



THE CORRELATION AMONG WRITING INTEREST, LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES, AND PARAGRAPH WRITING ACHIEVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to determine the existence of a substantial association between language learning methodologies, writing interest, and paragraph writing achievement. The employed methodology was descriptive, and the design was correlational in nature. Forty-one students from STKIP Muhammadiyah Pagaralam were selected as the samples for this research. Two types of surveys and a paragraph writing achievement exam were conducted to gather the data. The research findings indicated that (a) a significant correlation existed between language learning strategies and paragraph writing achievement, (b) a significant correlation was found between writing interest and paragraph writing achievement, (c) a significant correlation was observed among language learning strategies, writing interest, and paragraph writing achievement, and (d) no significant correlation was identified between language learning strategies and writing interest. The finding indicates that language learning strategies and writing interest significantly correlate with the enhancement of paragraph writing achievement among sixth-semester students in the English education study program at STKIP Muhammadiyah Pagaralam.

Keywords: *Paragraph Writing, Writing Interest, Language Learning Strategies*

1. INTRODUCTION

According to the School-Based Curriculum (KTSP) for Junior and Senior High School in Indonesia, the objective of English instruction is to cultivate mastery in the four essential language skills: hearing, reading, speaking, and writing. Students are required to attain these skills to speak proficiently in English. Writing is a crucial linguistic ability for academic achievement. Writing is considered the most intricate talent for kids to acquire. It is crucial in communication, especially in the contemporary information-centric age, when writing functions as a mechanism to develop

ideas, enhance linguistic structures, and facilitate interactive discourse (Massi, 2001). From this perspective, it may be deduced that the essence of writing is the conveyance of ideas in written form.

The ability to write well is not inherent; it is generally obtained through schooling or transmitted as a series of practices in formal or other situations. Acquiring writing proficiency necessitates practice and experience (Myles, 2002). Writing encompasses the process of composition, which entails the capacity to convey or narrate knowledge through narratives

Vol 8, No 1 (2025): ESTEEM

or descriptions, or to transform material into new formats, such as explanatory or argumentative writings (Ommagio, 1993). Academic writing necessitates intentional effort and regular practice in the generation, organization, and assessment of ideas.

It is depressing that numerous students, even instructors, in academia still perceive writing as a daunting challenge. Writing is universally acknowledged as the most challenging skill to learn, significantly more arduous than speaking. In contrast to speaking, which is an inherent biological capability, writing necessitates deliberate acquisition (Sugiharto, 2006). The deficiency in writing proficiency among numerous students is sometimes ascribed to insufficient pedagogical approaches. In numerous educational institutions, students are infrequently motivated to engage in paragraph or essay composition, with the emphasis predominantly placed on instructing writing theory, highlighting grammatical precision and the rhetorical framework of works.

Alwasih (1999), as reported in Sugiharto (2006), identified various deficiencies in college writing based on a review of writing teaching at the university level. The statistics indicated that 68.9% of students did not receive feedback from their instructors; 55.2% of instructors prioritized theory over practice; 37.9% of students failed to acknowledge the significance of writing, and 34.4% cited a deficiency in writing competence among instructors. This suggests that the instruction of writing is influenced by these

elements. Furthermore, he asserts that educational institutions continue to neglect writing instruction, resulting in many graduate students lacking the requisite writing skills to generate high-quality work. Furthermore, he found that 62.1% of students, spanning from elementary school to college, exhibited deficiencies in writing proficiency during his extensive investigation on the writing process. It can be inferred that Indonesia has not yet attained the primary goal of writing.

Acquiring proficiency in writing a foreign language poses numerous challenges for pupils due to its nature as an active, productive skill. For this group, writing is a challenging endeavor that necessitates a specific level of linguistic understanding, adherence to writing conventions, vocabulary, and syntax. It also requires cognitive processes that allow the individual to articulate oneself effectively in the other language. Additionally, Erkan & Saban (2011) conducted a correlational study to examine the relationship between EFL students' writing performance and their writing anxiety, self-efficacy, and attitudes about writing. The results indicate that EFL students' writing apprehension negatively correlates with their writing performance, as well as with writing self-efficacy; conversely, writing apprehension positively correlates with attitude toward writing.

