NEEDS ANALYSIS ON DEVELOPING EFL ESSAY WRITING MATERIALS FOR 5TH SEMESTER OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS

Hanina Syarifah[1], Siti Nur Aisyah[2], Wigati Sunarsih[3]
[1,2,3]Universitas Tidar
Email: haninaasyarifahh@gmail.com[1], syahaisyah80@gmail.com[2],
wigatisunarsih28@gmail.com[3]

Abstrak

Tujuan penelitian ini memberi pemahaman tentang kesenjangan antara pengetahuan dan keterampilan mahasiswa. Penelitian ini menguak kebutuhan sasaran dan belajar mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris semester 5 Universitas Tidar tahun ajaran 2023. Responden yang ikut serta adalah 25 mahasiswa dari kelas Essay Writing. Metode yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif dengan dua instrumen utama, yaitu angket yang terdiri dari tujuh soal pilihan ganda dan satu soal uraian. Hasil penelitian mengungkap bahwa: (a) dalam kebutuhan bahasa target, mayoritas mahasiswa (32%) ingin meningkatkan pemahaman pengembangan paragraf serta pemahaman unity dan coherence dalam menulis essay; (b) pengorganisasian ide-ide (60%) merupakan kesulitan dalam menulis esai; (c) menggunakan internet (48%) dalam membantu untuk memahami materi dalam kelas essay writing, dan memilih untuk mendapat arahan dari dosen (36%). Dalam hal metode pengajaran yang tepat, data menunjukkan bahwa: (a) dominan mahasiswa memilih browsing internet (56%) sebagai aktivitas kesukaan mereka untuk belajar; (b) lalu (52%) mahasiswa memilih mengakses internet dan (32%) memilih handouts/module untuk sumber belajar yang efektif untuk esai writing class. Dari hasil data, terungkap bahwa materi berbasis internet lebih disukai untuk mengembangkan materi di kelas Essay Writing. Selain itu, dosen juga memiliki peran penting dalam memotivasi dan mengarahkan mahasiswa dalam menulis esai.

Kata kunci: *Analisis Kebutuhan; EFL; Menulis; Mengajar.*

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to provide an understanding of the gap between students' knowledge and skills. This research reveals the target and learning needs of English Education students in semester 5 of Universitas Tidar in the academic year 2023. The respondents who participated were 25 students from Essay Writing class. The method used is descriptive qualitative with two main instruments, namely a questionnaire consisting of seven multiple choice questions and one description question. The results revealed that: (a) in terms of target language needs, the majority of students (32%) want to improve their understanding of paragraph development and understanding of unity and coherence in writing essays; (b) organizing ideas (60%) is a difficulty in writing essays; (c) using the internet (48%) in helping to understand the material in essay writing classes, and choosing to get direction from lecturers (36%). In terms of appropriate teaching methods, the data shows that: (a) dominant students chose internet browsing (56%) as their favorite activity to learn; (b) then (52%) students chose accessing the internet and (32%) chose handouts/modules as effective learning resources for essay writing class. From the data results, it is revealed that internet-based materials are preferred to develop materials in Essay Writing class. In addition, lecturers also have an important role in motivating and directing students in writing essays.

Keywords: *Needs analysis; EFL; Writing; Teaching*

Introduction

In material development and curriculum development, needs analysis is an inseparable part. Jenice (2012) in relation to Need Analysis tries to connect the relationship between students' wants and their needs in learning. Regarding these two main points, Kaewpet (2009) argues that learners' needs depend on many expectations, predictions and personal judgments. Needs analysis is beneficial in adapting material to students' needs and ensuring that the fabric matches the students' skill levels. According to Panggabean (2004), the purpose of needs analysis is to analyze participant characteristics to ensure that the program is suitable for their level of experience and skills. In this writing, we refer to the context of English Language Education to analyze students' learning needs in developing material in the Essay Writing class, which is designed explicitly for semester 5. Analyzing student needs is very important to provide students with suitable material to develop essay writing skills. This analysis examines students' target needs, learning needs, and learning styles. By conducting this needs analysis, we can ensure that students receive the necessary support in essay writing skills.

