

AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION INTO THE MULTIFACETED CHALLENGES CONFRONTED BY ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDENTS IN THE ART OF CRAFTING ENGLISH TEXTS

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to identify student writers' difficulties in compositional expression while also clarifying the repertoire of solutions used to overcome these complicated writing barriers. The study methodologically engages with a cohort of participants from the English department, explicitly consisting of twenty-five students enrolled in the fifth semester, using a descriptive qualitative research paradigm. The data-gathering procedure is based on a precisely constructed questionnaire. The findings show that a subgroup of nine students struggled with grammatical complexities, eight struggled with building an academic writing style, and three struggled with compositional structure and lexical choices. Furthermore, the dominant strategies employed by the students were primarily focused on independent writing endeavours. Finally, a detailed understanding of students' compositional challenges and their strategic repertoire enriches the instructional terrain, resulting in an enhanced learning environment. The findings show that a subgroup of nine students struggled with grammatical complexities, eight struggled with building an academic writing style, and three struggled with compositional structure and lexical choices. Furthermore, the dominant strategies employed by the students were primarily focused on independent writing endeavours. Finally, a detailed understanding of students' compositional challenges and their strategic repertoire enriches the instructional terrain, resulting in an enhanced learning environment.

Keyword: EFL Learners, Writing Difficulties, Writing Strategies

I. INTRODUCTION

Language is a sign, symbol, or instrument to communicate information vocally or in writing. Everyday communication is strongly related to language. Conversations in a language they understand may be easily discovered (Riadil et al., 2023). *Writing* is an essential skill that significantly aids in language development (Aziz et al., 2022). According to Reid (2002), writing is a complicated talent. Writing presents significant difficulties for most English as a foreign language (EFL) student. The difficulties began with grammar, vocabulary, a lack of ideas, writing order, etc. According to Harmer (2001, p. 79), writing is a communication in which we communicate our sentiments, ideas, emotions, etc. When expressing themselves, learners, particularly those learning English as a foreign language (EFL), spend time and are expected to exaggerate their attentiveness. It happens because the writers are impacted by their first language

experience, limited linguistic understanding, and so on. Indeed, (Schoonen et al., 2009) assert that first language influences foreign language writing in a variety of ways, including the writing process, which causes the writer to struggle due to a lack of linguistic understanding.

Furthermore, to reduce the difficulty of writing, the writer should become a good reader. The personality, self-image, knowledge of the word, and ability to reason and express thought are all reflected in writing performance (Mustafidah, 2023). According to Tsai (2006), reading and writing are inextricably linked. Writing and reading are processes in which the writer or reader interacts with a text. According to Williams (2003), reading is one approach to improving one's writing skills. Reading also helps kids improve their writing skills. Students who read often get acquainted with the terminology, sentence patterns, organization flow, idioms, and cultural assumptions. Furthermore, the existence and growth of media and social networking services can be found anywhere nowadays.

Furthermore, Kirby and Crovitz (2013) stated that teaching writing is a difficult task for educators. As a result, the appearance of tactics is required in this talent because tactics will positively influence their writing through tactics. There are four ways to improve writing abilities. First and foremost, autonomous writing. *Independent writing* is an approach that provides students with opportunities to enhance their writing abilities with various text genres without the direction of the teacher or classmates. In autonomous writing, students learn to define the purpose of their writing and apply some skills to complete their writing assignments. This method assists students in being more conscious of their writing and improving their self-assessment.

Second, speak your thoughts loudly. One type of method is the think-aloud strategy, which tries to engage learners in writing and is a stimulant. Thinking aloud is defined by the NSW Department of Education and Training (2007) as a strategy in which students state aloud what they are thinking in order to revise and arrange their writing. Indeed, think-aloud may be utilized to develop a wide range of writing abilities, knowledge, and comprehension. Third, there was model writing. Teachers utilize this method, according to The NSW Department of Education and Training, 2007, p. 29, to help students obtain the information, vocabulary, and text structure needed to write for various purposes.

