



Reading For Writing: Exploring English Language Education Study Program Students' In Improving Their Writing Skills (*Membaca untuk Menulis: Menjelajahi Upaya Mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris dalam Meningkatkan Keterampilan Mereka dalam Menulis*)

Megi Sepriyanti Gobel¹, Jolanda H.D. Pilongo², Yunita Hatibie³

^{1,2,3}English Language Education Study Program, Faculty of letters and cultures, Universitas Negeri Gorontalo
megisepriyantigobel@gmail.com¹, jolanda.pilongo@ung.ac.id², yunita.hatibie@ung.ac.id³

| Article Info | Abstract |
|---|--|
| <p>Article history:</p> <p>Received: 22 March 2024 Revised: 14 April 2024 Accepted: 29 April 2024</p> <hr/> <p>Keywords:</p> <p>Improving Writing, Reading for Writing, Students Experience</p> <hr/> <p>Kata Kunci:</p> <p>Meningkatkan Keterampilan Menulis, Membaca untuk Menulis, Pengalaman Mahasiswa</p> | <p>This study aims to investigate how students in the English Language Education Study Program (ELESP) adopt their reading activities to stimulate improvement in writing English texts. This qualitative descriptive study focuses on participants from the Class of 2020. Data collection methods include pre-interviews, interviews, and analysis of students' writing samples. The data is subsequently analyzed using a qualitative descriptive approach. The results indicate that students' experiences significantly influence their writing skills. A lack of experience often results in lower motivation to write, which in turn leads to poorer writing performance and lower scores. Although students recognize the importance of reading for enhancing writing skills, their reading abilities alone do not necessarily translate into improved writing proficiency. The findings suggest that while engaging in reading activities can help students overcome some writing difficulties, it does not have a substantial impact on overall writing improvement. This underscores the need for more comprehensive approaches that integrate reading with other skill-enhancing activities to better support students' writing development. Further research could explore additional factors that contribute to writing proficiency and develop strategies to more effectively bridge the gap between reading and writing skills.</p> <p>Abstrak</p> <p>Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meneliti bagaimana mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris (ELESP) mengadopsi kegiatan membaca mereka untuk merangsang peningkatan dalam menulis teks bahasa Inggris. Studi deskriptif kualitatif ini berfokus pada peserta dari Angkatan 2020. Metode pengumpulan data meliputi pra-wawancara, wawancara, dan analisis tulisan mahasiswa. Data kemudian dianalisis menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pengalaman mahasiswa sangat mempengaruhi keterampilan menulis mereka. Kurangnya pengalaman sering kali menyebabkan motivasi menulis yang rendah, yang pada gilirannya mengakibatkan kinerja menulis yang buruk dan nilai yang lebih rendah. Meskipun mahasiswa menyadari pentingnya membaca untuk meningkatkan keterampilan menulis, kemampuan membaca mereka saja tidak selalu diterjemahkan menjadi peningkatan kemampuan menulis. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa meskipun terlibat dalam kegiatan membaca dapat membantu mahasiswa mengatasi beberapa kesulitan dalam menulis, hal ini tidak memiliki dampak yang signifikan terhadap peningkatan menulis secara keseluruhan. Hal ini menekankan perlunya pendekatan yang lebih komprehensif yang mengintegrasikan membaca dengan kegiatan pengembangan keterampilan lainnya untuk lebih</p> |

mendukung perkembangan menulis mahasiswa. Penelitian lebih lanjut dapat mengeksplorasi faktor-faktor tambahan yang berkontribusi pada keterampilan menulis dan mengembangkan strategi untuk lebih efektif menjembatani kesenjangan antara keterampilan membaca dan menulis.

Corresponding Author:

Jolanda H.D. Pilongo
Faculty of Letters and Cultures
Universitas Negeri Gorontalo
jolanda.pilongo@ung.ac.id

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's world, reading is an essential activity, as most information is conveyed in written form. Reading is a fundamental skill necessary for success not only in school but throughout life. Alongside reading, writing is another critical skill. To develop writing skills, students need knowledge and abilities in word formation, sentence construction, and paragraph development. Writing enables individuals to express their feelings, thoughts, and fantasies and practice their vocabulary, sentence structure, and paragraph organization (Tarigan, 2008, p. 120).

According to Erya and Pustaka (2021), reading is crucial for students to develop their skills and improve their English learning. This study aims to explore how students in the English Language Education Study Program use reading activities to enhance their writing in English. Reading and writing are closely related skills that must be developed together to be effective. As Fitzgerald and Shanahan (2000, p. 42) note, reading and writing are interconnected because both depend on students' cognitive abilities and contextual understanding.