This Research analyzes the need to develop EFL essay writing materials for semester 5 to overcome the challenges students face in their language learning experience. This analysis identifies gaps between students' knowledge and skills. By carrying out this analysis, we can create material by providing many topics that are most relevant and interesting. This is to encourage learning methods that help improve their essay-writing skills. This analysis will be the foundation for developing material that connects the gap between current conditions and ideal conditions regarding benchmarks for essay writing success in semester 5.

These obstacles often lead to frustration and hinder students' ability to express their thoughts and arguments effectively. As educators, we must know students' needs in order to gain a better understanding of how to write essays well. Mastering how to organize, regulate writing behaviour, review the composition, and provide readers awareness Alsamadani et al. (2015) have also become crucial aspects of creating a well-produced piece of writing. These obstacles often lead to frustration and hinder students' ability to express their thoughts and arguments effectively. As educators, we must know students' needs in order to gain a better understanding of how to write essays well. Okpe et al. (2017) pinpointed that acquiring essay writing skills may be one of the significant beneficial things to do as it can improve day-to-day communication, obtain good grades, and be a better professional. Research has focused on the importance of providing examples and models of authentic writing to students to foster their understanding of essay structure and good writing style. By addressing this need by developing materials designed explicitly for Magelang L2 learners, their essay writing skills can be improved and contribute to their overall language proficiency.

Research Method

The method used in this Research is a qualitative and quantitative descriptive study (Creswell, 2015) involving 25 students from the 5th semester of English Education major of Universitas Tidar Magelang in the academic year 2023/2024 as respondents. The two main instruments used were questionnaires consisting of seven multiple-choice questions and one description question. The questionnaire is the primary source of data collection that will be analyzed in this study. Meanwhile, the description questions were embedded as explanatory for the author to get explanatory answers (Brown, 2016). This questionnaire was distributed and expected to be filled out to explore information about the wants, needs, and shortcomings of 5th-semester students who took the Essay Writing course.

The parts of questionnaire is divided into four sections covering various aspects: Section 1 discusses the target needs of students in the Essay Writing class in terms of what they need most, consisting of one question, Section 2 discusses the wants of students in the Essay Writing class to achieve the target needs, consisting of one question. Section 3 analyzes students' shortcomings in the writing class consisting of two questions. Section 4 is a description question to be filled in according to each student's opinion about the motivation to learn to write continually. Respondents were asked to provide answers by marking a circle on the appropriate choice, using four different options (A, B, C, or D) that described their preference for the question asked.
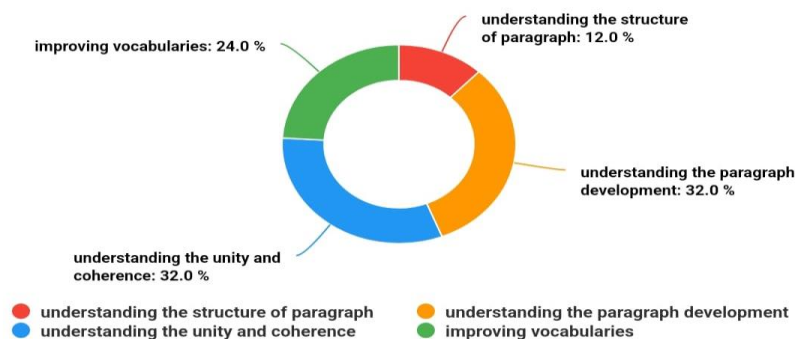
Findings and Discussion

This study was conducted to investigate students' target needs and learning needs in Essay Writing class in terms of students' needs and desires in attending class and students' shortcomings in attending class. This study also reveals and discusses students' learning needs, including learning styles and appropriate teaching procedures. The results of the questionnaires that have been distributed conclude:

Concerning learning targets in terms of their wants, two choices dominate with a total of (32%) of respondents. The skills I most wanted to develop during the essay writing class were understanding paragraph development and unity and coherence, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The target English language needs