This technique employs real-world examples such as articles, literary work, and newspapers, depending on the teacher's preference—Fourth, Guided writing. *Guided writing* is an approach through which teachers develop and facilitate students' writing. As a result, this study aims to investigate and initiate the frequency and roles of modals and semi-modal fillers to enhance student awareness of modals and semi-modals often used in writing. Following that, the researcher develops two research problems:

(1) What are the writing problems of Tidar University's fifth-year students?

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 English Language

Language is a vital component of human existence. People may communicate, exchange information, and engage through learning a language. Language is important in human existence because it allows people to connect with others in their environment. According to one expert, language is commonly employed in communication between persons who do not share the same first (or even second) language (Harmer, 2007). It implies that language is extremely important to learn in human existence. English is an international language that all Indonesian students must learn. English is used in the learning curriculum in Indonesia because it allows pupils to adapt to global problems and have access to digital technologies (Isadaud, Fikri, and Bukhari, 2022).

2.2 English Writing

Writing is one of the most crucial English skills for students in Indonesia to develop, according to Riadil (2019). It is a crucial ability that substantially improves the process of language learning. Despite this, writing is a formidable talent, particularly for most English as a foreign language (EFL) learner, who face several writing challenges. According to Ahmadi and Reza (2018), while presenting sentiments, ideas, and emotions in writing, learners, particularly those learning English as a foreign language (EFL), must take more time and be more attentive. It happens because the writers are impacted by their first language experience and inadequate linguistic expertise.

Writing is an essential element of daily life, and it is used in various settings in which a succession of symbols express meanings for various objectives. Writing is defined by Klein (1985, p. 70) as "the ability to use a pen and paper to express ideas through symbols." As a result, the representations on the page will have meaning and content that the writer may transmit to others." Garcia (2003, p. 13) defines *writing* as the depiction of words or ideas on paper or other sort of support using a pencil or any other instrument. In addition, Cassany (1999, p. 24) claims that writing is a manifestation of human linguistic activity such as conversation, monologue or, on a different level, gestures codes or Morse code. *Writing* is a tool that keeps words and shares knowledge through history.

Furthermore, Cassany (1999, p. 24) asserts that writing manifests human language activity similar to conversation, monologue, or, on a different level, gesture codes or Morse codes. Writing is a technique for preserving language and disseminating knowledge throughout history. Furthermore, writing results from a complicated brain process involving numerous functions from individuals. According to Garcia (2003, p. 149), writing is the result of a brain activity that involves global functions that are closely related, and it transmits familiar words from another person or one's existential memory using traces, as well as the ability to express ourselves through narration. Writing as a process is connected to how learners grow their language abilities, as language learning progress may be seen when writing productivity improves. According to Harmer (2004, p. 4), the writing process correlates to a progression known as the process wheel, comprised of four primary stages: planning, drafting, editing, and final version. Planning, also known as pre-writing, is the stage in which students are encouraged to write by taking notes, developing ideas, and gathering material through brainstorming or lists, according to Harmer (2004, p. 4). According to Harmer (2004), authors must consider three

significant difficulties when preparing. First and foremost, students must examine the goal of their work.

Secondly, authors must consider the audience they are writing to; thirdly, writers must evaluate the text's content structure. Drafting is the step in which the learner lays down his or her ideas and thoughts on paper and creates an outline. The most crucial objective during this stage is to draft the general information. The emphasis at this stage is on structuring the content and considering grammar. The following stage is editing. According to Harmer (2004, p. 5), it occurs when authors review their creation for accurate language usage and text purpose.

Students' writing abilities may be increased by using technology to increase their interest, motivation, and enjoyment of writing (Graham & Perin, 2007). Similarly, several metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective tactics may help students understand and practice the writing process (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Furthermore, teachers can adjust their pedagogical techniques and collaborate to build assignments that might engage and encourage students by allowing them to choose themes of interest (Pineteh, 2013; Quintero, 2008). It will probably modify their writing habits by involving physical and cognitive abilities that offer the writer control over the display of language and domain-specific information (Kellogg & Raulerson, 2007). Furthermore, language and subject teachers will find it easier to supervise their pupils from various angles (Nik, Sani, Kamaruzaman, Hasbollah, Journal of Education & Social Sciences et al., 2010).