The study seeks to understand the impact of reading interest on writing skills and why reading is important for writing. Effective writing requires reading, and a lack of interest in reading can hinder writing development. Elleman and Oslund (2019) explain that reading involves understanding text through word recognition and comprehension. Word recognition is understanding how written symbols correspond to spoken language, while comprehension involves understanding the meaning of words, phrases, and texts. Reading builds background knowledge, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, writing experience, and other strategies for understanding written text.

Nystrand (2023) explains that writing is a way of generating language, similar to speaking. Writing involves discovering and organizing ideas, putting them on paper, and refining them. McCarthy (2020) adds that writing often has a time limit, with students spending more time thinking when writing than when speaking. Writing allows for reviewing knowledge and consulting dictionaries or grammar books. Syam and Sangkala (2014) stated that writing makes thoughts and ideas organized. Pysarchyk and Yamshynska (2015, p. 150) argue that writing is a complex process involving various language components, requiring writers to convey ideas into text that readers can comprehend.

Reading and writing are interrelated processes. Better readers become better writers. Krashen (2004) suggests that without time to read, students lack the tools to write. Reading influences what writers produce. While many enjoy reading for pleasure and learning, fewer express a love for writing. Reading exposes students to new words and phrases, trains the brain to think critically and analytically, and helps improve writing skills by teaching them how to construct arguments and support points with evidence. Reading and writing are essential skills, and their connection is widely recognized. The International Reading Association defines reading as decoding and comprehending text while writing is producing connected text. Although closely correlated, the relationship is not perfect.

Reading and writing are two related activities. Graham et al. (2018) argue that literacy leads to strong interactions between these processes, where reading generates new texts, and writing involves developing ideas and goals. Writing conveys information through indirect written communication (Ruhana & Purwaningsih, 2019). The relationship between reading and writing is widely discussed. Grabe and Zhang (2013) emphasize the importance of teaching reading and writing together, although it can complicate classroom instruction. This study focuses on the importance of reading for writing and examines the experiences of students who have completed a writing skills course.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative research approach. Qualitative descriptive research aims to provide a detailed explanation of an event and its significance, addressing the questions of what, where, when, and why of an event or experience (Loeb et al., 2017; Bradshaw et al., 2017). This method involves classifying results into a comprehensive description to answer all research questions (Yates & Leggett, 2016). The methodology of this research includes three parts: the type of research, data collection, and data analysis. This chapter begins with the type of research. In this study, the researcher used the qualitative descriptive method to explore how English Department students in the 2020/2021 academic year improved their English writing skills based on their experiences. Descriptive research does not involve calculations or numerical data (Doyle et al., 2020). Instead, it requires in-depth data interpretation and analysis, focusing on non-numeric data such as words, images, audio, and video (Elmahdi & Hezam, 2021). Data were collected through interviews, observations, and physical samples of student writing from the English Language Education Study Program students of 2020.

This qualitative descriptive method was chosen because it helps gain detailed information about students' experiences in improving their English writing skills. The participants in this research were students from the English Language Education Study Program in the 2020/2021 academic year who were enrolled in the Writing for a Professional Context course, which requires specific and detailed writing skills. The study focused on nine participants from the E class of the 2020 academic year.

The researcher used purposive sampling to select the participants, choosing those who best suited the purpose of the study (Campbell et al., 2020). This method involves identifying individuals who can provide relevant information based on their knowledge or experience (Palinkas et al., 2015). The researcher decided what needed to be known and selected participants accordingly. To explore students' experiences in developing writing skills, the researcher used pre-interviews, interviews, and document analysis. Data collection involved analyzing students' writing using a rubric that assessed four aspects of writing an argumentative essay: the author's claims, factual issues, arguments, counterarguments, and rebuttals. The interviews provided additional information to support the research findings.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data for this study were gathered from nine participants in the E class of 2020 from the English Language Education Study Program (ELESP). Due to the difficulty in finding writing samples and the limited availability of only nine samples, the data for this study are based solely on these nine students. Consequently, these students' writing samples were included in the data analysis.