Based on the data on students' English language needs, in terms of their wants, it is clear that there are two majorities of respondents (32%) stating that the most important skills to develop during the essay writing course are understanding the paragraph development and understanding the unity and coherence.
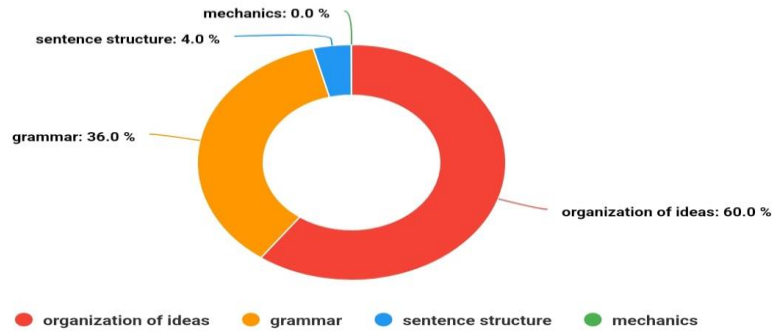
This result contributes to this study's identification of EFL writing materials used to improve writing skills. The findings revealed that mastering paragraph development, as well as mastering unity and coherence, are essential skills for developing essay writing. Information about students' interests in terms of fulfilling their wants in L2 writing contributed to conceptualizing the content of the materials. The results show that some students consider understanding paragraph development, unity, and coherence to be essential skills to develop in essay writing.

In terms of learning targets in terms of lack, the questionnaire data shows that idea organization (60%) is the difficulty that students experience when taking essay writing

classes. Then, the second most common difficulties experienced by students were related to grammar (36%), as illustrated in Figure 2.

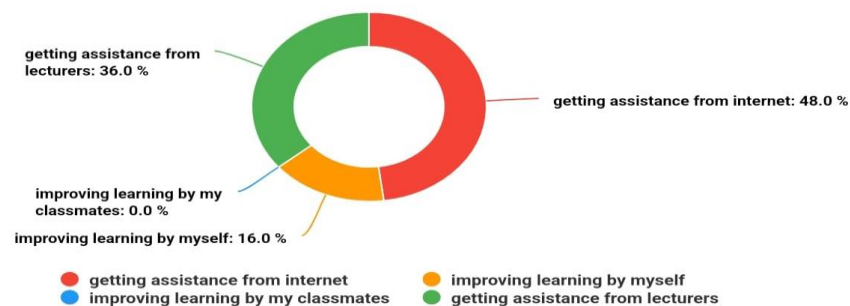Figure 2. The students' difficulty in essay writing

In terms of learning targets in terms of lack, the questionnaire data shows that idea organization (60%) is the difficulty that students experience when taking essay writing classes. Then, the second most common difficulties experienced by students were related to grammar (36%), as illustrated in Figure 2.

The preferences related to students' difficulties in writing essays, as shown in Figure 2 above, indicate that organizing ideas is the most common difficulty experienced by students, followed by grammar and sentence structure. This is because most students often get stuck or even stop at one idea that they write down. They do not know how the idea should be developed so that one paragraph with another paragraph has unity and coherence and developing paragraphs, as has been proven in Figure.1 making grammatical errors when writing paragraphs. In addition, students still need to improve their grammar when writing essays. Therefore, they should use the help of grammar checks to correct and learn about the grammar errors they make.

