

EXPLORING EFL LEARNERS' WRITING SELF-EFFICACY

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the factors contributing to the writing self-efficacy of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners at Universitas Kristen Indonesia Toraja (UKI Toraja). Using a qualitative approach with a case study design, the research involved five seventh-semester students from the English Education Study Program. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed using Miles and Huberman's qualitative analysis techniques. The findings reveal that students' writing self-efficacy is influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include diverse writing experiences, motivation and initiative, and emotional states such as anxiety or enthusiasm during writing. External factors encompass inspiration from peers' and lecturers' writing, social support, and collaborative learning environments. Challenges such as lack of motivation, difficulty in generating ideas, and language barriers also play a significant role.

Keywords: Writing skills, self-efficacy, writing self-efficacy

INTRODUCTION

Writing is a complex and creative process that involves using written medium to express one's thoughts, provide readers with information, and deliver messages. It is a multifaceted process that includes not just writing but also the creative and cognitive processes of concept organization, brainstorming, and language selection to guarantee efficacy and clarity. Writing is an intellectual activity that calls for creativity, critical thinking, and the capacity to synthesize knowledge from multiple sources. It is not just a mechanical task. It requires both a thorough comprehension of the subject and the capacity to communicate concepts in an engaging way. Therefore, writing is an important ability for students to develop, especially for those studying English as a foreign Research by (Ernawati, 2017). Self-efficacy has a huge impact on the writing process for students; enhancing self-efficacy assists students in enhancing motivation, minimizing fear, and generating high-quality writing results. Educators should provide a learning atmosphere that helps students develop self-efficacy. Students who are confident in their skills are better able to endure and tackle challenges with a positive attitude, so they do not become discouraged when they experience difficulties (ASMARANI, 2021; Lintang dyah puspita, 2022). This relationship is increasingly important in the university context, where students face increasingly complex writing demands across various genres and academic disciplines, research by (Wang, 2020; Zhang, Y. & Guo, 2022).

Current studies show the multidimensional character of writing self-efficacy in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. In one study, it was discovered that students' writing self-efficacy beliefs are influenced by a variety of factors, including mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social pressure, and physiological conditions. Further analysis revealed a substantial relationship between writing self-efficacy and other psychological dimensions, including anxiety and writing motivation. Both have an impact on how pupils develop their writing skills. These findings indicate that increasing students' self-efficacy can be an effective technique for supporting their learning process, as well as reducing anxiety and increasing motivation in writing. This study gives significant information for educators to build interventions that can raise students' confidence in writing, which can then improve (Hassan, S., & Ahmed, 2021; Kim, J., & Wang, 2022). Research has revealed that students' self-efficacy in writing in EFL environments is influenced by various elements, including previous writing experiences, feedback mechanisms, peer interactions, and instructional methods used. Understanding these elements is crucial to designing effective writing education and support systems. A recent investigation found that digital learning environments and collaborative writing activities have added a new dimension in the development of students' self-efficacy. Digital environments provide more access to materials and critical critiques, while collaborative writing helps students to learn from and support each other, increasing their confidence in their writing abilities. This research emphasises how the combination of these various characteristics can provide a more conducive environment for students to better develop their writing skills (Wang, X., & Chen, 2021).

In light of these gaps, this study aims to explore the factors that contribute to writing self-efficacy among EFL learners at UKI Toraja. By focusing on this specific context, the research seeks to provide a deeper understanding of how writing self-efficacy develops among university students in a non-English-speaking environment, how it is influenced by institutional and contextual factors, and how it can be enhanced to support students' academic and professional success. The findings of this study will not only contribute to the broader literature on writing self-efficacy but also offer practical insights for educators and policymakers at UKI Toraja to improve writing instruction and support systems for EFL learners.

In the context of observation, self-efficacy can be viewed in numerous ways. First, behavioral observations allow researchers to see how students respond to writing assignments; confident pupils are more likely to participate and take initiative in the writing process. Second, pupils with strong self-efficacy respond positively to writing challenges, whereas those with low confidence may avoid challenging projects. Furthermore, problem-solving tactics can be noted in how students use certain approaches to tackle writing issues, with students with high self-efficacy being more likely to attempt new methods. Acceptance of feedback is

also a crucial factor, as students with high self-efficacy are more receptive to criticism and view it as an opportunity to learn and grow. Finally, emotional engagement can be measured by observing how students' feelings, such as nervousness or enthusiasm, relate to their degree of confidence in writing. All of these factors provide important insights into how self-efficacy works in the context of learning to write.

This study's results are significant as they enhance comprehension of the development of writing self-efficacy among EFL learners at UKI Toraja, a hitherto under-explored situation. The results provide useful tactics for raising the quality of writing teaching, boosting professional and academic results, and tackling the particular difficulties that students in this area confront. By focusing on the specific needs of UKI Toraja students, this research helps to both local and global efforts to improve EFL education and assist the development of confident, skilled writers.

METHODS

The method used is qualitative with a case study methodology, which focuses on understanding writing self-efficacy among EFL students, specifically seventh-semester students at the English Department of Universitas Kristen Indonesia Toraja (UKI Toraja) who have completed a writing course. This study aims to gain insight into the factors that contribute to writing self-efficacy. The study involves purposive selection of respondents, where the selected students represent a critical point in the development of academic writing skills. The main instrument used was the interview, where the researcher served as the main instrument in collecting and analysing data. Data collection procedures included the preparation of interview documents and the conduct of individual interviews, which were then analysed using qualitative data analysis techniques by Miles and Huberman, which included data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. With this approach, this study aims to provide a comprehensive and contextualised understanding of writing self-efficacy, as well as valuable recommendations for improving English writing education in university settings in Indonesia.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results revealed that students' writing self-efficacy is influenced by the interaction of two main factors, namely internal and external. Internal factors include individual self-confidence, vocabulary mastery, and the ability to manage emotions such as anxiety when writing. Meanwhile, external factors include social support from lecturers and peers, the availability of adequate learning resources, and a conducive educational environment on campus.

