
Identifying Critical Thinking in “*My Next Words*” for Fifth Grade: A Study Using Content Analysis

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Abstract

Essay writing is an essential academic skill for English education students. However, many 6th semester students face various difficulties in the essay writing process. This study aims to find out the factors that affect students' difficulties among 6th semester English Education students at Universitas Perjuangan Tasikmalaya in writing essays and how students overcome their difficulties. Using a qualitative with case study approach, data were collected through close-ended questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and document. Participants included 30 6th semester students; 7 males and 23 females. Data collection began with an online questionnaire addressing difficulties in essay writing related to linguistic, psychological, and cognitive problems. To support the questionnaire data, interviews were conducted with two participants to gather further insights into their essay writing difficulties and how students overcome their difficulties, and the last was students' essay as the document. Data were then analyzed by counting responses, transcribing interviews, and presenting findings descriptively. The study found that despite having taken an English Essay Writing class in semester 3, students still faced significant difficulties in three aspects: linguistic problems, psychological problems, and cognitive problems. To overcome these difficulties, students will practice writing regularly, expand their vocabulary through reading, and increase their motivation in writing essays.

Keywords: Writing difficulties, essay, English education.

INTRODUCTION

Writing in English is an important instrument in academia and education. It makes it easier to communicate research results, enhance critical thinking skills, and articulate challenging concepts. Writing skills are necessary for students and academics to produce essays, theses, and

scholarly articles that contribute to the body of knowledge in their respective fields. Writing proficiency in English is essential for professionals in various fields, including science, technology, business, education, and law, as it has the capacity to persuade and influence readers.

Writing is an essential life skill that is used in many contexts, especially in the workplace, school, and university. This skill requires the capacity to communicate ideas, arguments, and opinions wisely and clearly through written language. Writing proficiency is

required for effective communication because it allows people to convey challenging ideas in an understandable manner. Writing is essential in an academic setting; students must compose numerous types of writing for their tasks, including essays and reports (Bisriyah,

2022). Essays provide a rigorous framework for developing and supporting a thesis or point of view. Writing an essay requires not only a deep comprehension of the topic matter, but also the ability to organize material in a logical and persuasive manner. Writing involves three steps: thinking, doing, and repeating, as much as time and patience allow (Kane, T, S,

1988).

In particular, essay writing is an important aspect of many curricula as it encourages critical thinking and in-depth knowledge of the subject. Students gain the ability to create their own perspective, substantiate their claims with facts, and effectively and concisely convey their thoughts through essay writing. There are various steps involved in writing an essay, such as planning, drafting, revising, and editing. Each step helps the writer's ideas become more refined and their expression become clearer. Essay writing is important in the educational process. Without this task, the various strands of knowledge learned may never be woven together (Warburton, N, 2006).

Writing essays needs a variety of academic abilities. Understanding information, organizing ideas, formulating arguments, creating structure, and writing in a disciplined manner while adhering to presenting rules is critical. These are fairly complex requirements. Confidently dealing with a subject in such a way as to produce a well-argued piece of work ranging in length from 1500 to 2000 words suggests the development of rather complex writing skills (Johnson, 2012).

Students often view writing well-crafted compositions as one of their most difficult assignments (Harmer, 2004; Bisriyah, 2022). English Language Education students face additional difficulties because they must write essays in a language different than their mother tongue. Concerns about academic language, paraphrasing, citing, and plagiarism contribute to the anxiety. Students become stuck when attempting to write about the first idea or topic because they do not know how to formulate the thesis statement, which should appear in the first or last phrase of the paragraph. Because of how they convey their ideas, feelings, and experiences, writers frequently feel afraid or fail when writing essays. They must consider both the reader or audience for whom they will write and the purpose of the essay. The essay is a basic academic writing form, and all writing obstacles occur during the essay-writing process (Morgan, 2016; Ashrafiyany, Hasanuddin, Nonny).

The difficulties in writing essays are as follows: 1.) Linguistic Problems: These difficulties involve aspects of language, such as grammar, vocabulary, language use, and phrase choice. 2.) Psychological Problems: These difficulties involve psychological aspects, such as lack of motivation, lack of self-confidence, and writing anxiety. 3.) Cognitive Problems: These difficulties involve cognitive aspects, such as content problems and organization problems (Byrne, 2002:2; Trifanny, 2021).

Several studies have been undertaken to explore the difficulties students have with essay writing. From research conducted by Nita Khairunnisa (2019), the findings showed that inadequate vocabulary, grammar, and formal language proficiency are among the difficulties students have when writing essays.

On the other hand, from research conducted by Sarah Alfiah Humairah (2021), the result shows student's difficulties with essay writing; they had issues using grammar as a language barrier. The students found it challenging to use the various aspects of grammar, such as subject verb agreement, tenses, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure.

Then the results of Maslihatul Bisriyah's research (2022) mentioned that the findings showed that the results showed that students encountered difficulties at every stage of the essay writing process. Making an outline and gathering ideas are said to be the two hardest of the six processes

for students to complete. The next two processes are the most difficult ones: writing the first draft and revising. Lastly, a minority of students found it challenging to select a topic and to go over the material and organization. This study presents the challenges students faced and the recommendations they offered. These can be used as a foundation for both individual and institutional change.