Regarding learning styles in terms of meeting learning needs, the questionnaire data shows that the learners prefer to get help from the internet (48%) than other sources, and they prefer to learn with assistance and direction from lecturers (36%), as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. The students' preference styles to improve their writing ability
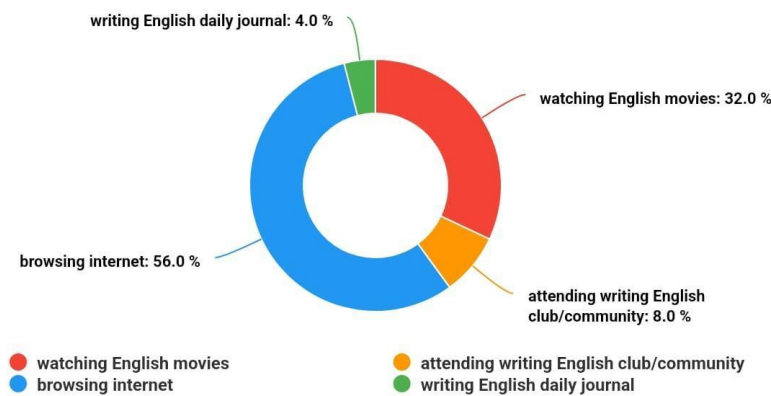
It is important to know the learning needs of students as they affect them when they learn to write (Sabarun, 2019). An aspect to consider in the process for EFL writing curriculum development is the exploration of how students' learning styles. Regarding learning styles that match students' preferences, the questionnaire data shows that students prefer to get help from the internet and to learn with guidance and direction from lecturers. The data can be used as a guide to how students learn and the effective way to carry out teaching and learning activities. The results of this learning style research are one of the guidelines for developing curriculum and learning materials. Learning with materials that can be accessed by the internet is a way of learning that is of interest to most students, and internet-based materials are one of the crucial things that need to be developed. In addition, students also choose to learn with guidance and direction from lecturers. This is a hint for lecturers or other educators always to assist students in their learning in class.

Figure 4. The students' favourite activity

According to the data collected in the questionnaire, the two favorite activities that students do to improve their writing skills are browsing the internet (56.0%), followed by watching English movies (32.0%).

Internet browsing is a diverse activity and provides significant engagement in improving writing skills. Internet browsing features a lot of content in English, such as articles, blogs, and social media. These different types of content help students understand different writing styles vocabulary, and broaden their understanding of topics from a comprehensive perspective. The internet is also connected to many sources, so it helps students independently learn to organize writing ideas with many supporting sources.
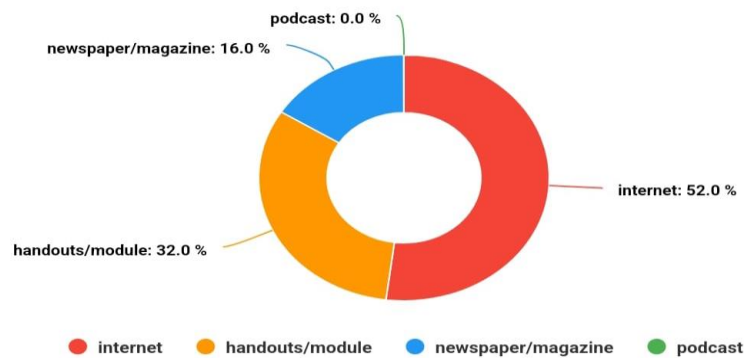
Another favourite activity is watching movies in English. The activity of watching movies in English has a positive impact on improving writing skills, with the students becoming familiar with everyday accents and expressions. Observing how characters express themselves with dialogue contributes to helping develop the plot. This helps students develop a more communicative writing style by presenting a compelling narrative.

Based on the topic of the question regarding the sources used by students to understand the Essay Writing class material, there are several sources chosen by students in the questionnaire. The questionnaire results showed that the most used source by students was the internet (52%), then the second most was handouts/modules (32%).

Furthermore, (16%) of students choose newspapers/magazines as the source they use and (0%) for the choice of listening to podcasts as an effective source to follow the Essay Writing class, as illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Resources used in Essay Writing class according to students' opinions
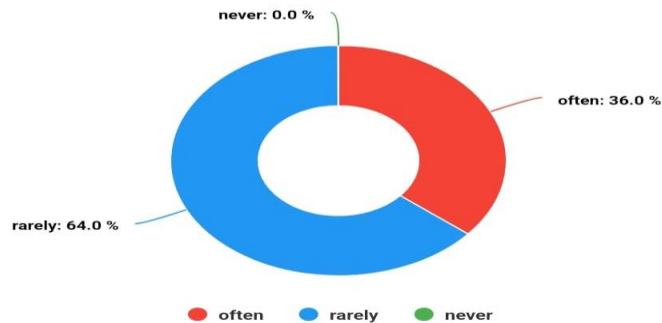

The internet (52%) emerged as the most frequently used source by students. This is because the internet provides a wealth of information, including scholarly articles, online libraries, and writing guides. Students can access diverse perspectives and examples related to essay writing. In addition, students find it more effective and easy to find sources accessed on the internet. The second most popular source was handouts/modules (32%) provided by instructors. The materials contained in handouts and module books offer structured guidance, tips, and specific instructions tailored to the essay writing material. These materials serve as a concise reference point for students during the essay writing process. Students felt that the use of these handouts and module books played a considerable role as they were provided by the teacher, whose materials and instructions were definitely transparent and intended for essay learning.