Above all, attitudes regarding writing and dealing with its challenges must shift. Teachers must use ways to extract ideas from children and write them down on paper to improve their linguistic abilities. Furthermore, immediate and critical feedback on their production is required to boost their confidence (Haider, 2012).

III. METHOD

This study was conducted using a descriptive qualitative approach. It means that qualitative researchers study things in a natural setting that make sense and interpret phenomena. In the descriptive qualitative approach, we conducted a study of the writing difficulties at Tidar university. Moreover, the researchers used questionnaires to collect the data. The researchers used open-ended questions that are used in qualitative surveys to generate long-form written/typed responses. Questions will be designed to elicit perspectives, experiences, narratives, or stories. They are frequently used as a prelude to interviews or focus groups since they assist in identifying early themes or concerns to be explored further in the study. According to Brace (2018), questionnaires are a few written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they must respond by selecting from or composing the existing response.

The research was carried out at Tidar University, specifically for class one, during the fifth semester of English education program. Twenty-five pupils, both male and female, took part. The researcher utilized a questionnaire to collect data. In this case, the questions are a mix of multiple-choice and closed, with the respondents being prompted to choose 'yes' or 'no' replies.

To begin gathering data, the researcher chose a case from the class. Second, the researcher comprehends the situation by applying writing skill theory. The researchers next sought a questionnaire to collect data. Finally, the researcher includes a link to the survey in the Google form. Fourth, the researcher distributes the questionnaire link to twenty-five students in skill one of the fifth semester and awaits a response. Following the collection of replies, the research examines the challenges in writing skills. Finally, based on the research findings, a conclusion was reached.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section outlines the study's findings. Because there are two project-related questions, the result section is separated into two sections. The first section is on writing challenges. The second focus is on the critical tactics for overcoming writing challenges.

After distributing the online questionnaires, the researcher gathered data, classified the writing challenges, and had the students fill them out. The following are the outcomes of the student's writing difficulties:

The difficulties in writing

According to the questions, most kids want to learn to write. The majority of replies are from females with a strong desire to write. Despite their tremendous enthusiasm to write, they must improve their writing skills. There are specific difficulties with writing.

