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Enhancing Paragraph Writing Proficiency: A Study of Students' Performance Post Global English Textbooks Exposure

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Abstract

The article focuses on identification of students' performance to write paragraphs and the topics needed by students to be developed post global English textbooks exposure. This study aimed to investigate description of current students' performance to write paragraphs after studying a paragraph writing using Global English Textbooks and to find out the topics needed by students to be developed as teaching English textbook materials for Paragraph Writing Course. The research employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative analysis of students' paragraph writing performance with qualitative interpretation into their perceptions to the use of global English textbooks as writing paragraph teaching materials. The total samples were 44 students of English Study Program, Faculty of Letters, Universitas Muslim Indonesia. To obtain information from the informants, the researchers employed questionnaires of Paragraph Writing distributed to the students through the Learning Management System (LMS) Google form. The results showed that students exhibited a wide range of proficiency levels in paragraph writing, from advanced to fundamental deficiencies, necessitating targeted support across all skill levels. Moreover, a significant proportion of students lacked confidence in their writing abilities, emphasizing the importance of tailored

instruction to address uncertainties effectively. Challenges with global English textbooks, including language complexity and cultural references, exacerbated these issues. Despite the inherent benefits of paragraph writing, such as language development and critical thinking skills, some students questioned its relevance in non-native English education settings. Additionally, doubts about fundamental language aspects like vocabulary and grammar underscored the need for focused instruction in these areas. Overall, addressing these challenges required comprehensive supports and resources to enhance students' paragraph writing skills and confidence levels effectively. Meanwhile, the exploration of sixty topics provided valuable insights into students' interests and knowledge. Among them, sixteen topics emerged as notably popular, indicating a strong resonance with students. These topics ranged from personal narratives to societal issues, reflecting students' diverse values and concerns. Furthermore, themes related to self-improvement and academic success garnered considerable interest, underscoring students' aspirations for growth. Even less chosen topics still demonstrated students' engagement with various aspects of interpersonal relationships and cultural identity. Moreover, the inclusion of less common topics reflected students' recognition of broader educational and patriotic ideals, albeit with less enthusiasm.

Keywords: Paragraph writing; students' performance; topics tailored to students' need

Introduction

Designing instructional teaching materials is widely acknowledged as a crucial aspect of academic texts (Dick, Carey and Carey 2015; Cresswell, 2012; Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2023), enabling students to acquire new information and skills through a combination of mediated resources and instructor guidance. Various scholars have emphasized the significance of teaching materials in facilitating effective teaching and learning processes (Komáromi 2023; Bouchard, 2005; Tomlinson, 2008; Maftoon, Kargozari, and Azarnoosh, 2016; Aubrey, 2017; Thi et al. 2018; Yunus, Rahmawati, S. 2022). These materials serve as essential references for teachers, guiding them in structuring classroom activities and guiding student learning. Moreover, teaching materials function as learning media for students, providing opportunities for observation, task completion, and active engagement both within and outside the classroom (Burn and Reed 2018; Skulmowski and Rey 2020). As such, they play a pivotal role in shaping the educational experience, facilitating meaningful interactions between instructors and learners. With proper design and implementation, teaching materials can enhance comprehension, foster critical thinking, and promote student success in academic endeavors (Whelpton, 2018; Lemin, 2018; Korona and Hutchison 2023).

In addition to their foundational role, teaching materials play a vital role in stimulating student learning and serving as the primary resource in achieving educational objectives. These materials provide language learners and educators with the necessary information to enhance their cognitive and linguistic abilities, allowing for deeper exploration within their areas of study. Moreover, teaching materials serve multiple functions for educators, including optimizing teaching time, transforming their role into that of facilitators, and fostering a more effective and interactive learning environment. Furthermore, these materials serve as valuable tools for assessing the attainment of learning outcomes, enabling educators to evaluate student progress and adjust instructional strategies accordingly (Suparto, Lao, & Salim, 2023). Through their multifaceted functions, teaching materials contribute significantly to the overall effectiveness and success of the teaching and learning process.

This research aimed to investigate current students' performance to write paragraphs after studying a paragraph writing using Global English Textbooks and the topics needed by students to be developed as teaching English textbook materials for Paragraph Writing Course for semester one students in the English Language Education Study Program at Universitas Muslim Indonesia. The urgency arises from the lack of paragraph writing textbooks tailored to student needs and

abilities. Investigating such materials required is crucial for enhancing students' writing skills (Sundana, 2017). Firstly, customized teaching materials accommodate diverse learning styles, fostering effective engagement and proficiency. Secondly, integration of relevant content enhances motivation and meaning in learning. Thirdly, targeted support addresses specific weaknesses, aiding students in overcoming writing challenges. Fourthly, materials promote critical thinking through analytical exercises. Fifthly, structured practice enhances language proficiency, including vocabulary and grammar. Lastly, proficiency in paragraph writing is vital for academic and professional success, necessitating materials aligned with real-world expectations. Developing these materials is imperative for advancing students' writing abilities and preparing them for future endeavors.