The majority of previous studies have revealed that students experience difficulties in all aspects of writing including grammar or language use, vocabulary, and essay organization. This study then attempts to explore the difficulties faced by students in the essay writing process based on their difficulties from linguistic problems, psychological problems, and cognitive problems. Specifically, this study plans to investigate not only the difficulties faced by students but also how they overcome their difficulties in writing essays. The research questions posed for this study are as follows:

1. What are the factors that affect students' difficulties in writing essays?
2. How do students overcome their difficulties?.

METHOD

The research used qualitative with a case study design. Qualitative research is a method for exploring and understanding the meanings that individuals or groups assign to a social or human situation. The research process entails developing questions and processes, gathering data in the participants' environment, inductively evaluating the data to build from specifics to general themes, and interpreting the data's significance. The final written report follows a flexible writing framework (Creswell, J, H, & Creswell, J, D, 2023). Case studies are a method of inquiry used in many domains, including evaluation, in which the researcher conducts an in-depth investigation of a case, which is typically a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. Cases are defined by time and place (or context), and researchers collect detailed information utilizing a range of data collection methodologies over a sustained period of time (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009, 2012, 2014; Creswell, J, H, & Creswell, J, D, 2023).

The participants of this study were 30 6th semester English Education students at Universitas Perjuangan Tasikmalaya. They consisted of 7 male and 23 female students. The instruments were

close-ended questionnaires, students' essays as a document, and semi-structured interviews. The first stage of data collection was to distribute an online questionnaire, the questions in the questionnaire related to their difficulties in writing essays based on linguistic problems, psychological problems, and cognitive problems. The second instrument was interviews with two participants to dig up more information related to their difficulties in writing essays and how they overcome these problems, and the last instrument was students' essay as the document. The last stage was to analyze the data, where the questionnaire, document, and interview data were counted, transcribed, analyzed, and presented in the form of descriptions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of the Paragraph Essay Writing course is to help students produce a variety of essays in English. However, despite taking the course, some students still encounter difficulties in writing essays. To identify the difficulties faced by 6th semester students, the following are the results from questionnaires and interviews.

1. Linguistic Problems

These difficulties involve aspects of language, such as:

a. Grammar

Figure 1. Bar Chart of Grammar Questionnaire Number 1

Based on the data above, it is evident that many students struggle greatly with grammar usage. In particular, 6 students (20%) strongly agreed that they frequently struggle to use proper language when writing essays. This statement was agreed to by

10 students (33.3%), indicating that the majority of the class faces the same issue, albeit maybe not as strongly as those who strongly agreed. 9 students (30%) stayed indifferent, indicating that they either had no strong feelings about the matter or might occasionally struggle with grammar without it being a big deal.

Figure 2. Bar Chart of Grammar Questionnaire Number 2

The information above makes it abundantly evident that many students' essays are considerably less understandable when they contain grammatical faults. Specifically, 4 students (13.3%) strongly agreed that grammatical problems frequently impeded essay clarity. This

demonstrates how most students care a great deal about how grammar impacts how readable and understandable their work is. 14 students (46.7%) expressed agreement with this item, indicating that nearly 50% of the class acknowledged that grammatical problems posed a significant obstacle to the lucidity of their essays. This high percentage draws attention to a prevalent issue that many kids deal with. However, 8 students (26.7%) expressed no opinion, indicating that even while they may be aware of grammatical faults, they do not believe that they have a substantial impact on the essay's clarity. These students may have encountered grammatical errors that affected the readability of their writing on a variety of occasions or less frequently. Four students (13.3%), who made up a smaller group, disagreed with the assertion, suggesting that they did not think that grammatical errors frequently hindered the readability of essays. This group could feel more assured about their command of grammar or that their writing is still comprehensible even in the face of sporadic faults. lastly no student (0%) strongly disagreed with the assertion, indicating a general consensus that, although not a substantial problem for a small minority, grammatical errors do influence essay clarity to some extent.

However, questionnaire results cannot be used as results without the support of interviews. The results of the interviews are as follows:

"Kemampuan grammar saya masih kurang, bingung soal penggunaan tenses yang benar saat menulis esai."

"My grammar skills are still lacking, and I'm confused about the correct use of tenses when writing essays." (Respondent 1. Female)

"Grammar itu cukup sulit karena saya tidak terlalu memahaminya."

"Grammar is quite difficult because I don't really understand it, especially when it comes to writing essays." (Respondent 2. Male)

Both respondents experience significant difficulties with grammar when writing essays. Respondent 1 (female) admitted that her grammar skills are still lacking, and she is often confused about the correct use of tenses. This indicates that

an inadequate understanding of grammar rules is a major barrier for her. Respondent 2 (male) also stated that grammar is quite difficult for him because he does not fully understand it,

especially when it comes to writing essays. These difficulties highlight that a weak grasp of grammar presents a considerable challenge in writing effective and accurate essays. Both respondents underscore the need for improved understanding and skills in grammar to help them write better essay.

b. Vocabulary

Figure 3. Bar Chart of Vocabulary Questionnaire Number 3

From the data above, it can be seen that students' views on vocabulary limitations and its impact on their ability to express ideas in essays vary widely. 5 students (16.7%) strongly agreed that they had a limited vocabulary, which made it difficult for them to express their ideas clearly in the essay. This small percentage shows that although only a small number of students strongly felt the impact of limited vocabulary, they felt that this significantly affected their ability to write essays clearly. 12 students (40%) agreed with the statement. This shows that the larger group also felt that vocabulary limitations affected their ability to express their ideas clearly. Although not as strongly felt as the strongly agreed group, they still considered that vocabulary was an important factor affecting the quality of their essays. 8 students (26.7%) were in the neutral position, which means that they did not have a strong opinion about the impact of vocabulary limitations on their ability to write essays. This group may feel that vocabulary is not a major factor affecting the quality of their essays, or they may experience mixed results in their experiences. 4 students (13.3%) disagreed with the statement, indicating that they did not believe that vocabulary limitation was a significant factor in their essay quality. And the last, 1 student (3.3%) strongly disagreed with the statement, indicating that these students felt that their

vocabulary did not affect their ability to write essays clearly. This indicates a strong belief that vocabulary is not a big problem for them in the context of essay writing.