The results revealed that: (a) in terms of target language needs, it was revealed that the majority of students (32%) want to improve understanding of paragraph development and understanding of unity and coherence in essay writing; (b) it was found that the majority of students revealed that organizing ideas (60%) is a difficulty in writing essays; (c) in terms of learning style, the majority of students agree to use the internet (48%) in helping to understand the material in essay writing classes and choose to get directions from lecturers (36%). In terms of appropriate teaching methods, the data shows that: (a) the dominant students choose to browse the internet (56%) as their favourite activity to learn; (b) (52%) students choose accessing the internet, and (32%) choose handouts/modules for adequate learning resources for an essay writing class.

Figure 6 shows the percentage of students who wrote essays in everyday and academic situations. The majority of students who rarely write essays in academic situations (44%), while students who write essays in everyday situations (36%).

Figure 6. How often students practice writing essay

How often do you write essays in everyday or academic situations?

never: 0.0 %

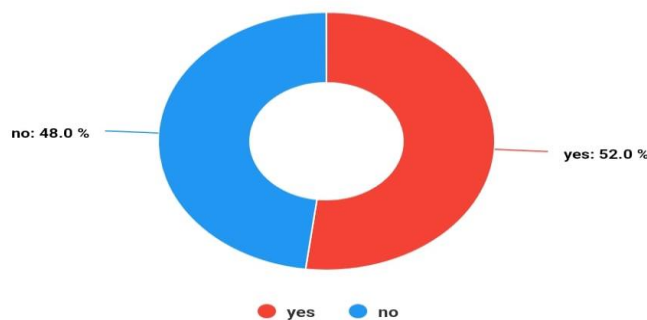often: 36.0 %

rarely: 64.0 %

● often   ● rarely   ● never

Successful essay writing can come from several factors, including experience and how often they practice writing. Previous writing experience can also affect the level of confidence. Someone who has had experience writing essays or other written works is usually more confident in their abilities. The more extensive knowledge and writing skills a person has, the greater his or her confidence in composing an essay. Learning writing techniques and having a good understanding of the topic can boost confidence.

Based on confidence in essay writing in Figure 7, (52%) of students were confident in their skills, while (48%) of students were not confident in their skills. The questionnaire data showed almost equal results. One of the most significant possibilities is that the results are almost equal because of how often they practice writing essays, as in the data in Figure 6.

Figure 7. Students' confidence in writing essays

Do you feel confident in organizing your ideas and arguments in the essay?

no: 48.0 %

yes: 52.0 %

● yes   ● no

In addition to having experience and continuing to practice can increase confidence in writing essays, there are several other factors, including consistency and feedback from competent and trusted people. Consistency in writing practice can also increase confidence. The more you practice your writing skills, the more ideas you will have to write about. In addition, feedback from readers or other people who are competent in writing can affect confidence. While positive feedback can increase one's confidence in his or her abilities, constructive criticism can also help to learn and improve the quality of writing.

Appropriate learning outcomes begin with understanding student needs so policymakers and educators can decide about effective teaching procedures and media. Knowing learners' needs is crucial in making decisions about the teaching procedures and

learning materials to be used (Davies, 2006) to achieve appropriate learning outcomes and support learners to become active class members in EFL writing classes. If the procedures and teaching media are effective, students will indirectly become active in the Essay Writing class. This essay writing class will only run effectively if the lecturer realizes and understands students' needs, desires, and shortcomings in essay writing. In this context, Wentzel and Wigfield (2009) emphasize that enjoyable learning can increase students' interest and motivation.