Paragraph is the basic unit of academic writing in English (Boardman 2008) or the basic building blocks of the texts (Bailey, 2003) which deal with one main idea (Yakhontova, 2003). (Epstein et al., 2005; Miller, Brett, Peggy McCardle, 2014) said that writing paragraphs is a fundamental foundation in producing scientific writing which (Hartshorn et al., 2010) consists of a set of rules used to organize words into larger units through organization, flow of ideas, details, and a sense of unity and coherence. Apart from that, writing academically (Jordan, 2003; Barbara L. Murphy and Estelle M. Rankin, 2021) is very important to ensure that the writing has a formal style that conforms to a set of rules that describe how words and groups of words can be arranged to form sentences in a particular language. Then the writing what was stated by Andrade M.S. dan Evans (2013) includes processes which goes through many stages for developing self-regulation strategies to produce written text accurately and clearly. Therefore, understanding the basic paragraph of scientific writing (Meyers, 2014) is a fundamental foundation that will help someone to decide what he/she is going to say about a topic sentence correctly supported some ideas to produce well-organized and clear paragraph writing.

Based on the above experts' opinion about a paragraph, it can be concluded that a paragraph is a distinct unit of written composition that presents a cohesive and unified expression of a single main idea or topic. It is characterized by its organization, which entails the logical arrangement of sentences to ensure a smooth flow of ideas from one to the next. Within a paragraph, supporting details, examples, evidence, or explanations are provided to develop and elaborate upon the central theme. The coherence of a paragraph is maintained through the clear and logical connection between sentences, ensuring that each contributes to the overall purpose and meaning. Unity is achieved by focusing on a single main idea or topic throughout the paragraph, while coherence ensures that the ideas presented are logically connected and follow a clear progression. Together, these elements combine to create a well-structured and cohesive unit of written communication that effectively conveys the writer's message to the reader.

For the key characteristics of paragraph writing, the experts explain several key characteristics for effective paragraph writing. Firstly, it maintains unity by centering around a single main idea, often articulated in the topic sentence. This central theme serves as the paragraph's focal point, guiding the content and ensuring a sense of purpose throughout. Coherence is essential, as it facilitates the logical flow and organization of ideas. Each sentence should build upon the preceding one, with transitional words aiding in smooth transitions between concepts. Supporting details play a crucial role in bolstering the main idea, providing examples, evidence, or explanations to enhance understanding and credibility. Clarity and precision are paramount, with clear, concise language facilitating effective communication. A logical structure, consisting of a clear beginning, middle, and end, guides readers through the paragraph, while varied sentence structures maintain engagement and readability. Lastly, audience awareness ensures that the

content is tailored to meet the needs and expectations of the intended audience, maximizing relevance, engagement, and impact.

The teaching materials for Paragraph Writing used by lecturers in the English Language Education Study Program use English Writing Textbooks, such as *Writing: Learn to write better academic essays* by Els Van Geyte 2013, *Paragraph Writing* by Dorothy E Zemach & Carlos Islam 2005, *ESL: Coherence and Cohesion* University of Washiton 2020, dan *Writer's Digest* University 2020. These reference textbooks which were called as the global textbook by Tomlinson (2008) are actually prepared for the needs of native English speaking students because all of these books are written in English. Because of this, students who are not native English speakers experience problems using these textbooks to study independently for several reasons, including that the books are written in English with an advanced level language standard while students who use them still have an elementary level English standard. According to Tomlinson (as cited in Tomlinson, 2008), many English learners foreign languages fail to use ELT material because it meets no the standard needs of the learner. In addition to this, the level of student vocabulary knowledge is still relatively low (Suhardi, Muliati, Sakkir, & Villarama, 2023). This was what the writer knows when teaching response in literal reading courses. Of the 2000 words most frequently used in English texts, very few of these words students recognize. Apart from that, of the 570 academic word lists, very few students know these words. However as stated by Beatrice S. Mikulecky & Linda Jeffries, (2007), a strong vocabulary is an essential aspect of reading ability. The students, therefore, require developing strategies for expanding their knowledge of vocabulary, particularly most frequent words in English language texts and words used often in academic texts. Furthermore, knowledge about the structure of the English language is still low, as students pointed out during interviews regarding the use of teaching materials in the Paragraph Writing course when this research was carried out.