Table 1. The Results of Students' Argumentative Essays

| Students category | Issue | Thesis Statement | Generic Structure |
|-------------------|-------|------------------|-------------------|
| S1 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| S2 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| S3 | ✓ | - | ✓ |
| S4 | ✓ | - | ✓ |
| S5 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| S6 | ✓ | ✓ | - |
| S7 | ✓ | - | - |
| S8 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| S9 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

The table above provides a detailed summary of the student's performance in writing argumentative essays. All nine students successfully identified and addressed an issue, as indicated by the checkmarks under the "Issue" category. However, only five students (S1, S2, S5, S8, and S9) produced an effective thesis statement, highlighting a key area for improvement. While most students understood the basic framework of an argumentative essay, maintaining the generic structure of an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion, there was variability in the quality of their arguments. Some students demonstrated strong analytical skills and effectively used evidence to support their claims, while others struggled with developing counterarguments and rebuttals, which are essential for a persuasive essay.

This variability suggests that while students are familiar with the theoretical aspects of writing an argumentative essay, they need more practice and instruction in developing substantive content. Emphasis should be placed on helping students improve their thesis statements, build strong arguments, and incorporate counterarguments effectively. The use of a rubric to assess these aspects provides a clear framework for students to understand what is expected in their writing. By focusing on key components such as issue identification, thesis statement, argument development, and counterarguments, students can systematically enhance their skills and become more proficient in crafting persuasive argumentative essays.

3.1 Findings from the interview

To obtain additional data and verify the writing analysis results, personal interviews were conducted with nine students from the English Language Education Study Program. These interviews, conducted via WhatsApp in September, aimed to explore the students' experiences with reading and its impact on their writing skills. The students were asked seven questions regarding their motivation in writing argumentative essays and their perception of the role of reading in improving their writing skills.

Table 2. Student Motivation in Writing Argumentative Essays

| Students' initial | Have motivation | Did not have the motivation | Fifty-fifty |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| S1 | ✓ | | |
| S2 | ✓ | | |
| S3 | | | ✓ |
| S4 | | | ✓ |
| S5 | ✓ | | |
| S6 | | ✓ | |
| S7 | ✓ | | |
| S8 | ✓ | | |
| S9 | | | ✓ |

The table above shows that motivation varied significantly among the students, affecting their performance in writing activities. Students with low motivation exhibited less enthusiasm and drive to improve their writing skills, often viewing writing as a mandatory task rather than a creative or enjoyable endeavor. This lack of motivation can be attributed to several factors, including insufficient knowledge of essay genres and a limited understanding of the writing process. Without a solid grasp of different essay structures and purposes, students may feel overwhelmed and disengaged, leading to minimal effort and improvement in their writing abilities.

Conversely, some students felt motivated to write only when they had a specific reason or personal interest in the topic. This selective motivation indicates that intrinsic interest plays a crucial role in driving students' engagement and effort in writing tasks. When students find a topic relevant or compelling, they are more likely to invest time and energy into crafting their essays, resulting in better performance. Therefore, educators need to find ways to connect writing tasks to students' interests and real-world applications. By fostering a more engaging and supportive writing environment, teachers can help students see writing as a valuable and enjoyable activity, ultimately enhancing their motivation and skills.

3.2 Student Difficulties in Writing Essays

Table 3. Student Difficulties in Writing Essays

| Student initial | Find difficulties | Did not find difficulties |
|-----------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Student 1 | ✓ | |
| Student 2 | ✓ | |
| Student 3 | ✓ | |
| Student 4 | ✓ | |
| Student 5 | | ✓ |
| Student 6 | ✓ | |
| Student 7 | ✓ | |
| Student 8 | ✓ | |
| Student 9 | ✓ | |

The data indicate that most students encountered difficulties in writing argumentative essays, primarily due to their limited vocabulary and inability to organize their essays effectively. According to Jayanti (2019), students struggle to write well when they cannot choose their vocabulary accurately. This challenge highlights a significant barrier, as a limited vocabulary can hinder students' ability to articulate their thoughts clearly and persuasively. Without a robust vocabulary, students may find it challenging to convey their arguments compellingly, leading to essays that lack clarity and impact.

Additionally, the difficulty in organizing essays effectively suggests that students are not sufficiently familiar with both spoken and written language forms. This lack of familiarity can impede their ability to structure their arguments logically, resulting in essays that may be disjointed or unclear. To address these issues, educators must focus on enhancing students' vocabulary through targeted exercises and exposure to diverse reading materials. Moreover, teaching students effective organizational strategies for their essays can help them present their arguments more coherently and persuasively. By improving these

foundational skills, students can become more adept at writing argumentative essays and expressing their ideas with greater clarity and precision.