Figure 4. Bar Chart of Vocabulary Questionnaire Number 4

From the data above, it can be seen that students' views regarding the repetition of the same words due to limited vocabulary when writing essays vary. 5 students (16.7%) strongly agreed that they often repeat the same words in their essays due to limited vocabulary. This percentage shows that a small group of students felt the significant impact of their limited vocabulary, so they often

fell into the trap of using repetitive words when writing. This reflects their awareness of their limited vocabulary which affects the variety of language in their writing. 13 students (43.3%) agreed with the statement, indicating that the larger group also experienced similar problems. They considered that their limited vocabulary caused them to tend to repeat the same words in their essays. Although not as strong as the group that strongly agreed, they still felt that a lack of varied vocabulary affected the quality of their writing. 10 students (33.3%) chose the neutral position, which means that they did not have a strong view on the repetition of words due to limited vocabulary. Students in this group may feel that this issue is not very significant or that they do not experience major difficulties with vocabulary variation in their writing. 2 students (6.7%) disagreed with the statement, indicating that they did not feel that they often repeated the same words in their essays even though they might face vocabulary limitations. They may feel that they can manage their vocabulary well or do not find repetition of words a major problem in their writing. Lastly, 0 students (0%) strongly disagreed with the statement. No students indicated that they did not feel at all affected by vocabulary limitations in terms of repetition of words, indicating that, although there was some difference in the level of influence, no students fully felt that vocabulary limitations did not affect the way they wrote their essays.

However, questionnaire results cannot be used as results without the support of interviews. The results of the interviews are as follows:

“Lalu pada vocabulary juga, saya tidak terlalu banyak memiliki vocabulary, sehingga saat menulis esai sering kebingungan.”

“Additionally, I don’t have a large vocabulary, so I often get confused when writing essays.” (Respondent 1. Female)

“Kosakata juga sering jadi masalah.”

“Vocabulary is often a problem too.” (Respondent 2. Male)

These interviews highlight that vocabulary limitations are a common issue among students, impacting their ability to write coherent and well-expressed essays. This emphasizes the need for strategies to enhance vocabulary skills, such as regular reading and vocabulary exercises, to improve their writing proficiency.

c. Language Use

Figure 5. Bar Chart of Language Use Questionnaire Number 5

Based on the data provided regarding the use of informal language in students' essays that is not appropriate for academic writing, it can be detailed as follows: A total of 5 students (16.7%) strongly agree that their essays often use informal language that is not suitable for academic writing. This indicates that these students are very aware of their frequent use of informal language, which can negatively impact the academic quality of their essays. Additionally, 13 students (43.3%) agree that they often use informal language in their essays, showing that almost half of the respondents recognize this as an issue, making the use of informal language in academic essays a common problem among students. Meanwhile, 9 students (30%) are neutral regarding this statement. They neither agree nor disagree that their essays often use informal language, suggesting that they do not feel the issue is significant or are unsure of how it affects their writing. On the other hand, 2 students (6.7%)

disagree that they often use informal language in their essays, indicating that a small number of students feel confident that they use language appropriate for academic writing. Lastly, 1 student (3.3%) strongly disagrees, showing a strong belief that they do not use informal language in their essays and feel comfortable with their academic writing skills.

Figure 6. Bar Chart of Language Use Questionnaire Number 6

Based on the data provided about students' difficulties in understanding and applying advanced language structures in essay writing, the results can be explained as follows: 3 students (10%) strongly agree that they experience difficulties in understanding and applying advanced language structures when writing essays. This indicates that these students feel a significant challenge in mastering complex language elements, which could affect their overall writing proficiency. Additionally,

16 students (53.3%) agree that they face difficulties with advanced language structures, showing that more than half of the respondents recognize this as a notable issue in their writing practice. On the other hand, 7 students (23.3%) are neutral, meaning they neither agree nor disagree with the statement. This group might be unsure about the impact of advanced language

structures on their writing or may not experience this difficulty as prominently. Furthermore, 4 students (13.3%) disagree that they have trouble with advanced language structures, suggesting that they feel more confident in handling these elements in their essays. Notably, no students (0%) strongly disagree, indicating that there is no one who feels entirely confident and without difficulty regarding the application of advanced language structures in their writing.

However, questionnaire results cannot be used as results without the support of interviews. The results of the interviews are as follows: "Masih berkaitan dengan kosakata, karena kosakata saya terbatas, saya juga mengalami kesulitan dalam menggunakan bahasa. Misalnya, membedakan bahasa formal dan informal yang cocok untuk esai saya."

"Still related to vocabulary, because my vocabulary is limited, I also have difficulty using the language. For example, distinguishing between formal and informal language suitable for my essay." (P1. Female)

"Sepertinya saat menulis esai saya lebih sering menggunakan bahasa yang non-formal."

"It seems that when I write essays, I use non-formal language more often."

