

AN ANALYSIS OF FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS' WRITING ATTITUDES IN EFL WRITING COURSE

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Abstract

This study explores the attitudes of first-year students toward writing in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. By employing a qualitative approach, the research examines both the affective and cognitive dimensions of students' attitudes in an EFL writing course. Data were collected through students' attitudes questionnaire from Descriptive and Narrative Writing Course. This sample of this study were 35 students at English Education Study Program of IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro. Key factors influencing these attitudes include motivation, engagement, and perceived effectiveness in writing. The study underscores the importance of fostering a supportive learning environment and suggests pedagogical strategies to enhance positive writing attitudes, thereby improving overall writing proficiency

Keywords – analysis, writing attitudes, EFL writing course, qualitative

Introduction

Proficiency in the domain of writing skills is of considerable significance in contexts where English is learned as a Foreign Language (EFL), playing a crucial role of both academic achievements and professional growth. EFL learners face distinct obstacles arise when composing text in a second or foreign language., requiring them to navigate unfamiliar grammar structures, vocabulary usage, and cultural nuances (Ferris, 2014). Effective writing not only signifies a mastery of language proficiency but also nurtures critical thinking, creativity, and communication abilities (Cumming, 2013). This proficiency is increasingly acknowledged as vital for accessing higher education opportunities and engaging in globalized professional settings (Cumming, 2013). Studies emphasize that students' attitudes towards writing in EFL settings significantly impact their learning outcomes and motivation (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Educators are urged to understand these attitudes to tailor instructional approaches that enhance students' confidence and competence in writing tasks (Tardy, 2009). Therefore, the examination and analysis of first-year

students' attitudes towards writing in EFL courses are essential for refining educational practices and promoting successful language acquisition and academic accomplishments (Leki, 2001). Writing skills are essential in the domain of English as a Second Language (ESL) education. Nasser (2018) emphasizes that writing constitutes a fundamental component of language acquisition and represents a critical competency for achieving academic excellence within the demographic of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Sengul et al. (2022) also highlighted the importance of writing as one of the key influential skills among the four language skills. Maung et al. (2022) discussed the complexity of mastering writing skills in English for EFL learners, attributing this challenge to the multifaceted cognitive activities involved in writing. Additionally, Yang (2015) underscores the dual purpose of EFL writing, emphasizing its role in both language acquisition and skill development. These perspectives collectively demonstrate the central position of writing in EFL education, serving as a cornerstone for academic achievement and language.

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Studying students' attitudes towards writing is crucial for several reasons. Research has shown that students' attitudes towards writing can significantly impact their writing achievement and overall success in the writing process (Bulut, 2017; Erdoğan, 2013; Jabali, 2018; Lo & Hyland, 2007; Setyowati & Sukmawan, 2016; Graham et al., 2018; Veramuthu & Shah, 2020; Göçen, 2019; Graham et al., 2012; Kamli, 2019; Setyowati, 2017; Gatcho & Ramos, 2020; Kaya & Kan, 2019; Özen & Duran, 2022; Knudson, 1993; Al-Sobhi et al., 2018; Özdemir & Çevik, 2018; Gholaminejad et al., 2013; Knudson, 1991; Romrome & Mbato, 2022; Ahmed, 2018; Okasha & Hamdi, 2014; Karahan, 2021). Positive attitudes towards the act of writing have been associated with enhancements in one's self-perceived ability to write effectively, motivation, and engagement, which are essential components for enhancing writing skills and performance (Bulut, 2017; Erdoğan, 2013; Jabali, 2018; Lo & Hyland, 2007; Setyowati & Sukmawan, 2016; حلو, 2022; Graham et al., 2018; Veramuthu & Shah, 2020; Göçen, 2019; Graham et al., 2012; Kamli, 2019; Setyowati, 2017; Gatcho & Ramos, 2020; Kaya & Kan, 2019; Özen & Duran, 2022; Knudson, 1993; Al-Sobhi et al., 2018; Özdemir & Çevik, 2018; Gholaminejad et al., 2013; Knudson, 1991; Romrome & Mbato, 2022; Ahmed, 2018; Okasha & Hamdi, 2014; Karahan, 2021). Understanding students' attitudes towards writing can help educators tailor instructional strategies, offer precise assistance, and establish an environment conducive to learning that fosters positive attitudes towards writing, ultimately leading to improved writing outcomes (Bulut, 2017; Erdoğan, 2013; Jabali, 2018; Lo & Hyland, 2007; Setyowati & Sukmawan, 2016; Graham et al., 2018; Veramuthu & Shah, 2020; Göçen, 2019; Graham et al., 2012; Kamli, 2019; Setyowati, 2017; Gatcho & Ramos, 2020;

