

# **AN INVESTIGATION OF THE UNDERGRADUATE EFL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS THE MOST COMMON WRITING CHALLENGES: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Writing had always been considered as the most difficult and challenging area of language learning for all students without exception, specifically in English as a foreign language or second language. Almost all of the students failed to fulfill the requirements of educators either communicatively or linguistically. In fact, the students had various levels of language proficiency and experience. The students also had various insights, attitudes, and thoughts about writing. Therefore, it was important to show what EFL students think of writing challenges and how they approach them.

Following the problem researcher outlined above, the purpose of this study was to find out the most common writing challenges faced by EFL students. The study also investigated the perceptions of undergraduate EFL students of these writing challenges and solutions to overcome them. This method of study adopted a qualitative case study. The participants of this study were five undergraduate EFL students in the fourth-semester of the English language education study program at a private university in Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan, Indonesia. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed with a thematic analysis to guide this study in analyzing the qualitative data. The findings indicated that organizational structure, grammar, and paraphrasing were the most common writing challenges that EFL students faced. Besides, citation errors and poor English proficiency were the other challenges that were revealed in this study. In accordance with EFL students' perceptions, the findings of this study could reveal that writing was difficult for undergraduate EFL students, whether in producing an acceptable piece of writing or the inability to write. Nevertheless, EFL students responded positively to writing challenges. EFL students showed enthusiasm, ambition, curiosity about the writing mistakes they made, and they tried to improve their abilities and skills in writing. Finally, the strategies adopted by EFL students to overcome their writing challenges, such as peer feedback and technologies (e.g., Google and Youtube). Moreover, keep on studying hard, learn and practicing writing a lot, pay attention on lecturers' explanation as well as ask the instructions, and convincing themselves that they could do it as the other strategies that had been revealed. In particular, the participants suggested that more

reading could overcome the challenges of writing. Besides, increasing time in the academic writing course class made EFL students had enough time to study the material and understand the lesson well.

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