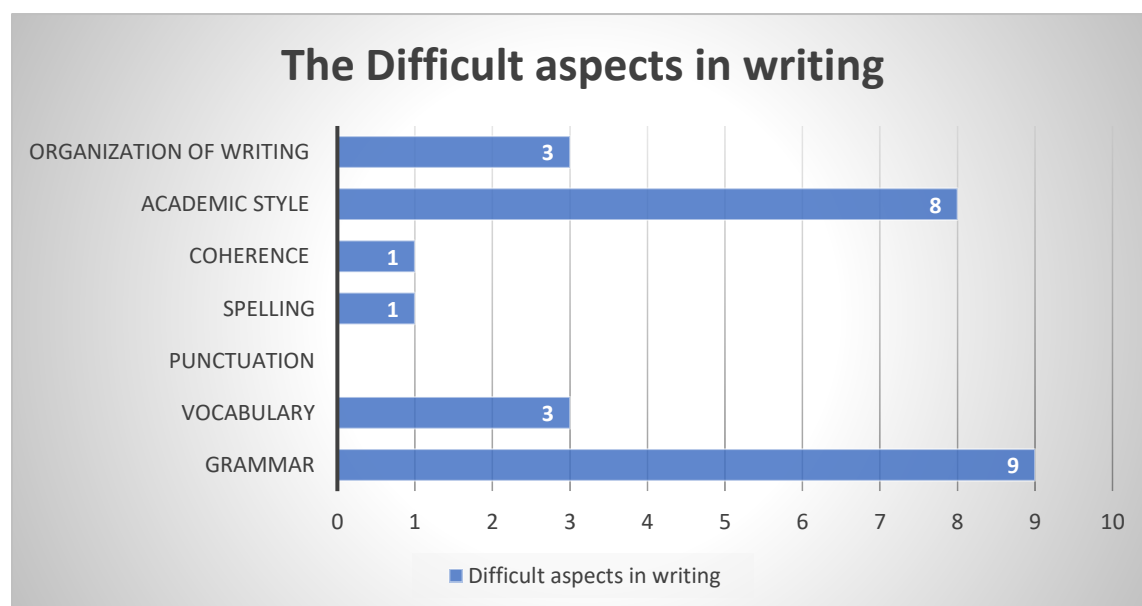


Fig 1. The difficult aspect in writing

According to Figure 1, grammar is the most challenging component of writing, with a total of nine people. There were eight people for academic style, three for writing structure and vocabulary, one for spelling and coherence, and zero for punctuation. The researcher discusses the three fundamental aspects of writing difficulties in this part. The reply was, first and foremost, concerned with grammar. It might be due to a need for knowledge and implementation of grammatical rules.

Furthermore, it is the result of the effect of the first language. Second, think about academic style. Each type and writing pattern have its characteristics, such as sentence structure, transitions, academic language, etc. These qualities may cause problems for students who require assistance distinguishing between non-academic and academic writing. Third, organize your writing and terminology. Students may want guidance on writing arrangements at times. Aside from vocabulary, children may want aid in finding specific terminology when writing. EFL learners require more vocabulary, misuse vocabulary items, and have less competence and practice with a term, resulting in word repetition and uncertainty of meaning in writing.

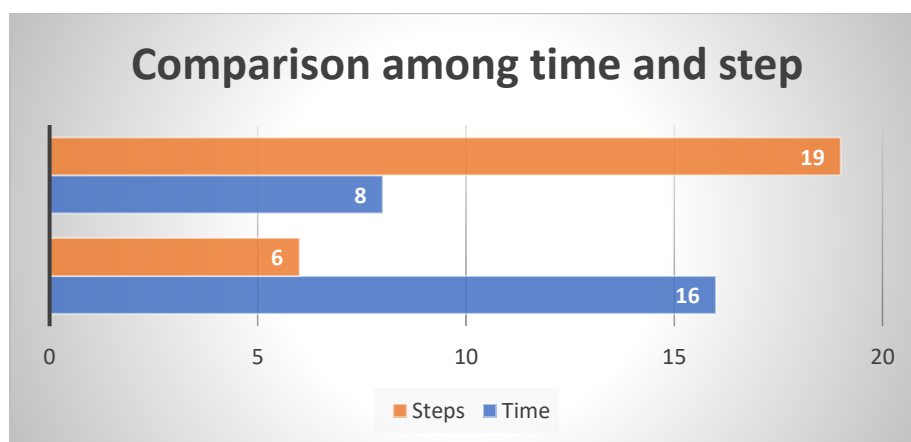


Fig 2. The comparison between time and step which effect writing difficulties

According to Figure 2, time and step also impact writing. Regarding writing in the classroom, around sixteen students do not have enough time, whereas eight students believe they have enough time. Furthermore, the students who require more time do not follow the steps, as evidenced by their position in the chart, which depicts the chart of steps is lower than the time with six students who follow the procedures. On the other hand, students who have ample time follow the stages in writing. The step chart is higher than the sixteen individuals who follow the step chart than the time chart. As a result, allowing students enough time to think is critical for them to produce quality writing.