Based on the above, learning Paragraph Writing in the English Language Education Study Program using global textbooks intended for native English speakers is not in accordance with the needs and abilities of the students. This causes ineffective learning outcomes as stated by Tomlinson above. These global textbooks offer comprehensive content and exercises tailored to native English speakers' proficiency levels, they may not sufficiently address the specific needs and language abilities of non-native English speakers. As a result, students encounter difficulties in understanding complex language structures, idiomatic expressions, and cultural references that are commonly found in native English materials. Additionally, the pace and depth of instruction in these textbooks may not align with the students' language acquisition stages or learning styles, further exacerbating their challenges. Therefore, it is essential for educators to supplement these global textbooks with additional resources, adaptations, or scaffolding techniques to accommodate the diverse linguistic backgrounds and learning needs of non-native English-speaking students.

This study aimed to investigate description of current students' performance to write paragraphs after studying a paragraph writing using Global English Textbooks and to find out the topics needed by students to be developed as teaching English textbook materials for Paragraph Writing Course.

Research method

Research design

The research employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative analysis of students' paragraph writing performance with qualitative interpretation into their perceptions to the use of global English textbooks as writing paragraph teaching materials.

Research subject

The research subjects comprise of 44 students drawn from two separate classes enrolled in English Paragraph Writing courses, forming the basis for comprehensive assessment of the impact of global textbooks on paragraph writing proficiency. The subjects selected were based on criteria such as English proficiency level and willingness to participate in the study. The selected subjects exhibit above-average academic capabilities, indicated by a Grade Point Average (GPA) exceeding 3.50, as confirmed by academic records provided by the head of the academic subdivision. Consequently, all students from the two classes were included as research samples, ensuring representation of proficient academic performance within the scope of this study.

Research instrument

The questionnaires were employed to investigate description of current students' performance to write paragraphs in the Paragraph Writing Course and to find out the topics needed by students to be developed as teaching English textbook materials for paragraph writing course.

Procedures of data collection

Two distinct questionnaires were distributed through the Learning Management System (LMS) of Universitas Muslim Indonesia, leveraging Google Forms as an online student learning tool. Subsequently, students were notified via WhatsApp Group Links about the questionnaire's availability on the LMS platform, and their voluntary participation in filling out the research questionnaires was solicited. Within a brief timeframe, students promptly completed the questionnaires, facilitating efficient data collection for the study.

Data analysis approach

Following the distribution of the questionnaires, the researcher utilized WhatsApp Group Links to inform students of the request to complete the research questionnaires via Google Forms embedded within the Learning Management System (LMS). Subsequently, the data filled in by students were subjected to quantitative analysis directly within the Google Forms platform. This approach facilitated a seamless and efficient process of data collection and analysis, leveraging the integrated functionalities of Google Forms to obtain quantitative insights from the gathered responses.

Results

In this section, the findings of the study are presented. The findings include describing current students' performance using the global English textbook reference materials, and the topics needed by students to be developed as teaching English textbook materials for paragraph writing course.

An overview of current students' ability to write paragraphs in the basic writing course

The research enlisted the participation of 44 individuals, with the survey outcomes outlined subsequently:

Having paragraph writing skills

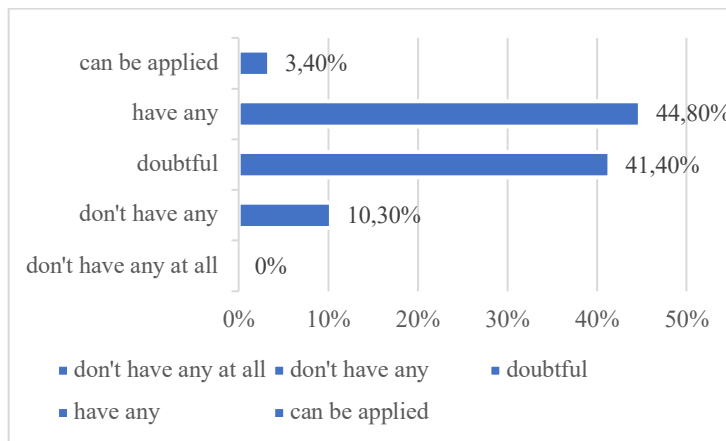


Figure 1. Writing skills

In figure 1, the distribution of students' writing skills in paragraph composition reveals distinct categories. Firstly, a small percentage, approximately 3.40%, are labeled as “can be applied.” These students demonstrate advanced proficiency, capable of effectively applying their skills across various contexts. Following this group, the majority, comprising approximately 44.80%, falls into the category of “already have” paragraph writing skills. While they possess a basic level of proficiency, there remains room for improvement in clarity, coherence, and depth of expression. Subsequently, nearly half of the students, around 41.40%, are categorized as “doubtful.” This indicates a significant portion of the student population exhibits uncertainty or inconsistency in their writing skills, lacking confidence in consistent application. Lastly, a segment, roughly 10.30%, is identified as lacking fundamental paragraph writing abilities. These students may encounter challenges in organizing ideas coherently within the structure of a paragraph.