1. Internal Factor

a. Previous Writing Experience (Success/Failure)

The previous writing experiences reported by respondents showed a wide variation. From challenges that test skills to moments of success that boost confidence. As R1 said, she found writing in academic contexts often very complex and challenging, especially when it came to balancing depth

of analysis and clarity of ideas. This creates tension in the writing process, where every sentence must be carefully checked to conform to high academic standards.

- b. Motivation and initiative (reward strategies, positive affirmation)

Motivation and initiative in starting and completing the writing process often relate to the adoption of strategies that help to increase enthusiasm and focus.

- c. Emotions while writing (anxious, stressed, excited)

The writing process is often characterised by emotional dynamics, such as anxiety, stress, and excitement, which can affect the quality and fluidity of writing. Anxiety and stress usually arise when writers face pressure, such as a tight deadline or a complex topic that demands deep thinking.

2. External Factor

- a. Inspiration from people's writing

The writing process not only involves individual creativity, but is also influenced by interaction with the work of others. Most respondents admitted that they are often inspired by the writing of lecturers, peers, or even writers on social media. This shows that exposure to quality work can be a motivational driver in writing.

- b. Social Support

Social support, especially in the form of feedback and motivation from people around us, plays an important role in the writing process.

- c. Collaborative Environment in Writing

A collaborative environment in writing plays an important role in improving a writer's self-efficacy.

- d. Challenges in Writing

One of the main challenges in writing is the difficulty in finding and developing ideas, as experienced by R2 and R4. The creative process is often hampered by idea deadlock, where writers struggle to decide on a topic or expand on an existing concept. In addition, time pressure further exacerbates the situation, as deadline constraints can reduce the space for in-depth exploration of ideas. These challenges not only affect the quality of writing but can also demotivate writers if not managed well.

Based on the interview results, students' writing self-efficacy was significantly influenced by their previous writing experience, indirect experience, and the feedback they received (social persuasion). This study's findings align with Albert Bandura's cognitive theory, particularly the concept of self-efficacy, which emphasizes the role of belief in one's ability to carry out the behaviors required to achieve specific performance. Bandura (1997) identified four primary sources of self-efficacy: mastery experience, indirect experience, social persuasion, and physiological conditions.

Students stated that reading high-quality writing from peers and instructors inspired and motivated them to improve their own writing skills. This reflects Bandura's assertion that observing others succeed can increase one's confidence in their own abilities. In addition, the emotional responses that students reported after

reading others' work, such as feeling motivated or inspired, further illustrate the interaction between self-efficacy and emotional state, as highlighted in Bandura's framework.

The findings of this study corroborate previous research on self-efficacy in writing in the context of English as a second language (EFL). Zhang and Guo (2022) found significant correlations between self-efficacy in writing and students' writing processes, strategies and outcomes. Similarly, the current study revealed that students who feel more confident in their writing abilities tend to engage more in effective writing strategies, such as brainstorming and outlining before writing. This is in line with the findings of Kim and Wang (2022), who noted that self-efficacy is closely related to writing motivation and anxiety levels.

In addition, research by Hassan and Ahmed (2021) identified several factors that influence self-efficacy in writing, including the experience of mastering something and social persuasion. The current study supports these findings, as students reported that writing confidence increased with practice and constructive feedback from peers and other sources. This highlights the importance of creating a supportive learning environment that is able to foster confidence through positive reinforcement and constructive criticism. The interview describes factors that contribute to the self-efficacy of writing among EFL learners:

a. Diverse Writing Experience

Students reported a variety of writing experience, ranging from academic papers to creative writing. This diversity in writing tasks allowed them to develop their skills and confidence over time. As R1, noted regular writing practice results in more structured and coherent writing.

b. Impact of peer and lecturer writing

Many students stated that reading others' work motivated them to improve their own writing. R2 mentioned feeling inspired by the quality of others' writing, which is in line with Bandura's concept of vicarious experience.

c. Support from others

Moral support and constructive feedback from others are crucial in improving students' writing ability. R3 highlighted the importance of receiving encouragement and constructive criticism, which helped build confidence in their writing ability.

d. Initiative and Motivation

Students demonstrate various strategies to start writing, such as setting clear goals and finding a comfortable environment for writing. R5 emphasized the importance of motivation and the role of personal interest in increasing engagement in writing.

e. Challenges faced

Despite progress, Students reported challenges such as a lack of ideas, anxiety about their writing, and difficulty in language use. R4 mentioned feeling anxious about the use of complex language, which reflects a psychological barrier that can hinder writing ability.

Overall, the findings suggest that self-efficacy in writing among EFL learners is influenced by a combination of personal experiences, social

interactions, and emotional responses. The interaction of these factors highlights the need for educators to create supportive and engaging writing environments that foster self-efficacy and encourage students to take risks in their writing.

CONCLUSION

The study shows that students' writing self-efficacy is influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include diverse writing experiences, motivation and initiative, and emotional states such as anxiety or enthusiasm during writing. External factors encompass inspiration from peers' and lecturers' writing, social support, and collaborative learning environments. Challenges such as lack of motivation, difficulty in generating ideas, and language barriers also play a significant role.

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