Kaya & Kan, 2019; Özen & Duran, 2022; Knudson, 1993; Al-Sobhi et al., 2018; Özdemir & Çevik, 2018; Gholaminejad et al., 2013; Knudson, 1991; Romrome & Mbato, 2022; Ahmed, 2018; Okasha & Hamdi, 2014; Karahan, 2021). By examining and addressing students' attitudes towards writing, educators can better support students to develop their students' writing ability and achieve academic success.

Attitudes towards writing skills contexts significantly influence both the ability of students' in writing skills and academic performance. Research has highlighted the importance of fostering positive attitudes towards writing among student teachers. Studies conducted in countries like Indonesia, Iran, and China have revealed a mix of positive and negative attitudes towards writing among EFL students (Setyowati & Sukmawan, 2016; Setyowati, 2017; Mousavi & Darani, 2018). Negative attitudes have been associated with factors such as anxiety, lack of motivation, and perceiving writing as burdensome (Romrome & Mbato, 2022; Haryanti et al., 2022; Setyowati, 2017). Conversely, collaborative writing approaches have been shown that it has a positive effect on students' attitudes in writing class (Yesuf & Anshu, 2022). Additionally, the use of technology, such as the result has shown a beneficial impact on the perspectives of students in relation to the act of writing. (Rahimi et al., 2020; He, 2016). These findings emphasize the importance of addressing attitudes towards writing in EFL education to enhance students' writing abilities and overall learning experiences.

Previous studies have extensively explored students' attitudes towards writing in EFL contexts. McCarthy & Garcia (2005) highlighted the impact of home backgrounds and classroom environments on students' writing practices and attitudes Ekmekçi (2017). Peer review has been identified as a

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beneficial practice that positively impacts students' attitudes towards writing (Ho & Savignon, 2013). Additionally, research by Al-Qallaf and Al-Mutairi (2016) demonstrated that integrating digital literacy and content support in learning can lead to improved writing outcomes and foster a more positive attitude towards EFL learning (Al-Qallaf & Al-Mutairi, 2016). Research has demonstrated that collaborative writing methodologies have the potential to improve students' perceptions and dispositions towards the acquisition of writing proficiency. (Yesuf & Anshu, 2022). Furthermore, Meletiadou and Tsagari (2022) investigated the utilization of peer feedback in writing courses have improved students' motivation and enhanced their reflective abilities. These studies collectively emphasize the importance of considering students' perceptions in EFL education play a crucial role in the improvement of their writing abilities and broader educational encounters.

Factors influencing attitudes towards writing are multifaceted and played an important aspect in shaping learners' writing experiences. Research by Toba et al. (2019) highlighted that apprehension in the context of writing activities, as well as negative attitudes towards the practice of academic writing, are significant aspects contributing to EFL students' difficulties in writing (Toba et al., 2019; Lee, 2005) identified inhibiting factors such as writing apprehension and writer's block are common challenges faced by individuals engaged in the writing process. Conversely, facilitative factors such as free reading and self-initiated writing can help alleviate these challenges, which influence students' attitudes towards writing performance (Lee, 2005). Moreover, Setyowati & Sukmawan (2016) emphasized the importance of students' engagement and interest in writing, indicating that these factors are essential for successful writing outcomes