(Respondent 2. Male)

Both respondents highlight that limited vocabulary impacts their ability to effectively use appropriate language styles in essay writing. Respondent 1 specifically mentions difficulty with distinguishing between formal and informal language, while Respondent 2 notes a tendency to use informal language. This underscores the importance of expanding vocabulary and understanding language registers to improve writing quality and adherence to academic standards.

d. Phrases Choice

Figure 7. Bar Chart of Phrases Choice Questionnaire Number 7

From the data above, it is apparent that students have diverse views on whether they struggle with selecting the right phrases to express their ideas clearly in their essays. Specifically, 2 students (6.7%) strongly agreed that they have difficulty choosing appropriate phrases to convey their ideas effectively. This small percentage suggests that a minor group of students faces significant challenges in finding the precise language needed to articulate their

thoughts clearly in their writing. A larger group, consisting of 14 students (46.7%), agreed with the statement, indicating that nearly half of the respondents acknowledge experiencing difficulties in selecting the right phrases. These students likely find it challenging to express their ideas clearly and accurately, which can impact the overall clarity and effectiveness of their essays. In contrast, 10 students (33.3%) were neutral on this issue, meaning they neither strongly agree nor disagree with the notion that they struggle with phrase selection. This substantial group might experience varying levels of difficulty with phrasing, finding it problematic in some instances but not in others, or they may not perceive this as a consistent issue affecting their writing. Additionally, 4 students (13.3%) disagreed with the statement, suggesting that they do not believe they have significant trouble choosing the right phrases for their essays. These students likely feel more confident in their ability to find and use appropriate language to clearly express their ideas. Lastly, no students (0%) strongly disagreed with the statement, indicating that none of the respondents feel entirely confident that they never face issues with phrase selection. This complete absence of strong disagreement underscores the recognition of at least some level of challenge among the student body regarding this aspect of essay writing.

Figure 8. Bar Chart of Phrases Choice Questionnaire Number 8

Based on the data provided regarding students' difficulties with using transitions and connectors effectively in essay writing, the explanation is as follows: 1 student (3.3%) strongly agrees that they struggle with using transitions and connectors effectively in their essays. This indicates that this student feels very strongly about their challenge with incorporating these elements, which are crucial for ensuring the coherence and flow of their writing. Additionally, 7 students (23.3%) agree that they face difficulties with transitions and connectors, showing that a significant portion of the respondents acknowledges this issue in their writing process. In contrast, 17 students (56.7%) are neutral, meaning they neither agree nor disagree with the statement. This neutrality may suggest that these students do not find this issue to be particularly significant or are unsure about its impact on their writing. Furthermore, 5 students (16.7%) disagree that they have trouble with transitions and connectors, indicating that they feel more confident in their ability to use these elements effectively in their essays. Notably, no students

(0%) strongly disagree, which means there are no respondents who feel entirely confident and without difficulty in using transitions and connectors.

However, questionnaire results cannot be used as results without the support of interviews. The results of the interviews are as follows:

“Memilih prasa juga cukup sulit bagi saya karena seperti yang sudah disebutkan di atas, karena faktor keterbatasan vocabulary juga.”

"Choosing phrases is also quite difficult for me because, as mentioned above, it is due to the limited vocabulary factor." (Responden 1. Female)

“Penggunaan prasa memang agak sulit sih, tapi kalau menggunakan trasisi saya masih bisa.”

Using phrases is indeed somewhat difficult, but I can still manage with transitions." (Responden 2. Male)

Both respondents face different challenges in writing or speaking. Respondent 1 feels limited by their vocabulary, which affects their ability to choose appropriate phrases. Meanwhile, Respondent 2 experiences similar difficulties with phrase usage but feels more comfortable with using transitions, which help in connecting ideas and maintaining smooth communication. This indicates that different skills, such as phrase

selection and transition use, can impact an individual's experience in writing or speaking.

In addition to questionnaires and interviews, analysis of students' essay documents will support this research.

Do you believe the key success for student is self-study? Many people believe, especially students, self-study is the way to improve their skill and knowledge after study in the class. Self-study is getting knowledge and improve our skill by ourself. According several source from website, self-study more evisien for student to get success. Beside that, several tips for self-study such as use media study like visual or audio, method 50:10 make student stay focus when study, and comfortable place also make student more enjoy when study.

Figure 9. Student's Essay Document

The introduction contains some linguistic issues that affect the clarity and effectiveness of the message. Grammatically, there are errors in the use of tense and sentence structure, such as in the sentence “Do you believe the key success for students is self-study?” which should use the present simple tense with the correct article added. In addition, the prepositions used are not appropriate, for example “According to several sources from websites” which should be “According to several sources from websites.” Plurality errors can also be seen in the word “student” which should be “students” for general contexts. The use of articles is incorrect, such as “self-study is more efficient for students to get success” should be “self-study is more efficient for students to achieve success.”

Then the selection of vocabulary is also inaccurate, such as “efficient” which should be “efficient” and “success” which should be “success.”. There is inappropriate word choice, such as “Beside that” should be “Besides that.”. In addition, coherence and cohesion in the paragraphs are poorly maintained, characterized by transitions between sentences that are not smooth so that the sentences do not flow well, such as “Do you believe the key success for students is self-study? Many people believe, especially students, that self-study is the way to improve their skills and knowledge after studying in the classroom.” should be summarized and improved to, ‘Many people, especially students, believe that self- study is the key to improving their skills and knowledge after classroom learning.’.