Asmuti (2002) discovered that kids may systematically organize concepts through writing. Simultaneously, writing has emerged as one of the most challenging aspects for educators to

Vol 8, No 1 (2025): ESTEEM

manage in the classroom. Due to a lack of inspiration or enjoyment in writing, kids have little motivation to engage with it. It is essential to recognize that several folks hardly compose extensive texts in their regular activities, nor do they utilize pen and paper or spellcheckers. Nonetheless, educators often require students to compose written work. Writing, akin to all facets of language, functions as a medium of communication. In everyday life, we compose emails, lists, notes, cover letters, reports, assignments, or essays; some of us even generate content for blogs, forums, or websites. Each writing activity has a distinct function and targets a certain audience.

Nevertheless, in English language classes, writing frequently lacks this communicative emphasis. Fortunately, there are methods to enhance the engagement and significance of writing assignments for students. Selvaraj and Aziz (2019) asserted that educators should employ many methods and tactics in teaching writing. Writing approaches include the concepts, norms, and ethical ideals related to the writing methods utilized in educational writing courses.

Young learners in language schools frequently find pleasure in the preliminary phases of writing, including the formation of letters or characters. They enthusiastically delineate letters and words, acquiring the ability to inscribe their own names as well as that of family members, pets, toys, or classroom items. We strive to maintain this passion as they advance in their English writing abilities.

Furthermore, Singh et al. (2017) identified two primary writing issues—subject-verb agreement and tense consistency—through an analysis of 144 students' work. Many students oversimplified their writing, resulting in a conflation of tenses and a failure to establish subject-verb agreement due to difficulties with complex sentence construction.

Writing can be a difficult skill for children to acquire. It is generally an individual endeavor that involves concentration, exertion, and duration. Composing well is challenging, even for novice learners, although it can be a profoundly gratifying endeavor. Additional Habibi et al. (2017) investigated 70 students with a questionnaire and identified seven writing issues: inadequate organization or illogical sequence, word choice, grammatical errors, spelling, conceptual uncertainty, punctuation, and capitalization. Furthermore, the majority of female students encountered issues with word selection, whereas male students struggled with grammatical inaccuracies. The article indicates that gender influences the perception of challenges encountered by pupils.

Moreover, educators ought to assist pupils in cultivating their early enthusiasm for writing while enhancing their skills and confidence. It is essential for pupils to possess a solid foundation in verbal communication. For instance, they must identify and discuss subjects and individuals prior to writing about them competently. The inability of teachers to implement classroom-based strategies to enhance

Vol 8, No 1 (2025): ESTEEM

students' cognitive abilities results in insufficient writing skills (Moses et al., 2019). To enhance students' cognitive capacity, educators must sustain their interest and motivation throughout the teaching and learning process. Interest refers to the state of curiosity, attention, or attentiveness towards a subject, whereas motivation denotes the emotional drive or inspiration that compels an individual to make choices, take action, exert effort, and persist with determination in their endeavors (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2021). Furthermore, Wijekumar et al. (2019) discovered that empirical evidence consistently demonstrates that driven students display positive and strategic actions in writing. Furthermore, research on writing and motivation indicates that students who exhibit an interest in writing are more likely to set effective goals, utilize advantageous tactics, and seek feedback while completing writing projects (Lipstein and Renninge, 2007). To emphasize the significance of interest in writing, the author obtained data on students' writing achievement scores by interviewing lecturers from the English Education Study Program at STKIP Muhammadiyah Pagaralam. The scores were diverse and may be classified as middle-low scores. The current data indicates the writing scores of third-semester students' GPAs. Only 35% of all pupils achieved a standard score in the writing class. The remaining kids perform below the standard, which is around 65%. No student achieves a score above the standard. Nearly all instructors of the writing course indicated that

students' writing ability was predominantly uninspired, rife with grammatical errors, redundant notions, and lacking coherent organization. The author noted that just a few students experienced difficulties in writing. Through casual inquiries with the lecturers, the author inferred that the students exhibited diminished enthusiasm and proficiency in writing processes.

This study examined learning techniques as a primary distinction. Numerous methods exist for language acquisition that can enhance pupils' comprehension, retention, and application. Students employed diverse strategies to address a challenge encountered during the learning process (Brown, 2001). Consequently, by understanding diverse language learning methodologies, educators can instruct effectively, enabling pupils to comprehend the information with ease. The literature on this subject is scarce, particularly about measures to assist Indonesian college students. Two types of tactics can be employed to enhance our proficiency in English. These tactics may be suitable for certain individuals, while others may align well with alternative approaches. The strategies were categorized as direct and indirect. Certain educational methodologies include experiential learning and practical application of content, such as learning a foreign language, referred to as direct techniques. Conversely, supplementary techniques involving metacognitive, affective, and collaborative approaches augment learning in a less direct but significant way, referred to as

Vol 8, No 1 (2025): ESTEEM

indirect strategies. Both direct and indirect techniques possess equal importance and mutually strengthen one other in numerous respects. Furthermore, Putri (2023) stated that learning methods are crucial as they enable students to attain their objectives more efficiently, facilitating greater success in the learning process.