(Setyowati & Sukmawan, 2016). Additionally, Ghufon (2019) pointed out that corrective feedback is crucial in ESL/EFL classrooms, particularly in the context of writing, which can impact students' attitudes towards writing (Ghufon, 2019). These studies collectively underscore various elements that have the potential to impact the perspectives of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in writing skills, ranging from personal apprehensions to instructional strategies, highlighting the need for a comprehensive approach to address these influences in EFL education. The objective of this study entitled "An Analysis of First-Year Students' Writing Attitudes in EFL Writing Course" is to delve into attitudes of first-year students regarding to writing skills in the context of an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writing course. The students' attitudes are divided into three aspects, namely motivation in English Academic Writing, Engagement in English Academic Writing, and Perceived effectiveness in English Academic Writing

Methodology

A case study design conducted to investigate the attitudes towards writing skills settings among 35 participants selected from the first-year students of English Education Study Program at IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro. This case study approach allows for a comprehensive investigation of the attitudes and experiences of a specific group of participants within a real-life context Ghufon (2019). Participant selection focused on students from the English Education Study Program to ensure relevance and specificity to the research topic. Data collection methods involved the use of questionnaires in order to gain the quantitative data on students' attitudes in writing course. Questionnaires are effective tools for collecting standardized data from a large number of participants,

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providing valuable insights into attitudes and perceptions (Nikussa, 2023). The data procedures included distributing the questionnaires to the selected participants, collecting the responses, and analyzing the data to identify patterns and trends in attitudes towards writing among EFL students. This methodology enabled a comprehensive examination of the factors influencing attitudes towards writing in EFL settings, contributing to a deeper understanding of students' perspectives and experiences in English writing education.

Finding and Discussion

This study examined the students' attitudes in EFL writing course, whether students' attitudes are divided into three parts, namely motivation in writing essay, engagement in writing essay, and perceived effectiveness in English writing. The results of the students' attitudes questionnaire shown as follows:

Table 1. Motivation in Writing Essay

	1	2	3	4	5
I enjoy writing academic essays	5.71	5.71	28.57	57.14	2.86
I believe writing could be of some value to me	2.86	5.71	17.14	57.14	17.14
I like to write even if my writing will not be evaluated	2.86	11.43	48.57	28.57	8.57
I think I do pretty well in	0.00	22.86	42.86	28.57	5.71

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According to table 1, it can be concluded that 57.14% of the students agree if they enjoy writing and believe writing could be some value for them. There was 48.57% of the students still in doubt their writing will be graded, and 42.86% of the students in doubt too when their writing compared with their classmates.

Table 2. Engagement in Writing Essay

	1	2	3	4	5
I always finish my writing homework before class	0.00	25.71	28.57	42.86	2.86
During writing class, I ask questions to help me learn	2.86	5.71	57.14	20.00	14.29
I feel excited about the things I learn in writing class	2.86	0.00	48.57	40.00	8.57
I often look for ways to improve my writing	0.00	5.71	22.86	60.00	11.43

From the table 2, we know that 42.86% of the students agree that they finish their writing before class begin. There was 57.14% of the students still in doubt when

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they ask wuestions during the class activities. There was 48.57% of the students in doubt too when they learn in writing class. While 60.00% of the students agree that they freaquently seek methods to improve their writing skills.

Table 3. Perceived Effectiveness in English Academic Writing

	1	2	3	4	5
My writing has improved with time	0.0 0	2.86	31.4 3	57.1 4	8.57
I am able to clearly express my ideas in writing	2.8 6	5.71	31.4 3	45.7 1	14.2 9
I know how to use vocabulary appropriately in my writing	0.0 0	17.1 4	34.2 9	40.0 0	8.57
I know how to use collocations appropriately in my writing	0.0 0	11.4 3	14.2 9	71.4 3	2.86
I know how to make an appropriate essay organization	5.7 1	2.86	37.1 4	45.7 1	5.71
Before class task help me prepare for the lesson better	2.8 6	2.86	37.1 4	45.7 1	11.4 3

Peers editing helps me improve my writing	0.0 0	2.86	42.8 6	45.7 1	8.57
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From the table 3 about perceived effectiveness in English Academic Writing of the students, we can conclude that most of the students agree in the improvement of their writing during the time, they are able to express their ideas, they know how to use vocabulary, they know how to use collocations, they know how to create a suitable essay structure, pre-class task assist them in preparing in-class lesson, and helpful peers editing.