There is also unnecessary repetition of words such as the words “study” and “self- study” repeated several times without variation. This can be corrected by using synonyms or other similar phrases. Errors in definitions: “Self-study is getting knowledge and improving our skills by ourselves.” This definition can be clarified and written more precisely. Finally, the claims presented in the essay are not supported with strong evidence, making the argument less convincing. All these issues need to be fixed to improve the clarity, effectiveness, and strength of the argumentation in the essay.

2. Psychological Problems

These difficulties involve psychological aspects, such as:

a. Lack of Motivation

Figure 10. Bar Chart of Lack of Motivation Questionnaire Number 9

Based on the data provided regarding students' motivation to start or complete essay assignments, the explanation is as follows: 1 student (3.3%) strongly agrees that they often feel unmotivated to start or finish their essay assignments. This indicates that this student feels a significant lack of motivation which impacts their ability to engage with and complete their writing tasks. Additionally, 11 students (36.7%) agree with this sentiment, suggesting that a substantial portion of the respondents also experience motivational issues with their essay assignments. In contrast, 12 students (40%) are neutral, meaning they neither agree nor disagree with the statement. This neutrality may reflect a lack of strong feelings about motivation or variability in their motivation levels. Meanwhile, 4 students (13.3%) disagree that they frequently feel unmotivated, indicating that they generally feel more motivated to start and complete their essays. Lastly, 2 students (6.7%) strongly disagree, showing that they do not

experience motivational problems and feel consistently motivated to engage with their essay tasks.

Figure 11. Bar Chart of Lack of Motivation Questionnaire Number 10

Based on the data provided regarding students' perceptions of essay writing as a boring and unenjoyable task, the explanation is as follows: 3 students (10%) strongly agree that writing essays feels like a boring and unenjoyable task. This indicates that these students experience a significant level of dissatisfaction and lack of engagement with essay writing, finding it to be particularly unappealing. Additionally, 4 students (13.3%) agree that essay writing is boring and unenjoyable, suggesting that a notable portion of respondents also view the task negatively, though not as intensely. In contrast, 16 students (53.3%) are neutral, meaning they neither agree nor disagree with the statement. This neutrality may reflect varying levels of engagement or indifference towards essay writing, where the task does not evoke strong feelings of either enjoyment or boredom. Furthermore, 5 students (16.7%) disagree that essay writing is boring and unenjoyable, indicating that they find some level of interest or satisfaction in the task. Lastly, 2 students (6.7%) strongly disagree with the statement, demonstrating that they view essay writing as an engaging and enjoyable activity, experiencing it positively.

However, questionnaire results cannot be used as results without the support of interviews. The results of the interviews are as follows:

“Motivasi saya untuk menulis esai masih kurang. Kadang tidak termotivasi dan dikerjakan karena sudah mepet deadline.”

“My motivation to write essays is still lacking. Sometimes I am not motivated and do it because the deadline is already tight.” (Respondent 1. Female)

“Saya ngga ada motivasi sebenarnya jujur dalam menulis esai. Menyesuaikan mood, motivasi dikerjakan karena deadline.”

“I have no real motivation to be honest in writing essays. Adjusting the mood, motivation to do it because of the deadline.” (Respondent 2. Male)

It can be seen that both respondents face the same challenges regarding motivation in writing essays. They both admitted that their motivation to write essays was not strong. Respondent 1 felt unmotivated in general and only completed the essay as the deadline approached. Meanwhile, Respondent 2 also lacked strong motivation and wrote essays based on mood and deadlines. In conclusion, both Respondent 1 and Respondent 2 experienced significant motivation issues, with the deadline serving as the main factor driving them to complete the task.

b. Lack of Self-Confidence

Figure 12. Bar Chart of Self-Confident Questionnaire Number 11

Based on the data provided regarding students' doubts about their ability to write good essays and their frequent lack of confidence in their work, the explanation is as follows: no students (0%) strongly agree that they doubt their ability to write good essays and frequently lack confidence in their work, indicating that there are no individuals who feel extremely uncertain about their essay-writing skills. However, 12 students (40%) agree with this statement, suggesting that a significant portion of respondents experience doubts about their writing ability and often feel insecure about their essays. This indicates that confidence in essay writing is a notable issue for these students. In contrast, another 12 students (40%) are neutral, meaning they neither agree nor disagree with the statement. This neutrality may reflect varying levels of self-doubt and confidence, or it could indicate ambivalence towards their writing

skills. Additionally, 5 students (16.7%) disagree that they frequently lack confidence in their essay writing, implying that they feel more assured about their abilities or do not experience significant self-doubt. 1 student (3.3%) strongly disagrees, showing that this individual is very confident in their essay-writing abilities and does not experience doubts or insecurity about their work.

Figure 13. Bar Chart of Self-Confident Questionnaire Number 12

Based on the data provided regarding students' perceptions of their essays compared to those of their peers, the explanation is as follows: 3 students (10%) strongly agree that they feel their essays are not as good as those written by their peers. This indicates that these students experience a significant sense of inadequacy regarding the quality of their essays when compared to their classmates' work. Additionally, 9 students (30%) agree with this sentiment, suggesting that a considerable portion of respondents also feel that their essays fall short in comparison to their peers' essays. In contrast, 15 students (50%) are neutral, meaning they neither agree nor disagree with the statement. This neutrality may reflect a lack of strong feelings about the comparative quality of their essays or an indifference to how their work stacks up against others'. Furthermore, 3 students (10%) disagree that their essays are inferior to their peers', indicating that they feel their essays are on par with or exceed the quality of their classmates' work. Finally, no students (0%) strongly disagree, which means there is no one who feels very confident that their essays are better than or equal to their peers' essays to the extent that they would completely reject the notion of inferiority.