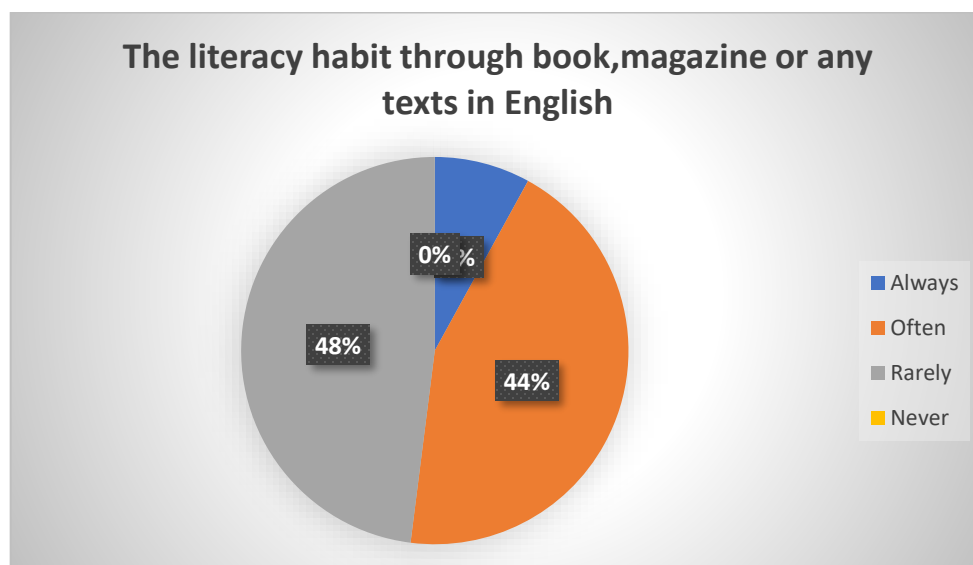


Fig 3. The degree of reading habit which effect writing difficulties

According to Figure 3, twelve students seldom read in English; eleven students frequently read, two persons always read, and the other students never read. Furthermore, reading and writing are linked. Reading ability should play a role in the writing session. According to (Krashen, 1985; Williams, 2003), frequent reading practice helps improve students' writing skills and teaches them about effective writing.

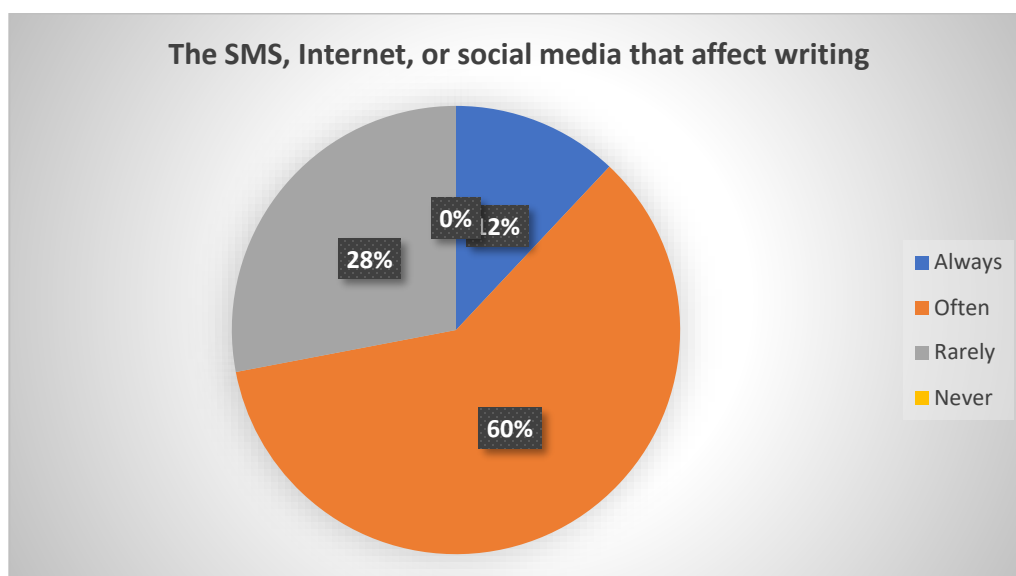


Fig 4. The degree of SMS, internet, or social media that effect the difficulties of writing.

According to Figure 4, the majority of students, with a total of fifteen students, frequently use SMS, Internet, or social media in writing. Seven students seldom use the Internet, three students always use SMS or social media, and zero students use English through SMS, Internet, or social media. These findings indicate that students positively perceive that writing via SMS, the Internet, or social media affects their English writing skills. Furthermore, the presence of technology is critical in students' writing learning.