The direct technique pertains to the immediate use of acquired language skills. The pupils utilize this method of communication directly. One may cluster words of the same class or utilize visuals to enhance vocabulary through practice, as well as by sending or receiving messages. The most significant aspect is that when students engage directly with the language, it indicates they have employed a direct technique for learning. Some research emphasizes the significance of direct tactics in enhancing writing skills (Zhang, 2017). Furthermore, Hapsari (2019) concentrated her research on the significance of direct tactics to enhance linguistic correctness and fluency.

Conversely, when students acquire language skills by learning from others, consulting experts, relaxing before studying, or collaborating with peers, they are employing what is referred to as an indirect technique. The learners do not acquire the language directly; they do not engage with it personally but rather learn it through others or by comprehending the culture associated with the language, which facilitates a deeper understanding and enhances input.

In line with the previous discussion, various strategies to aid students in improving their writing skills involved considering the language learning preferences of the students to tailor support to their unique characteristics. Dansereau (1985), as referenced in Lalonde (1998), defines learning strategies as a compilation of methods or procedures utilized by students to facilitate the acquisition, retention, and application of knowledge. In other words, learning strategies denote the methods of learning—what pupils employ to navigate the educational process.

The research by Zakia Ali Chand (2014) examined the relationship between language learning methodologies and their impact on university students' ability in academic writing. This study indicated that most students utilized language learning methodologies with moderate regularity. Metacognitive and cognitive techniques were the most frequently employed, succeeded by social, compensatory, memory, and affective strategies. A modest positive association exists between the application of these tactics and competency in academic language. The deficiencies in the academic language proficiency of undergraduate students cannot be attributed to their employment of language learning methodologies.

Based on the explanations, survey results, and research conducted by various specialists, the author seeks to determine whether the low writing scores of English Study Program students correlate with their diminished interest

Vol 8, No 1 (2025): ESTEEM

and language learning methodologies. Consequently, the authors undertook study examining the relationship between writing interest, language learning methodologies, and paragraph writing achievement among students in the English Education Study Program at STKIP Muhammadiyah Pagaram.

2. METHODS

The research employs a quantitative methodology utilizing a correlational approach. The initial approach involved requesting students to complete the writing interest inventory questionnaire to ascertain their writing preferences. Secondly, a questionnaire was employed to ascertain the students' language learning methodologies, and finally, a writing test was administered to evaluate the students' paragraph writing proficiency. The research sample comprised 41 students who had successfully completed two writing courses, selected by purposive sampling.

Prior to analyzing the acquired data, tests for normality, linearity, and homogeneity were undertaken utilizing SPSS 20. Ultimately, multiple regression analysis was employed to ascertain whether a significant correlation exists between students' language learning methodologies, their writing interest, and their paragraph writing achievement.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**RESULTS****a. Writing Achievement**

There were six students categorized in excellent category with score in the range of 90 – 100. It means that those students are knowledgeable to assign topic, give clearly stated with well organized, have few errors of tenses or word order, and they are also able to demonstrate writing mechanics. While 18 students are in very good category, which means they are very good at developing topic given and stand on main idea, even have lack of detail. And only 3 students in fair category and one student in very poor category. It means that most of students have been able to develop topic given but still lack of details, have major problems in construction because several errors of language use.

Table 1. The Frequency and Percentage of Paragraph Writing Achievement Based on Category

		F	%	Valid %	Cum %
Valid	Excellent	6	14.6	14.6	14.6
	VeryGood	18	43.9	43.9	58.5
	Average	13	31.7	31.7	90.2
	Fair	3	7.3	7.3	97.6
	VeryPoor	1	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

b. Writing Interest

There were 41 students involved in this research, 20 students (48.8%) of the samples agreed that writing was so much fun to do, especially in a free time. The other 14 students (34.1%) had strongly agreed in writing interest.

Vol 8, No 1 (2025): ESTEEM

The percentage reached 65.9, which means that enough evident to show how those students perceived writing as something interesting.