However, questionnaire results cannot be used as results without the support of interviews. The results of the interviews are as follows:

“Karena hal-hal di atas, kadang saya nggak percaya diri, soalnya pasti bahasanya muter-muter dan kurang bervariasi.”

“Because of these things, sometimes I don't feel confident, because I'm sure the language will be all over the place and not varied enough.” (Respondent 1. Female)

“Saya kadang nggak percaya diri soal apa yang saya tulis karena merasa kurang. Karena jarang menulis, jadi bingung ini udah sesuai apa belum.”

“I sometimes feel insecure about what I write because I feel like I'm not doing enough. Because I rarely write, I don't know if it's appropriate or not.” (Respondent

2. Male)

Both respondents felt insecure in their writing. Respondent 1 was worried that the language in her writing would be disorganized and lack variety. Meanwhile, Respondent 2 felt unsure because she rarely wrote, which made her doubt the appropriateness and quality of her writing. Both faced challenges that affected their confidence in writing.

c. Writing Anxiety

Figure 14. Bar Chart of Writing Anxiety Questionnaire Number 13

Based on the data provided regarding students' feelings of anxiety and stress when writing essays, the explanation is as follows: no students (0%) strongly agree that they feel anxious and stressed when writing essays, indicating that no one experiences extreme levels of anxiety related to this task. However, 5 students (16.7%) agree that essay writing induces anxiety and stress for them. This suggests

that a small portion of students do experience some level of stress when engaging in essay writing. In contrast, 16 students (53.3%) are neutral, meaning they neither agree nor disagree with the statement. This neutrality may indicate that these students do not have strong feelings about the stressfulness of essay writing or that their experiences vary widely. Additionally, 7 students (23.3%) disagree that writing essays causes them anxiety and stress, suggesting that they generally do not feel significant stress related to this task. Finally, 2 students (6.7%) strongly disagree, showing that these individuals do not experience anxiety or stress when writing essays and likely find the task to be manageable or even enjoyable.

Figure 15. Bar Chart of Writing Anxiety Questionnaire Number 14

Based on the data regarding the impact of students' anxiety about essay writing on their ability to organize and develop their ideas, the explanation is as follows: 1 student (3.3%) strongly agrees that their anxiety about writing essays significantly affects their ability to organize and develop their ideas. This indicates that this student experiences a substantial level of anxiety that seriously impairs their cognitive processes related to structuring and expanding their

essay content. Additionally, 8 students (26.7%) agree that their anxiety affects their ability to manage and elaborate on their ideas, suggesting that a significant portion of respondents also find that stress impedes their organizational skills and idea development, though not to the same extent as the one student who strongly agrees. In contrast, 13 students (43.3%) are neutral, meaning they neither agree nor disagree with the statement. This neutrality may reflect that these students do not feel a strong impact of anxiety on their ability to organize and develop ideas or that their experiences vary. Furthermore, 7 students (23.3%) disagree that anxiety impacts their

ability to structure and develop their ideas, indicating that they feel less affected by such anxiety in their writing process. Finally, 1 student (3.3%) strongly disagrees, showing that this individual does not believe that anxiety has any significant effect on their capacity to manage and expand their ideas.

However, questionnaire results cannot be used as results without the support of interviews. The results of the interviews are as follows:

“Cemasnya karena sulit mengembangkan ide esainya.”

“The anxiety is because it's difficult to develop the idea for the essay.”

(Respondent 1. Female)

sih.”

“Saya merasa susah buat ngembangin ide, jadi kadang ngaruh ke stress nya

“I find it difficult to develop ideas, so sometimes it affects the stress.”

(Respondent 2. Male)

Both respondents revealed difficulties in developing ideas for essays, which caused anxiety and stress. Respondent 1 mentioned that anxiety arises due to the difficulty of developing ideas for essays. Respondent 2 also experienced similar difficulties, which sometimes impacted on her stress levels. In conclusion, problems in idea development were the main source of anxiety and stress for both respondents.

3. Cognitive Problems

These difficulties involve cognitive aspects, such as:

a. Content Problems

Figure 16. Bar Chart of Content Problems Questionnaire Number 15

From the data above, it is evident that students have varied opinions on whether their essays lack depth and fail to explain key points in detail. Specifically, 1 student (3.3%) strongly agreed that their essays were not deep enough and did not sufficiently elaborate on important points. This small percentage indicates that a minority of students feel significantly impacted by this issue, believing that their writing lacks the necessary detail and thoroughness. A larger group, comprising 12 students (40%), agreed with this statement, indicating that a substantial portion of the student body recognizes a noticeable deficiency in the depth and detail of their essays. These students feel that their essays do not thoroughly address key points, suggesting a common struggle with developing ideas fully and providing comprehensive explanations. On the other hand, 11 students (36.7%) remained neutral on this issue, implying that they neither strongly agree nor disagree with the notion that their essays lack depth and detailed explanations. This group might feel that the impact varies, with some essays being sufficiently detailed and others not, or they may not perceive a consistent issue with the depth and detail in their writing. Conversely, 5 students (16.7%) disagreed with the statement, suggesting that they do not believe their essays lack depth or fail to elaborate on key points. These students likely feel confident in their ability to provide detailed and comprehensive explanations in their essays, or they might prioritize other aspects of writing over detailed elaboration. Lastly, 1 student (3.3%) strongly disagreed, indicating a firm belief that their essays are both deep and detailed. This student feels assured that their writing thoroughly covers key points and provides the necessary detail to support their arguments effectively.