Confident

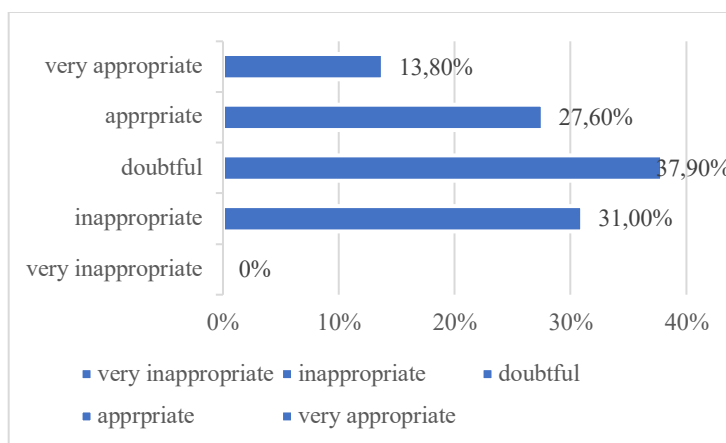


Figure 2. Confident.

Figure 2 reveals varying levels of confidence among students in their paragraph writing abilities. Firstly, approximately 13.80% report feeling very confident, indicating a significant yet smaller proportion with a high level of self-assurance. Leveraging this confidence can foster a positive learning environment and promote ongoing skill development. Additionally, around 27.60% express confidence, suggesting a notable portion feeling assured in their abilities. Building upon this confidence through further skill development opportunities can empower students to become more proficient writers. However, nearly 37.90% express doubt about their paragraph writing skills, indicating a substantial proportion with reservations or uncertainty. Addressing these doubts may require additional support and practice opportunities. Lastly, approximately 31.00% lack confidence in their writing abilities, suggesting a considerable number feel insecure. Understanding factors contributing to this lack of confidence, such as past academic experiences or language barriers, can inform interventions to enhance students' confidence and competence in paragraph writing.

Awareness of involvement in paragraph writing activities

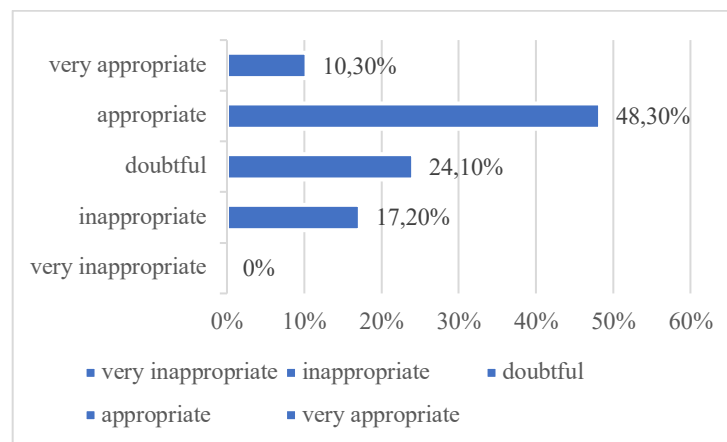


Figure 3 Awareness of involvement in paragraph writing activities

Figure 3 indicates that the students' awareness and involvement in paragraph writing activities. Approximately 10.30% of students view their participation as "very appropriate," indicating a smaller yet notable group that strongly believes in the relevance of these activities for enhancing writing skills. Additionally, nearly half 48.30% perceive their involvement as "appropriate," suggesting a significant majority finds these activities suitable and beneficial. However, around 24.10% express doubts about the relevance of their involvement, while 17.20% feel it's "inappropriate." Notably, no students consider their involvement "very inappropriate," indicating a lack of significant dissatisfaction. These findings underscore the need to address doubts and perceptions to encourage active engagement in paragraph writing activities.