3.3 Impact of Reading on Writing Skills

Table 4. Student Experience in Reading and Its Impact on Writing Skills

| Student initial | Yes | No |
|-----------------|-----|----|
| Student 1 | ✓ | |
| Student 2 | ✓ | |
| Student 3 | ✓ | |
| Student 4 | ✓ | |
| Student 5 | ✓ | |
| Student 6 | ✓ | |
| Student 7 | ✓ | |
| Student 8 | ✓ | |
| Student 9 | ✓ | |

The interview results revealed that students believed their experience in reading positively influenced their writing skills. They indicated that extensive reading helped them expand their vocabulary and improve their understanding of writing structures, thereby enhancing their writing abilities. This exposure to diverse texts enabled students to encounter new words and phrases in context, making it easier for them to incorporate these elements into their writing. As a result, they felt more confident in their ability to express ideas clearly and persuasively.

Moreover, students recognized that reading a variety of texts allowed them to develop a better grasp of grammar and paragraph organization. This familiarity with different writing styles and structures facilitated smoother transitions between ideas in their essays. By observing how experienced authors construct arguments and organize content, students could mimic these techniques, leading to more coherent and well-structured writing. Overall, the students acknowledged that reading extensively provided them with valuable insights and tools that directly contributed to their improved writing skills.

Table 5. Student Belief in the Role of Reading in Writing

| Student initial | Students believe that reading can help them in writing | |
|-----------------|--|----------|
| | Positive | Negative |
| Student 1 | ✓ | |
| Student 2 | ✓ | |
| Student 3 | ✓ | |
| Student 4 | ✓ | |
| Student 5 | ✓ | |
| Student 6 | ✓ | |
| Student 7 | ✓ | |
| Student 8 | ✓ | |
| Student 9 | ✓ | |

The table indicates that all students believed reading could help improve their writing skills. They understood that the knowledge absorbed through reading was integral to enhancing their essay writing capabilities, recognizing that extensive reading expanded their vocabulary and comprehension of writing structures. This theoretical understanding underscores the importance students place on reading as a foundational skill for effective writing.

However, the actual scores in writing did not always reflect their reading proficiency. Despite recognizing the benefits of reading, many students struggled to translate their reading knowledge into writing practice. This gap suggests that while students are aware of the connection between reading and writing, they may need more guidance and practice in applying what they learn from reading to their writing tasks. This discrepancy highlights the need for integrated teaching approaches that reinforce how to effectively use reading insights to improve writing performance.

3.4 Comparison of Reading and Writing Scores

Table 6. Writing Scores of Students in English Education Study Program Class of 2020

| Student initial | Reading scores | Writing scores |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Student 1 | A | A- |
| Student 2 | B+ | A- |

| | | |
|-----------|----|----|
| Student 3 | B+ | B+ |
| Student 4 | A | A- |
| Student 5 | A- | B+ |
| Student 6 | A- | B+ |
| Student 7 | B | B+ |
| Student 8 | A- | B+ |
| Student 9 | B+ | B+ |

The comparison of reading and writing scores revealed that good reading skills did not necessarily translate into good writing skills. Although students performed well in reading, their writing scores were generally lower. This disparity suggests that while students recognized the value of reading for improving writing, they struggled to apply this understanding effectively in their writing tasks. The challenges in translating reading proficiency into writing skills may be due to difficulties in organizing thoughts, constructing coherent arguments, and applying grammatical rules in writing, despite their ability to comprehend and analyze written texts.

The findings also revealed that only five students demonstrated perfect writing work, as evidenced by the structure of their argumentative essays. This indicates that even among those who excel in reading, only a subset can translate that proficiency into exceptional writing. These students likely possess a deeper understanding of how to utilize vocabulary, grammar, and essay structure learned from reading, showcasing the importance of not just reading extensively, but also engaging in targeted writing practice and receiving constructive feedback to bridge the gap between reading and writing skills.

The results of this study highlight the complexity of the relationship between reading and writing skills. While students acknowledged the importance of reading for improving writing, their performance in writing tasks did not consistently reflect this understanding. The findings suggest a need for targeted interventions to help students translate their reading proficiency into effective writing skills. Educators should focus on providing students with more practice and support in developing thesis statements, organizing their essays, and expanding their vocabulary. By addressing these areas, students can become more proficient and confident writers, capable of producing clear and persuasive argumentative essays.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

4.1 Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion sections, this study concludes that students' experiences play a significant role in improving their writing skills. Students with good experiences tend to achieve higher scores as they feel more confident and capable of dealing with difficulties. However, their success is also tied to their reading abilities, as having a good vocabulary is essential for constructing sentences. This explains why students often face challenges when writing argumentative essays, which are not only due to a lack of vocabulary but also an inability to effectively design the essay.