Writing Techniques

This section addresses the second project issue, which is how to deal with writing challenges. There are four strategies in the writing. There are four types of writing: individual writing, think-aloud writing, modelled writing, and guided writing. The details of the result are presented in the figure.

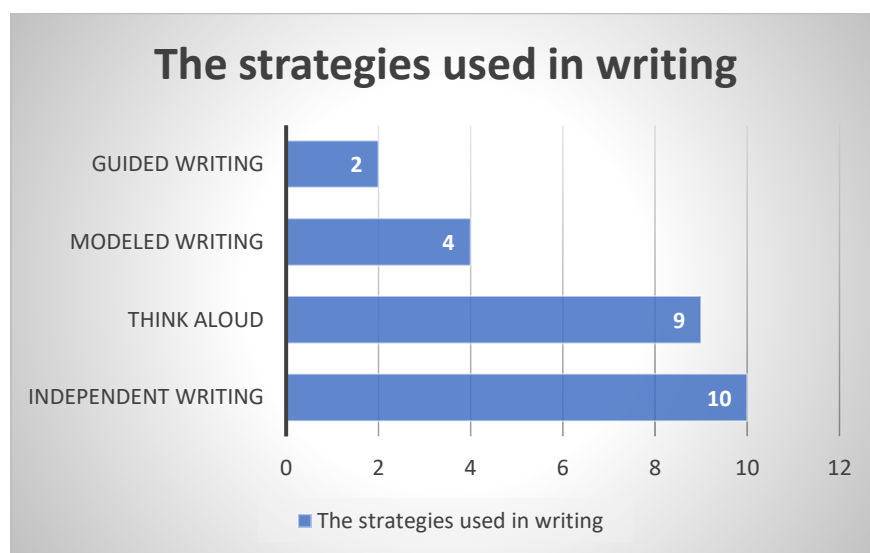


Fig 5. The Strategies to face difficulties in writing

According to Figure 5, up to ten pupils prefer an autonomous writing approach, nine prefer a think-aloud method, four prefer a modelled writing strategy, and two prefer guided writing. These findings suggest that each student has a unique writing strategy. It occurs as a result of their particular choices. Student approach selection depends on their prior writing experiences and the outcome of selecting the techniques they want. Furthermore, most of them choose an independent method as their writing strategy.

Discussion

Drawing upon the culmination of our empirical inquiry, encompassing both the discerning findings and comprehensive deliberations, this study was undertaken with the overarching aim of delving into the intricate terrain of writing challenges experienced by students matriculated in the fifth semester, whilst concomitantly exploring the diverse strategies that have proven efficacious in surmounting these challenges. A pivotal revelation emanating from the data is the formidable prominence of grammatical intricacies as the foremost hurdle within the realm of writing encountered by these adept learners.

Moreover, it is salient to highlight the nuanced interplay of reading practices and technological influences upon the landscape of writing issues, albeit their comparative significance paling compared to the pre-eminence of grammatical prowess. Concurrently, our investigation unveiled four distinct writing techniques: individual writing, guided writing, think-aloud writing, and model writing. Notably, the autonomous writing modality predominates among the cohort of students, underscoring its resonance as a favoured approach in grappling with the intricacies of written expression.

In the intricate tapestry of coping strategies, students adeptly navigate through diverse methodologies to overcome the challenges that beset them on the path of written discourse. These findings reverberate with implications for educators, beseeching them to adroitly curate pedagogical strategies that are both captivating and efficacious in nurturing and enhancing the writing proficiency of their pupils.

In light of these conclusions, it becomes increasingly apparent that the pedagogical milieu necessitates an astute selection of strategies to invigorate students' writing prowess. By aligning instructional methods with the multifaceted landscape of students' challenges and strategies, educators possess the potent capacity to foster a transformative environment that augments writing competence and cultivates a cohort of articulate and adept communicators poised to excel in the intricate realm of written expression.

