One of the contributors is experienced this is Respondent X.

"I think it difficult when I've never been used to taking paragraph writing courses. The methods and explanations used during the lecture were a little boring and confusing. I have difficulties learning and adapting to this method."

The lecture and the student's expressed learning style should coexist in balance. Finally, once the correct kind of balance is obtained, the lecturer and students may have good communication in the classroom, which makes it better for students to consult on their progress with the lecture. in the subsequent interview respondent XII explained that she had trouble understanding the lecture's instructions

" I feel challenged to write in the paragraph writing course for me. I often have difficulties understanding the explanations given in lectures. The lecturer's voice is unclear when he is explaining something. besides that, I find it more difficult when comparing paragraphs."

Students also needed help understanding the lecture's instructions. This was expressed by Respondent XV

"I have difficulties identifying the correct grammar and for this class, must progressively understand grammar. I also have difficulties finding the correct vocabulary. I think that this class uses uncommon, formal vocabulary, including some that I haven't heard of before."

It becomes just as important to consider a student's performance in the classroom as it is to consider their knowledge. It was stated by Respondent XIV

"I was surprised by a student academic being written like a journalist. Grammar and the atmosphere of the classroom were both difficult for me. The schedule of the courses during sleep hours is a consideration as well."

Writing has inflexible guidelines, which cause students to be hard to follow and be aware of. It was stated by Respondent XXV

"I feel this class is very comfortable to me, but to be considerate. the context in paragraph writing is more academic. The cause is less flexible than the other kinds of writing classes, Additionally, I have problems with grammar and context."

As a result of this, the genre of paragraph writing allows students to write inside a predetermined context. In addition, it helps the students to write creatively and critically in writing.

External Factor	The cause of problems felt by students
Lecture teaching style	Unclear lecture instructions and explanations, unclear teaching and learning methods like the task requirements, and difficulties in considering lecture teaching style
Classroom atmosphere	Classroom atmosphere, the class's beginning place and time, Specific guidelines in paragraph writing (not flexible)
Materials	Difficulties while reading journals and articles carefully using a new language, complicated tasks, Referencing from a source (quotation)
Writing's aspect	Paragraph writing difficulties related to context, topic, and language (conjunctions and diction)

RESULT

The studies were performed through preliminary interviews and documentation of the study's topics. The study's consequences were analyzed through the researcher's use of the descriptive qualitative method, which means that the researcher defined and interpreted all of the information gathered so that they were able to gain a preferred and complete situation. The researchers performed studies using the approach of interviews and documentation related to the studies identified, specifically "The factors Contributing to EFL students' difficulties in Paragraph Writing course (students' perspectives). The researcher, in short, defined the study's findings that the researcher had accomplished.

DISSCUSION

In educational Writing lessons, many students feel frightened and concerned about their writing due to the fact students have diverse problems in the world of writing, which include skill ability degree, lack of motivation, lack of knowledge, and so forth. It may be seen from students' overall performance in writing lessons, like organizing ideas, encountering arguments, paraphrasing, synthesizing, summarizing, and grammatical issues.

The researcher found that some students experience disinterest in what they could be better at. It will encourage them to write. Further, the students also need Feedback from the lecture to know about the results of their writing. The essential aspect of learning is providing student feedback, especially in writing. Through the problems and contributing difficulties

faced, students can discover approaches to help them carry out better in paragraph writing class. Students will understand their stage of writing potential and be encouraged to exercise greater of their manner.

CONCLUSION

The researcher has divided the difficulties into two problems in the students difficulties and the factors that contributing difficulties.

The research findings in the students' difficulties section, the researchers found six indicators of students' difficulties in writing paragraphs in paragraph writing courses, namely grammar, vocabulary, organization, supporting ideas, punctuation, and spelling.

The factors contributing to difficulties, the researchers focused on three main categories of students' paragraph writing difficulties according to the research findings by how students' linguistic, psychological, and cognitive problems were related to their difficulties in writing paragraphs.

This gives rise to internal and external factors, of which internal factors are self-motivation, self-confidence, lack of understanding, and feelings of pressure. Lecture teaching methods, classroom atmosphere, materials used, and aspects related to writing are external factors. This means that researchers found a way to overcome the difficulties faced by students in writing paragraph writing by knowing themselves by reading more and mastering all types of writing, writing down every idea that arises, and learning how to write correctly and summarize from a paragraph topic.

SUGGESTION

This research is expected to be useful for readers and other researchers who want to conduct a similar course in paragraph writing. Therefore, the researcher makes suggestions that, in the future, are expected to be useful for students, lecturers, and other researchers.

1. To the students

The researcher will expand on a few points that may help students with their writing. They can analyze the most common problems in paragraph writing. When they determine the issues with paragraph writing, they can also improve the quality of their writing.

2. To the lecture

The lecturer can develop more exercises for the students to help students because more written assignments are going to help students learn. By writing on more topics, the

students will obtain more experience and develop their critical thinking abilities since they can apply what they have learned in class.

3. To other researcher

This study only identified and analyzed the factors that influenced students' difficulties in paragraph writing courses. This research strongly recommended furthering the researcher to develop the aspects studied in this research by the same research method in different writing courses with a more significant number of participants so that these deficiencies can be overcome. The author also strongly recommends further developing this research as a reference.

REFERENCES

- Alfaki, I. M. (2015). University students' English writing problems: Diagnosis and remedy. *International Journal of English Language Teaching*, 3(3), 40-52.
- Creswell, C. W. J. (2018). Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches. *Journal of Chemical Information and Modeling*, 53(9).
- Hattie, J., & Gan, M. (2011). Instruction based on feedback. In *Handbook of research on learning and instruction* (pp. 263-285). Routledge.
- Hidayati, K. H. (2018). Teaching writing to EFL learners: An investigation of challenges confronted by Indonesian teachers. *LANGKAWI: Journal of the Association for Arabic and English*, 4(1), 21-31..
- Nirwanto, R. (2015). The methods of defining terms found in theses of the EFL students. *Journal on English as a Foreign Language*, 5(2), 87-98.
- Sari, D. M. M. (2019). An overview of genre based approach in EFL writing class. *Journal of English Education (JournE)*, 1(1), 31-40.
- Widiastuty, H. (2019). Students' English learning motivation at the Tenth Grade of SMK Karsa Mulya Palangka Raya.