Furthermore, the lack of experience results in students feeling unmotivated to write. This leads to lower scores because they do not view writing as a skill to be mastered but rather as a mandatory task. Despite this, students recognize the importance of reading for writing improvement. As noted in the discussion, students believe that mastering reading and its components can help overcome writing difficulties. They understand the relationship between reading and writing skills. However, proficiency in reading does not automatically translate to higher writing scores. Many students still struggle with issues such as generating ideas, organizing sentences into paragraphs, and more. Consequently, even if they excel in reading, their writing scores do not necessarily reflect this balance. In summary, while students' reading experiences can alleviate some difficulties in improving writing skills, this improvement is not significant enough to create a balance between their reading and writing scores.

4.2 Recommendation

To enhance students' writing skills, it is recommended that educational institutions implement integrated reading and writing programs that emphasize the interconnectedness of these skills. Teachers should provide more opportunities for students to engage in diverse writing practices, focusing on both the technical aspects of writing and the creative process of idea generation. Additionally, incorporating peer review and collaborative writing exercises can help students develop their writing abilities in a supportive environment. Providing targeted feedback and personalized writing challenges based on individual student needs can also motivate and guide them toward improvement. Finally, encouraging a culture of reading for pleasure alongside academic reading can enrich students' vocabulary and overall language proficiency, ultimately benefiting their writing skills.

REFERENCES

- Bradshaw, C., Atkinson, S., & Doody, O. (2017). Employing a qualitative description approach in health care research. *Global qualitative nursing research*, 4, 2333393617742282.
- Campbell, S., Greenwood, M., Prior, S., Shearer, T., Walkem, K., Young, S., ... & Walker, K. (2020). Purposive sampling: complex or simple? Research case examples. *Journal of research in Nursing*, 25(8), 652-661.
- Doyle, L., McCabe, C., Keogh, B., Brady, A., & McCann, M. (2020). An overview of the qualitative descriptive design within nursing research. *Journal of research in nursing*, 25(5), 443-455.
- Elleman, A. M., & Oslund, E. L. (2019). Reading comprehension research: Implications for practice and policy. *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 6(1), 3-11.
- Elmahdi, O., & Hezam, A. M. (2020). Challenges for methods of teaching English vocabulary to non-native students. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 7(5).
- Erya, W. I., & Pustika, R. (2021). STUDENTS' PERCEPTION TOWARDS THE USE OF WEBTOON TO IMPROVE READING COMPREHENSION SKILL. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning*, 2(1), 51-56.
- Fitzgerald, J., & Shanahan, T. (2000). Reading and writing relations and their development. *Educational Psychologist*, 35(1), 39-50.
- Grabe, W., & Zhang, C. (2013). Reading and writing together: A critical component of English for academic purposes teaching and learning. *Tesol Journal*, 4(1), 9-24.
- Graham, S., Liu, X., Aitken, A., Ng, C., Bartlett, B., Harris, K. R., & Holzapfel, J. (2018). Effectiveness of literacy programs balancing reading and writing instruction: A meta-analysis. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 53(3), 279-304.
- Jayanti, A. D. (2019). Students' writing ability on english descriptive text at grade viii in smpn 33 padang. *ENGLISH FRANCA: Academic Journal of English Language and Education*, 3(1), 72-94.
- Krashen, S. D. (2004). *The power of reading: Insights from the research*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA.
- Loeb, S., Dynarski, S., McFarland, D., Morris, P., Reardon, S., & Reber, S. (2017). Descriptive Analysis in Education: A Guide for Researchers. NCEE 2017-4023. *National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance*.
- McCarthy, L. P. (2020). A stranger in strange lands: A college student writing across the curriculum. In *Landmark Essays on Writing Across the Curriculum* (pp. 125-155). Routledge.
- Nystrand, M. (Ed.). (2023). *What writers know: The language, process, and structure of written discourse*. BRILL.
- Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and policy in mental health and mental health services research*, 42, 533-544.
- Pysarchyk, O. L., & Yamshynska, N. V. (2015). The importance of integrating reading and writing for the EFL teaching. *Advanced education*, 77-83.
- Syam, U. K., & Sangkala, I. (2014). Information transfer technique in teaching writing. *Exposure*, 3(1), 97-106.
- Tarigan, H. G. (2004). *Menulis Sebagai Suatu Keterampilan Berbahasa*. Bandung: Angkasa.
- Yates, J., & Leggett, T. (2016). Qualitative research: An introduction. *Radiologic technology*, 88(2), 225-231.