Developing and selecting materials with the right objectives is a step to creating a material design that suits the learners' needs. This can only be done by collecting information related to the learning targets. The central aspect of learning from the questionnaire data is the use of internet-accessed resources and assistance from lecturers. Both aspects are directions for policymakers and educators to develop curricula for current EFL writing classes. This is in line with Richards and Rodgers (2001) who state that methodology and approach have a vital role to play in classroom activities; teacher tasks and classroom activities should be aimed at achieving various learning styles. The data shows that the internet can help them because it is very effective and easy to access. Meanwhile, assistance and direction from lecturers are also favourites of students when learning to write essays.

The data collected through questionnaires in this study contribute to developing suitable activities, materials, and contents in the process of teaching and learning essay writing. After conducting observations and analysis, we can find out students' learning needs to improve their writing skills, especially in developing essay writing. Then, the results of the research data show that there are several factors that influence students to improve their writing skills, especially in paragraph development or coherence in essay writing. These factors include prior knowledge, students' writing intensity, difficulty in writing, and their self-confidence when writing. The results of this study are almost in line with Sumarsono et al. (2017) research. Their findings showed that the learners' abilities were still at a basic level. In addition, learners' needs in learning EFL writing include materials enriched with pictures, EFL academic writing, and writing materials based on theory.

Conclusion

As a result, this writing focuses on the target needs and learning tastes of students majoring in English, semester 5, Tidar University in the scope of essay writing. Most students assume that they want to improve their writing skills, especially in paragraph development or coherence in essay writing. In implementing ideas, students face as many as 60% difficulties. The source of developing ideas from browsing the internet is of great interest to 56% of students. Meanwhile, guidance with lecturers regarding essay development is also in demand by 36%. This study emphasizes the importance of meeting these needs in developing effective EFL essay writing materials. The results of this analysis provide knowledge for curriculum development and suggest updated materials to help students address gaps in writing skills.

For further researchers, we suggest further Research regarding innovative teaching methods in accordance with student preferences. Increasingly, students are very interested in the Internet. Apart from that, understanding students' difficulties, especially in implementing ideas, must be based on the development of appropriate teaching materials. This Research encourages ongoing discussions between teachers and students to be able to adapt learning strategies to student learning styles that continue to develop over time.

In conclusion, collaborative efforts between educators and students are significant in improving essay writing material to ensure that the material meets students' needs and learning styles. This study provides valuable knowledge to improve the quality of

education, especially in the English department, in order to foster practical communication skills between educators and students.

References

Alsamadani, M. S. B. & H. A. (2015). Improving the Persuasive Essay Writing of Students of Arabic as a Foreign Language (AFL): Effects of Self-Regulated Strategy Development. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *182*, 89–97. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.04.742

Brown, H. D. (2016). *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. White Plains, NY: Longman.

Creswell, J. W. (2015). *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*. University of Nebraska–Lincoln: Pearson.

Davies, A. M. (2006). What Do Learners Really Want from Their EFL Course? *ELT Journal*, *60*(1), 3–12. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/ 10.1093/elt/cci076

Jenice, Y. (2012). *Principles of Course Design for Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kaewpet, C. (2009). A Framework for Investigating Learner Needs: Needs Analysis Extended to Curriculum Development. *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, *6*(2), 209–220. https://e-flt.nus.edu.sg/v6n22009/kaewpet.pdf

Okpe, Agnes Ada; Onjewu, M. A. (2017). Difficulties of Learning Essay Writing: The Perspective of Some Adult EFL Learners in Nigeria. *International Journal of Curriculum and Instruction*, *9*(2), 198–205. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1207242

Richards, J., & Rodgers, T. (2001). Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching. *New York: Cambridge University Press.*, 204. https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511667305.021

Sabarun. (2019). Needs Analysis on Developing EFL Paragraph Writing Materials at Kalimantan L2 learners. *English Language Teaching*, *12*(1), 186–193. https://doi.org/DOI:10.5539/ELT.V12N1P186

Sumarsono. (2017). *Sosiolinguistik*. Yogyakarta: Pusataka Pelajar.