Figure 17. Bar Chart of Content Problems Questionnaire Number 16

From the table above, it is clear that students have varied opinions on the difficulty of gathering and incorporating sufficient evidence to support arguments in

their essays. Specifically, 2 students (6.7%) strongly agreed that they struggle to collect and include adequate evidence to back up their arguments. This small percentage indicates that a minority of students experience significant challenges in this area, feeling that their inability to find and integrate strong evidence undermines the effectiveness of their essays. A larger group,

consisting of 13 students (43.3%), agreed with the statement, suggesting that a substantial portion of the student body finds it difficult to gather and incorporate sufficient evidence. These students recognize that this challenge impacts their ability to construct well-supported arguments, which likely affects the overall quality and persuasiveness of their essays. On the other hand, 8 students (26.7%) were neutral on this issue, implying that they neither strongly agree nor disagree with the notion that they struggle to gather and include enough evidence in their essays. This group might feel that their ability to find and use evidence varies from one essay to another, or they might not see it as a consistent problem in their writing process. Conversely, 6 students (20%) disagreed with the statement, indicating that they do not believe they have difficulty gathering and incorporating sufficient evidence to support their arguments. These students likely feel confident in their research skills and their ability to find and use evidence effectively in their essays. And the last, 1 student (3.3%) strongly disagreed, suggesting a firm belief that they have no issues in this regard. This student feels assured that they can gather and incorporate enough evidence to construct strong, well-supported arguments in their essays.

However, questionnaire results cannot be used as results without the support of interviews. The results of the interviews are as follows:

“Kadang topiknya memang udah ditentukan kalau tugas di kelas, tapi nyari judul terus ide-ide per paragrafnya susah.”

“Sometimes the topic is already determined if the assignment in class, but finding the title and ideas per paragraph is difficult.” (Respondent 1. Female)

“Saya sering ngestuck, kayak misalnya ide bakal kemana lagi, tapi cuma buat 1-2 paragraf kesananya susah, nyari Conclusion nya gimana. Next paragraf dan judul nya juga gimana.”

“I often get stuck, like for example the idea of where to go again, but only for 1-2 paragraphs the impression is difficult, how to find the Conclusion. Next paragraph and title are also difficult.” (Respondent 2. Male)

Both respondents face difficulties with certain aspects of essay writing even when the topic is already assigned. Respondent 1 struggles with finding a suitable title and developing ideas for

each paragraph despite having a predetermined topic. Respondent 2 often gets stuck with generating ideas for paragraphs, crafting conclusions, and finding appropriate titles. In summary, their main challenges revolve around developing ideas and structuring the essay, even when the topic is given.

b. Organization Problems

Figure 18. Bar Chart of Organization Problems Questionnaire Number 17

From the data above, it is clear that students have varied opinions on whether their essays often lack a clear and logical structure. Specifically, 1 student (3.3%) strongly agreed that their essays frequently do not possess a clear and logical structure. This small percentage indicates that a minority of students face significant challenges in organizing their essays coherently, feeling that their inability to structure their writing logically undermines the overall effectiveness of their essays. A larger group, consisting of 11 students (36.7%), agreed with the statement, suggesting that a substantial portion of the student body recognizes issues with structuring their essays. These students likely struggle with arranging their ideas in a coherent and logical manner, which can affect the readability and persuasiveness of their writing. This indicates that for many students, ensuring their essays are well-structured is a common difficulty. On the other hand, 10 students (33.3%) were neutral on this issue,

implying that they neither strongly agree nor disagree with the notion that their essays lack a clear and logical structure. This group might feel that their ability to structure essays varies, sometimes achieving a clear structure and other times struggling, or they might not see this as a consistent problem in their writing process. Conversely, 7 students (23.3%) disagreed with the statement, indicating that they do not believe their essays often lack a clear and logical structure. These students likely feel confident in their ability to organize their ideas and present them coherently in their essays, suggesting that structuring their writing is not a major concern for them. 1 student (3.3%) strongly disagreed, suggesting a firm belief that their essays are always clearly and logically structured. This student feels assured in their ability to organize their essays effectively, indicating a high level of confidence in their writing skills.

Figure 19. Bar Chart of Organization Problems Questionnaire Number 18

From the table above, it is clear that students have varied opinions on whether their essays often lack smooth transitions between paragraphs and sections. Specifically, 1 student (3.3%) strongly agreed that their essays frequently do not have smooth transitions. This small percentage indicates that a minority of students face significant challenges in creating seamless connections between their ideas, which can disrupt the flow and coherence of their essays. A somewhat larger group, consisting of 7 students (23.3%), agreed with the statement, suggesting that a notable portion of the student body recognizes issues with making smooth transitions in their essays. These students likely struggle with linking their paragraphs and sections in a way that maintains the reader's understanding and engagement, which can affect the overall readability and cohesion of their writing. On the other hand, 14 students (46.7%) were neutral on this issue, indicating that they neither strongly agree nor disagree with the

notion that their essays lack smooth transitions. This sizable group might experience variability in their ability to create smooth transitions, finding it easier for some topics and more challenging for others, or they may not see it as a consistent problem in their writing process. Conversely, 7 students (23.3%) disagreed with the statement, suggesting that they do not believe their essays often lack smooth transitions between paragraphs and sections. These students likely feel confident in their ability to create cohesive links between their ideas, indicating that they prioritize and manage transitions effectively in their essays. Lastly, 1 student (3.3%) strongly disagreed, indicating a firm belief that their essays consistently have smooth transitions. This student feels assured in their ability to maintain a seamless flow throughout their writing, suggesting a high level of confidence in their skills to connect ideas logically and coherently.