Table 2. Writing Interest

		F	%	Valid %	Cum %
Valid	SD	1	2.4	2.4	2.4
	D	2	4.9	4.9	7.3
	UD	4	9.8	9.8	17.1
	A	20	48.8	48.8	65.9
	SA	14	34.1	34.1	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

c. The Correlation between Language Learning Strategies and Paragraph Writing Achievement

Table 3. Correlation

		Language Learning Strategies Question	Paragraph Writing
Language Learning Strategies Question	Pearson Correlation	1	.345*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.027
	N	41	41
Paragraph Writing Score	Pearson Correlation	.345*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.027	
	N	41	41

*. Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

From the data over, the significance score is 0.027 (below 0.05) indicated that language learning strategies was correlated with students writing ability. Even the correlation coefficient (r) .345 which means the correlation was in low category. Each of language learning strategies were analysed since there was a correlation

between language learning strategies (total) and paragraph writing achievement.

Table 4. Language Learning Strategy Types

Language Learning Strategy Types		Paragraph Writing Achievement
Memory Strategy	Pearson Correlation	.192
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.228
	N	41
Cognitive Strategy	Pearson Correlation	.208
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.192
	N	41
Compensation Strategy	Pearson Correlation	.485**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	41
Metacognitive Strategy	Pearson Correlation	.445**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004
	N	41
Affective Strategy	Pearson Correlation	.500**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	41
Social Strategy	Pearson Correlation	.392*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011
	N	41

From the table, there were four types of language learning strategies which significantly correlated to paragraph writing achievement with all the significant scores lower than .05, they were affective and compensation strategy with

Vol 8, No 1 (2025): ESTEEM

score .001, then metacognitive strategy with score .004, and social strategy with score .011

d. The Correlation between Writing Interest and Paragraph Writing Achievement.

From the table, the significance score was .007 lower than .05. So, it can be concluded that writing interest was significantly correlated to paragraph writing achievement with correlation coefficient (*r*) was .415, and the level of correlation in moderate category.

Table 5. Correlations between WI and PW

		Writing Interest	Paragraph Writing
Writing Interest Questionnaire	Pearson Correlation	1	.415**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.007
	N	41	41
Paragraph Writing Achievement	Pearson Correlation	.415**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	
	N	41	41

e. The Correlation among Writing Interest, Language Learning Strategies, and Paragraph Writing Achievement.

From table above, the correlation coefficient (*r*) was .484, so the level of correlation analysis was in moderate category. By applying multiple regression, it was found that R square (R^2) was .235. It means that language learning strategies and writing interest simultaneously contributed to paragraph achievement.

Table 6. ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2392.943	2	1196.472	5.827	.006b
	Residual	7802.569	38	205.331		

Total	10195.512	40			
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- a. Dependent Variable: Paragraph Writing Achievement
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Language Learning Strategies Questionnaire, Writing Interest Questionnaire

Table 7. Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.484a	.235	.194	14.329

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Language Learning Strategies Questionnaire, Writing Interest Questionnaire

f. The Correlation between Writing Interest and Language Learning Strategies

g.

Table 8. Correlations

		Writing Interest Questionnaire	Language Learning Strategies Questionnaire
Writing Interest Questionnaire	Pearson Correlation	1	.247
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.119
	N	41	41
Language Learning Strategies Questionnaire	Pearson Correlation	.247	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.119	
	N	41	41

From the table above, it was shown that there was no significant correlation between the two variables because the significance score is 0.119 higher than α .05.

4. CONCLUSION

Four conclusions can be drawn from the research. The correlation between language learning strategies and paragraph writing achievement among students in the English Education Study Program at STKIP Muhammadiyah Pagaralam was substantial.

Vol 8, No 1 (2025): ESTEEM

Secondly, writing interest had a high correlation with paragraph writing achievement. Third, language learning strategies and writing interest are concurrently connected with paragraph writing achievement. The correlation between language learning methodologies and writing interest was not significant.

Students' language learning strategies significantly correlate with their paragraph writing achievement. It is essential for educators to understand students' preferred learning styles to deliver appropriate instruction. New pedagogical skills include identifying students' language acquisition strategies, offering training on these strategies, and assisting students in responding adeptly in classroom contexts. This study revealed that mechanics received the lowest score in writing, indicating that teachers should prioritize this area of instruction. Instructors of writing courses should cultivate effective approaches and methodologies for teaching writing, enabling students to articulate their ideas through writing and fostering a sense of comfort in producing written compositions.

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Vol 8, No 1 (2025): ESTEEM

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