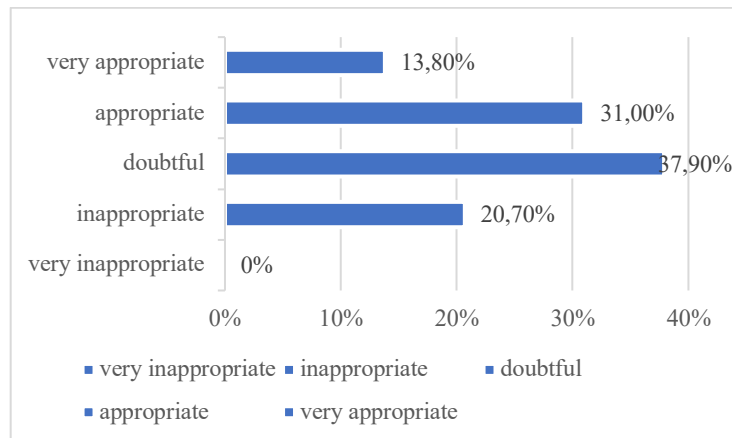
Interest in writing paragraphs

Figure 4. Interest in writing paragraph

Figure 4 reveals students' interest levels in paragraph writing. Firstly, 13.80% consider it "very appropriate," indicating a notable group that values its importance in skill development. Additionally, around 31.00% find it "appropriate," suggesting significant engagement and relevance. However, approximately 37.90% express doubts, indicating uncertainty about its relevance. Lastly, about 20.70% perceive it as "inappropriate," suggesting some students find it unengaging or unsuitable. These findings highlight the importance of addressing doubts and fostering positive perceptions to enhance student engagement in paragraph writing activities.

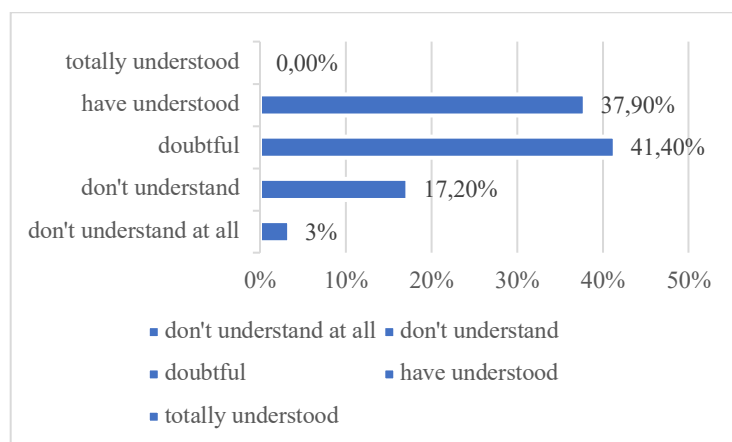
Knowledge about the benefits of paragraph writing

Figure 5. The benefits of paragraph writing

Figure 5 illustrates students' understanding of the benefits of paragraph writing. Notably, no students reported totally understanding the benefits. This underscores the need for educators to clarify and emphasize the benefits of paragraph writing to enhance student comprehension and appreciation of its importance in writing proficiency. Moreover, 37.90% indicate they already understand the benefits, suggesting a substantial proportion recognizes the advantages of paragraph writing. However, a significant portion 41.40% expressed doubts about the benefits, implying uncertainty or ambiguity regarding the advantages of paragraph writing. Additionally,

17.20% state they do not understand the benefits, indicating a further group with limited understanding. Conversely, a small percentage 3.00% reported not understanding the benefits at all, suggesting a minor portion may lack awareness or comprehension of its advantages.

Mastery of vocabulary, grammar, and combining words in paragraph writing

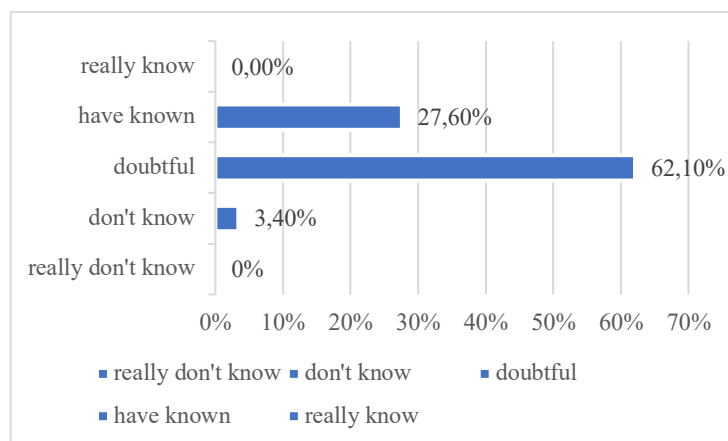


Figure 6. Mastery of vocabulary, grammar, and combining words in paragraph writing