From the results of students' attitudes questionnaires towards English Academic Writing, it can be inferred that the majority of students exhibit favorable attitudes toward English Academic Writing.

These analyses of first-year students' writing attitudes in an EFL writing course reveals crucial insights into the factors influencing writing proficiency and attitudes towards writing. Studies such as those by Setyowati & Sukmawan (2016) emphasize the importance of fostering positive attitudes towards writing to enhance writing achievement among EFL students. Additionally, findings from research by Al-Qallaf and Al-Mutairi Al-Qallaf & Al-Mutairi (2016) suggest that interventions aimed at improving writing skills can lead to increased motivation, independence, and positive attitudes towards learning EFL. Moreover, the study by Thongchalerm & Jarunthawatchai (2020) highlighted the benefits of genre-based teaching for EFL students' writing confidence and development. The findings collectively underscore the significance of promoting positive attitudes towards writing through effective instructional strategies to optimize writing outcomes in EFL contexts.

The exploration of students' perspective regarding writing instruction in EFL

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(English as a Foreign Language) is essential for improving teaching methods and developing curricula. Understanding students' perceptions and motivations can lead to the creation of more engaging and effective teaching methods tailored to their needs and preferences. By analyzing attitudes, educators can identify common challenges and misconceptions that students face, allowing for targeted interventions that foster a more positive learning environment. Moreover, this analysis can inform the integration of technology and innovative practices in writing education, making the learning process more interactive and enjoyable. In the end, these contributions boost students' confidence and excitement for learning English in addition to improve their writing skills, thereby promoting higher academic achievement and better long-term outcomes in EFL education.

Studies such as Sabti et al. (2019) have delved into learner factors like apprehension, self-assurance, and motivation in ESL/EFL writing, shedding light on the intricate relationship between these psychological aspects and writing performance. Additionally, research by Yousefifard & Fathi (2021) emphasizes the impact of motivation on writing skills, highlighting its influence on various stages of the writing process. Furthermore, investigations like Alenezi (2022) have shown that utilizing platforms like class blogs can positively influence students' attitudes towards writing in English, indicating beneficial effects of incorporating technology in writing instruction to enhance motivation and engagement. These findings collectively underscore the significance of addressing learners' attitudes, motivation, and self-efficacy to foster a conducive environment for developing proficient writing skills in EFL contexts.

A comparative analysis across different demographic variables such as age, gender, and language background reveals nuanced

insights into EFL writing proficiency. Studies like Cheng & Xu (2022) have highlighted the significant role of gender, major, and age in assessing the communicative readiness of language learners, underscoring the importance of considering these factors in instructional design. Additionally, research by Sasaki & Hirose (1996) has shown distinctions between good and weak writers concerning overall organization, fluency, confidence in L2 writing, and frequency of writing, highlighting the effect of language background in writing proficiency. Furthermore, investigations by Khalil (2005) have delved into the influence of gender on the variation in language learning strategy use, indicating the need to tailor instruction based on demographic characteristics. These studies collectively emphasize the necessity of considering age, gender, and language background when designing EFL writing instruction to cater to the diverse needs and preferences of learners, ultimately enhancing writing outcomes.