However, questionnaire results cannot be used as results without the support of interviews. The results of the interviews are as follows:

“Kalau nulis esai, saya bikin first draft dulu, menulis hal-hal yang keluar dari otak, terus dibenerin lagi sampai jadi esai yang cukup baik. Bingung juga sih meskipun udah diajarin outline nya. Terus masih bingung cara menghubungkan kalimat-kalimatnya, menyesuaikan isi esai dengan topik.”

“When writing an essay, I make a first draft first, write things that come out of my brain, and then fix it again until it becomes a pretty good essay. I'm also confused even though I've been taught the outline. I'm still confused about how to connect the sentences, adjusting the content of the essay to the topic.” (Respondent 1. Female)

“Saya bikin brainstorming, misalnya saya ingin menulis sesuatu mencari judul, isinya bagaimana, Conclusion nya gimana. Tapi kalo misalnya untuk menulis secara bebas pilih langsung nulis tanpa nulis outline ataupun framework. Jadi itu sih mungkin masalahnya kalau nulis esai buat tujuan akademik dibagian outline nya.”

“I make a brainstorm, for example, I want to write something, find a title, what is the content, what is the conclusion. But if I want to write freely, I choose to write directly without writing an outline or framework. So that might be the problem when writing essays for academic purposes in the outline section.” (Respondent 2. Male)

Both respondents face challenges in structuring their essays effectively. Respondent 1 creates a first draft and revises it multiple times but still struggles with connecting sentences and aligning content with the topic, despite having been taught how to outline. Respondent 2 prefers brainstorming and writing freely without using an outline, which may lead to difficulties in adhering to academic essay structures. In summary, their main issues are related to organizing and connecting ideas within their essays, with respondent 1 struggling with sentence flow and respondent 2 encountering problems due to a lack of structured planning.

From the difficulties in writing essays that they face, as described above, the way they overcome these problems is by:

“Harus banyak latihan, banyak baca juga biar vocabulary makin banyak.

Terus jangan malas-malasan juga. Ningkatin motivasi buat nulis esai.”

“Should to practice a lot, read a lot to increase vocabulary. Don't be lazy either. Increase motivation in writing essays.” (Respondent 1. Female)

“Banyak nulis paling penting, banyak baca-baca juga, karena nulis pasti diawali dengan membaca.”

“Lots of writing is most important, lots of reading too, because writing must begin with reading.” (Respondent 2. Male)

Respondent 1 and respondent 2 suggest similar approaches for overcoming difficulties in essay writing, emphasizing the importance of practice and reading. Respondent 1 advises that frequent practice and extensive reading are crucial for improving vocabulary and avoiding laziness. This approach aims to build a stronger foundation in writing by enhancing one's vocabulary and writing skills through consistent effort. Respondent 2 also highlights the significance of writing a lot and reading extensively, noting that writing skills are closely linked to reading habits. He suggests that reading is fundamental because it informs and enriches writing capabilities. Both respondents agree that improving writing skills involves a combination of regular practice and extensive reading to expand vocabulary and enhance overall writing proficiency.

In addition to questionnaires and interviews, analysis of students' essay documents will support this research.

Do you believe the key success for student is self-study? Many people believe, especially students, self-study is the way to improve their skill and knowledge after study in the class. Self-study is getting knowledge and improve our skill by ourself. According several source from website, self-study more evisien for student to get success. Beside that, several tips for self-study such as use media study like visual or audio, method 50:10 make student stay focus when study, and comfortable place also make student more enjoy when study.

Figure 20. Student's Essay Document

There are cognitive problems in the introduction essay section above as in the structure and organization section; the thesis is unclear the first sentence asks a question without giving a clear thesis or a firm position. The reader does not immediately know whether the writer supports or rejects the idea that independent learning is the key to success. Then redundant definitions where there is repetition in defining self-study. For example, “Self-study is getting knowledge and

improving our skills by ourselves” can be unified with the previous sentence. Inconsistent logic where there is a claim that self-study is more efficient based on “several sources from websites” without providing concrete evidence or specific references. This makes the argument less strong. Then the sudden topic switch: The transition from self-study efficiency to self-study tips is not smooth enough. The author needs to make a better transition between the main argument and practical advice.

CONCLUSION

This study found that although 6th semester students of English Education at Universitas Perjuangan Tasikmalaya had attended English Essay Writing class in semester 3, they still faced various difficulties, especially in linguistic aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, language use, and phrase selection. These difficulties have the potential to affect students' psychological aspects, such as decreased motivation to write and lack of confidence in the quality of their writing. This finding indicates that cognitive problems are also felt, where limited vocabulary often hinders students' ability to express ideas clearly and effectively. To overcome these difficulties, students will practice writing and expand their vocabulary through reading and increase their motivation in writing essays.

As a corrective measure, the results of this study provide a basis for further evaluation and development at both the institutional and individual levels. At the institutional level, it is important to revisit writing courses and integrate reading activities as part of the learning process. This integration will support the development of holistic writing skills. For individuals, both students and teachers, it is recommended to continue making active efforts in overcoming writing difficulties with regular practice, reading academic English, and getting intensive guidance from lecturers. With this approach, it is expected that students can significantly improve their writing skills and overcome various challenges.

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