Figure 6 presents insights into students' knowledge and confidence levels regarding vocabulary, grammar, and combining words in paragraph writing. Firstly, it's notable that no students reported "really know" in this aspect. This suggests a complete absence of students who feel they have a thorough understanding of vocabulary, grammar, and word combination within paragraph writing. However, approximately 27.60% have indicated they have known, indicating a portion of students who possess some level of familiarity or understanding in this area. Nonetheless, a significant majority (62.10%) expresses doubts, suggesting uncertainty or ambiguity regarding their knowledge and skills in vocabulary, grammar, and word combination within paragraph writing. Furthermore, a small percentage (3.40%) state they don't know, indicating a minority of students who acknowledge their lack of understanding or proficiency in this aspect. Notably, no students reported "really don't know," suggesting that while some students may lack confidence or familiarity, none feel completely unaware or clueless about vocabulary, grammar, and word combination in paragraph writing.

The topics that meet students' needs to be developed as teaching materials for the English paragraph writing course.

In a study involving student preferences for topics in paragraph writing, a total of 60 topics were identified as interesting and enjoyable. Among these topics, sixteen emerged with the highest frequencies, indicating their popularity among students. The top-ranking topics included Family, Save Earth, On my mother, and On my father, each garnering a significant percentage of votes, ranging from 50% to 55.6%. Following closely were themes such as Girl Education, Health is wealth, and Honesty, which received notable levels of interest, ranging from 38.9% to 44.5%. Other topics of interest included Time Management, Power of knowledge, and Discipline, each capturing the attention of approximately 38.9% of the respondents. Additionally, themes such as My best friend, Adventure, Indonesian Culture, and Good manners were also popular among students, with 33.3% to 38.9% of respondents expressing interest. Less commonly chosen topics included Importance of Education and Independence Day, with 27.8% and 33.3% of respondents

showing interest, respectively.

The topics proposed by students through the Google form are displayed in chart 1 as follows:

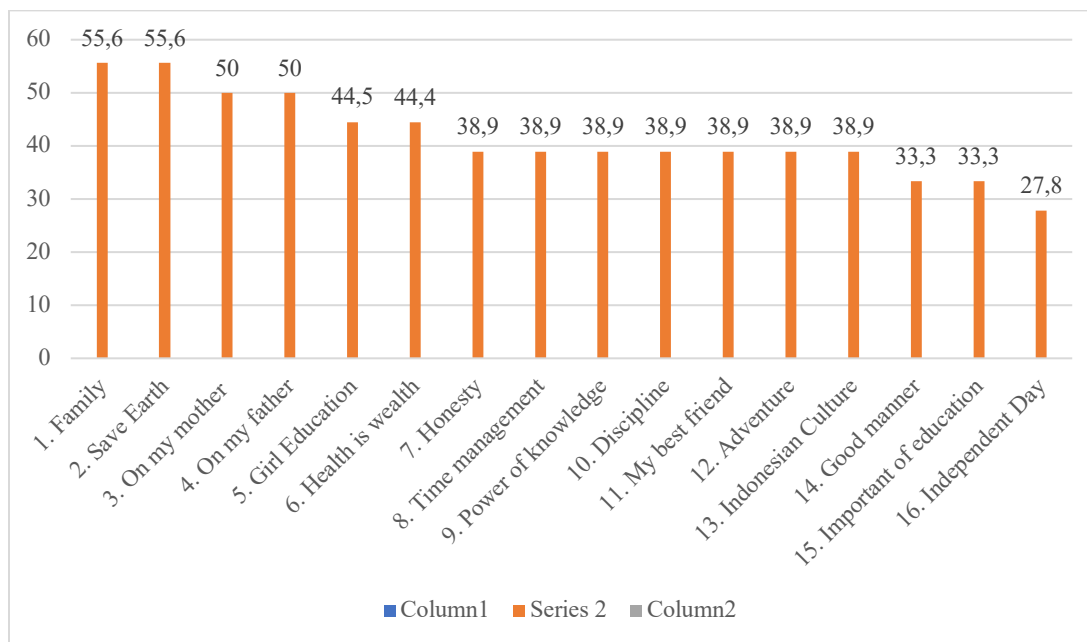


Chart 1. Topics students need

Discussions

Based on the results, the current students' abilities using global English textbook reference materials and the topics needed for teaching English paragraph writing are described as follows:

The current students' abilities using global English textbook reference materials

The data from figures 1 to 6 collectively provide insights into students' proficiency, confidence, awareness, interest, understanding, and knowledge in paragraph writing.