The implications for EFL writing instruction are extensive and varied, drawing from a range of research studies. Teng & Zhang (2016) validated a self-regulated learning strategies questionnaire for EFL writing, highlighting the importance of structured strategies for effective writing instruction. McDonald and Murtagh (2015) emphasized the significance of academic writing instruction in EFL preparatory programs, emphasizing the need for tailored approaches in university settings. Zhang (2023) stressed the value of translanguaging and translation methods for empowering Chinese EFL students in writing classes. Additionally, Liu et al. (2022) explored innovative methods such as wiki-based education and collaborative writing to improve EFL learners' writing skills and self-efficacy. These studies collectively underscore the importance of incorporating diverse strategies, such as

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metacognitive approaches, flipped classrooms, and genre-based instruction, to optimize EFL writing pedagogy and support learners in developing their writing proficiency effectively.

Comparing the existing literature on students' attitudes in writing courses reveals the diversity range of factors and methodologies that influence writing attitudes. Studies have examined the impact of flipped learning on writing skills and attitudes, indicating positive outcomes in terms of writing performance, metacognitive strategies, and motivation (Ekmekci, 2017; Liu, et.al., 2022). On the other hand, research by and Sukmawan Setyowati & Sukmawan (2016) and Al-Sobhi et al. (2018) delves into students' attitudes towards writing in specific contexts, such as Indonesian EFL students and Arab ESL secondary school students, shedding light on cultural influences on attitudes. Additionally, studies like those by Kocoglu (2019) and Alenezi (2022) have investigated the use of technology, such as blogging and WhatsApp dialogue journaling, in improving writing attitudes among EFL learners. Furthermore, research by Musa (2023) and Sengul & Bostanci (2021) has examined the role of external and internal factors, as well as comparing in-class and out-class flipped learning models, in shaping students' attitudes towards writing. These comparisons highlight the importance of considering various instructional approaches, cultural contexts, and technological interventions in understanding and enhancing learners' attitudes in writing skills.

To enhance students' attitudes and writing skills, several recommendations can be drawn from existing literature. Collaborative writing has been shown to positively impact EFL learners' attitudes in writing skills (Yesuf & Anshu, 2022; Nguyen & Yen, 2021). Implementing flipped learning methodologies can enhance in composing metacognitive

techniques and abilities, providing innovative writing instruction (Fathi et al., 2022). Additionally, incorporating genre-based approaches, strategic writing techniques, and digital tools like blogs and digital portfolios can improve writing skills and attitudes among EFL learners (Diab & Balaa, 2011; Hassan, 2020; Okasha & Hamdi, 2014; Alenezi, 2022). Furthermore, integrating reading and writing pedagogy, using corpus-based programs, and employing virtual writing tutors have been suggested to enhance EFL students' writing skills and self-autonomy (Alhujaylan, 2020; Qoura et al., 2018; Badi et al., 2020). Consistent use of well-developed rubrics for assessment and reflective writing activities can also contribute to improving EFL writing outcomes (Yousefifard & Fathi, 2021; Sunra et al., 2021). These recommendations emphasize the importance of employing diverse teaching methodologies, integrating technology, and providing structured feedback to foster positive attitudes and enhance writing skills in EFL courses

Conclusions

In conclusion, the results of students' attitudes questionnaires towards English Academic Writing, it can be inferred that the majority of students exhibit favorable attitudes toward English Academic Writing. Future research on the analysis of students' attitudes toward writing skills in EFL education should focus on several key directions to further enhance understanding and instructional efficacy. Firstly, longitudinal studies could explore how students' attitudes evolve over time and what factors contribute to positive or negative changes, providing insights into the long-term impact of different teaching approaches. Secondly, comparative studies across diverse cultural and educational contexts can identify universal versus context-specific factors affecting students' attitudes, aiding in the

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development of more globally adaptable teaching strategies. Thirdly, examining the role of digital tools and platforms in shaping students' writing attitudes could reveal how technology can be leveraged to increase engagement and improve writing outcomes. Additionally, research could investigate the influence of personalized feedback and adaptive learning systems on students' motivation and attitudes toward writing. Finally, interdisciplinary studies incorporating insights from psychology and educational neuroscience could offer a deeper understanding of the cognitive and emotional aspects influencing students' attitudes, leading to more holistic and effective pedagogical practices in EFL writing education.

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