V. CONCLUSION

In summation, synthesizing the culmination of extensive exploration and meticulous analysis, this study has holistically embarked upon the intricate terrain of probing into the multifaceted landscape of writing impediments and the concomitant strategies deployed to surmount these obstacles, focusing specifically on students enrolled in the fifth semester of the English education program. The journey of inquiry unveiled a multifaceted vista, with grammatical intricacies emerging as the paramount challenge within the intricate fabric of writing for these adept learners. Moreover, the interplay between reading practices and technological interventions was unearthed, casting a discernible influence on the contours of writing challenges. However, it is noteworthy that their impact pales in

comparison to the indomitable prominence of grammatical prowess. In addition, this investigation crystallized into the taxonomy of four distinct writing techniques, each distinct in its approach—individual writing, guided writing, think-aloud writing, and modelled writing—forming a comprehensive arsenal at the disposal of these aspiring writers. Central to this study's discourse is the compelling predominance of autonomous writing as the preferred modality among the student cohort, underlining its resonance as a strategy of choice in confronting the intricate labyrinth of writing hurdles. Within this realm of strategic manoeuvring, students deftly employ diverse approaches, affirming their resourcefulness and adaptability in navigating the multifaceted challenges of written expression.

The implications of these findings are resonant and far-reaching, particularly for educators vested with the transformative role of nurturing and honing students' writing competence. This study serves as a clarion call to educators, urging them to meticulously curate an instructional paradigm that seamlessly marries the intricacies of writing challenges with pedagogical strategies that are both stimulating and efficacious. By doing so, instructors possess the potential to create a pedagogical environment that not only ameliorates writing skills but also fosters holistic communicators adept at traversing the variegated landscape of written articulation with finesse. In light of these intricate and multifaceted revelations, it becomes increasingly manifest that the pedagogical arena demands an astute calibration of strategies that resonates with students' diverse array of challenges. This convergence of insight and strategy can yield a transformative educational milieu wherein students' writing prowess is cultivated to its zenith. Thus, as the curtain falls on this empirical odyssey, the clarion call endures for educators to rise to the occasion, selecting and refining strategies that captivate and invigorate, ultimately elevating students' competence and confidence in the intricate realm of written expression.

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Born on October 21, 1999, in Jakarta. He successfully attained his Bachelor's degree in English Language Education from Tidar University in the year 2021. As part of his academic pursuits, he engaged in a scholarly exchange program within the realm of English Studies, particularly focusing on Secondary Education, at Pangasinan State University, Philippines. Subsequently, he culminated his academic journey by accomplishing a Master's degree in the domain of Language and Culture from the esteemed Faculty of International Studies at Prince of Songkla University, Thailand, where he enjoyed the privilege of a full comprehensive scholarship. His scholastic orientation centers around an array of specialized subjects, encompassing English Language Teaching, Teaching with Technology, Linguistics, Sociolinguistics, and Ethnic and Cultural Studies. His academic trajectory includes a tenure as an Assistant Professor/Lecturer at Prince of Songkla University, coupled with the provision of virtual English instruction to learners in Indonesia and Thailand. Notably, he exercises his linguistic prowess through freelance engagements as an English-Indonesian translator. Presently, he occupies the role of an erudite faculty member as an Academic Staff and is actively engaged in the Research Parallel initiative at the esteemed University of Indonesia (UI). His scholarly enthusiasm finds expression in his dynamic participation across a spectrum of seminars and his prolific contributions to the national and international academic discourse through numerous research publications.

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Aqila, currently in the third semester of study within the esteemed Department of International Trade specializing in the intricate domains of ASEAN and PRC regions, demonstrates an unwavering commitment to the pursuit of scholarly excellence. His research pursuits are distinctly oriented towards the multifaceted realms encompassing export and import dynamics, the expansive domain of international trade, the intricate facets of business studies, and the indispensable role of English within the realm of international business discourse. Aqila's academic fervor is further complemented by his proactive involvement in diverse academic and extracurricular endeavors, thereby underscoring his holistic engagement in scholarly exploration and research."



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