The results in figure 1 reveal a spectrum of students' paragraph writing skills, from advanced proficiency to fundamental deficiencies. Only 3.40% demonstrate advanced proficiency, capable of effectively applying skills across contexts, indicating a deep understanding and adaptability. Conversely, the majority lack such proficiency, struggling to apply skills across scenarios due to various factors (Yunisah, Arifin, & Ridwan, 2023). Non-native speakers may find complex vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and grammatical structures challenging (Ibrahim, Abduh, & Korompot, 2023). Cultural references in native English textbooks may pose comprehension difficulties. Differences in writing style between native and non-native languages hinder adaptation. Additionally, complex academic concepts in native English textbooks may require high language proficiency for comprehension. Overall, these challenges highlight the need for tailored support and resources for non-native speakers to improve paragraph writing skills. This is in line with what (Tomlinson, 2008) proposed, that many English learners of foreign languages fail to use ELT (English Language Teaching) materials because they do not meet the standard needs of the learner.

Based on the results in figure 2, the confidence levels vary widely among students, with a significant proportion expressing doubts or lacking confidence in their writing abilities.

Approximately 37.90% doubts regarding their paragraph writing skills, suggesting a considerable portion experiences reservations or uncertainty. Various aspects of global English textbooks contribute to students' doubts when writing paragraphs. Firstly, the language used may be overly complex for non-native speakers, comprising advanced vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and intricate grammatical structures, hindering comprehension and application. Additionally, cultural references and contexts within these textbooks may be unfamiliar to non-native students, impeding their ability to relate to the material. Moreover, the lack of personalization in global English textbooks fails to cater to individual needs and preferences, neglecting to provide tailored learning experiences. Furthermore, content presentation may lack contextualization, making it challenging for non-native speakers to apply learned concepts in real-world writing situations. Insufficient language support resources, such as glossaries or practice exercises, further compound these difficulties. Finally, the complexity of assigned writing tasks, such as synthesizing information or crafting arguments, may exacerbate feelings of doubt and uncertainty among non-native English speakers. This observation aligns with previous research conducted by (Sundana, 2017) which highlights the relevance of the complexities in assigned writing tasks, such as synthesizing information or crafting arguments, in exacerbating feelings of doubt and uncertainty among non-native English speakers.

Overall, the results in figure 3 highlight the importance of considering students' doubts and perception towards their involvement in paragraph writing activities. The former, among the students who express doubts about the relevance of their involvement in paragraph writing activities, there are likely several underlying reasons. Some students may find it challenging to see the direct connection between paragraph writing and their overall writing skills or academic development. They may question how mastering paragraph structure and organization translates into improved writing proficiency or academic success. Additionally, students may feel uncertain about the practical application of paragraph writing skills beyond the classroom setting. Without a clear understanding of the significance of these activities, they may struggle to fully engage and invest in the tasks. The latter, the students who perceive their involvement in paragraph writing activities as inappropriate may have distinct concerns that shape their attitudes. They may feel that the tasks are not aligned with their learning needs or goals, viewing them as extraneous or irrelevant to their academic pursuits. Some students may find the tasks overly challenging or intimidating, leading to feelings of inadequacy or frustration. Others may perceive a disconnect between the content of the writing prompts and their educational objectives, questioning the practical utility of the skills being developed. Overall, these students may struggle to find value or relevance in participating in paragraph writing activities, which influences their perception of appropriateness.

Overall, the results in figure 4 underscore the importance of considering students' doubts and perceptions towards paragraph writing. The former, a significant portion of students, approximately 37.90%, express doubts regarding the relevance of writing paragraphs using non-native global English textbooks. This suggests that a substantial number of students are uncertain about the value or importance of engaging in paragraph writing activities within the context of these textbooks. They may question how writing paragraphs in a non-native English environment contributes to their overall language proficiency or academic development. Additionally, students might be unsure about the effectiveness of using non-native global English textbooks in improving their writing skills, leading to hesitancy or skepticism towards the tasks. The latter, about 20.70% of students perceive writing paragraphs using non-native global English textbooks as inappropriate. This indicates that a notable proportion of students believe that these activities are

not suitable or applicable to their learning needs or goals within the context of non-native English education. They may view the tasks as challenging or disconnected from their educational objectives, leading to feelings of frustration or disinterest. Additionally, students may struggle to find relevance in writing paragraphs using materials that are not tailored to their language proficiency level or cultural background, further contributing to their perception of inappropriateness.

Overall, the findings in figure 5 reveal that a significant portion of students, approximately 41.40%, express doubts about the benefits of engaging in paragraph writing activities. This suggests that there is uncertainty or ambiguity among these students regarding the advantages that paragraph writing offers within the context of non-native English education. For example, the first benefit serves as a fundamental building block for developing overall language proficiency, including vocabulary expansion, grammatical accuracy, and syntactic structure. Additionally, paragraph writing fosters critical thinking and analytical skills by requiring students to organize ideas logically, support arguments with evidence, and synthesize information from various sources. This cognitive engagement not only strengthens students' academic abilities but also equips them with essential skills for navigating complex texts and expressing themselves proficiently in both academic and professional contexts. Moreover, paragraph writing promotes language fluency and communicative competence by providing opportunities for students to express their thoughts and opinions on diverse topics.

Overall, the results in figure 6 underscore the importance of addressing doubts and uncertainties among students regarding vocabulary, grammar, and word combination in paragraph writing. A significant majority of students (62.10%) expressed doubts, suggesting uncertainty or ambiguity regarding their knowledge and skills in vocabulary, grammar, and word combination within paragraph writing when using native global English textbooks. This indicates that a considerable portion of students feel unsure about their proficiency in these fundamental aspects of writing within the context of native English education. In paragraph writing, vocabulary knowledge is crucial for selecting precise and appropriate words to convey meaning effectively, while grammar skills ensure coherence and accuracy in sentence structure. Additionally, the ability to combine words skillfully contributes to the fluency and readability of paragraphs.

In conclusion, these discussions highlight the need for educators to provide comprehensive instruction and support in vocabulary acquisition, grammar proficiency, and word combination within the context of paragraph writing in non-native English textbooks. By addressing students' uncertainties and offering opportunities for skill development, educators can empower students to communicate more effectively and confidently in their writing within the native English educational framework.

The second discussion, the topics that meet students' needs to be developed as teaching materials for the English Paragraph Writing course.

The results from the survey reveal a diverse range of topics that resonate with students, reflecting their interests and preferences in paragraph writing tasks. The identification of the 60 topics provides valuable insights into students' interests and pre-existing knowledge. Among these topics, sixteen emerged as particularly popular, suggesting that they resonate strongly with students. For example, themes like Family, Save Earth, On my mother, and On my father received significant percentages of votes, indicating their widespread appeal. These topics likely tap into students' personal experiences and values, reflecting their familiarity with familial relationships and environmental concerns. Similarly, themes such as Girl Education, Health is wealth, and

Honesty also garnered notable levels of interest. This suggests that students are aware of and concerned about important social issues and values. Additionally, topics like Time Management, Power of knowledge, and Discipline captured the attention of a substantial portion of respondents, indicating an interest in self-improvement and academic success. Other popular themes, including my best friend, adventure, Indonesian culture, and good manners, albeit slightly less chosen, still indicate students' engagement with topics related to interpersonal relationships, cultural identity, and social etiquette (Farida, Supardi, & Muchtar, 2023). Less commonly chosen topics, such as Importance of Education and Independence Day, still received some interest from respondents, suggesting a recognition of broader educational and patriotic sentiments among students, albeit at lower levels of engagement.

Conclusion

Students' paragraph writing skills vary widely, ranging from advanced to fundamental deficiencies, with only a small percentage demonstrating advanced proficiency. Addressing these discrepancies requires targeted support and resources across all proficiency levels. Additionally, a significant proportion of students' express doubts or lack confidence in their writing abilities, underscoring the need for tailored instruction and support to address these uncertainties effectively. Challenges with global English textbooks further compound these issues, as various factors such as language complexity, cultural references, lack of personalization, and insufficient language support resources contribute to students' doubts and difficulties in paragraph writing. Despite the benefits of paragraph writing, including language proficiency development, critical thinking skills, and communicative competence, a notable portion of students question its advantages within the context of non-native English education. Furthermore, many students' express doubts about their proficiency in fundamental aspects such as vocabulary, grammar, and word combination within paragraph writing, highlighting the necessity for targeted instruction and support in these areas.

The identification of sixty topics sheds light on students' interests and existing knowledge. Among these, sixteen stand out as particularly popular, indicating a strong resonance with students. Themes like Family, Save Earth, and personal narratives received significant attention, reflecting students' deep-seated values and experiences. Additionally, topics concerning social issues such as Girl Education and Health is wealth demonstrate students' awareness and concern for broader societal matters. Furthermore, themes related to self-improvement and academic success, such as Time Management and Power of knowledge, garnered considerable interest. Despite varying levels of popularity, even less chosen topics like My best friend and Adventure indicate students' engagement with interpersonal relationships and cultural identity. Lastly, the inclusion of less common topics like Importance of Education and Independence Day suggests a recognition of broader educational and patriotic sentiments among students, albeit with lower levels of engagement.

Declaration of conflicting interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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