# THE STUDENTS' PERCEIVED IMPACT
# ON THE USE FREE WRITING IN EFL CLASSROOM

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**Abstract**

Writing is a skill that is important to learners because when learners want to write educational essays or educational homework, they must write correctly. This study aimed to analyze students perception of the use of free writing in EFL classrooms to improve writing skills. This research seeks to know and describe students' perception of free-writing use in EFL Classrooms. The study used a descriptive quantitative design with a questionnaire for data collection consisting of fourteen questions as the research instrument. In this research, there were 26 EFL students as the respondents of the English Education study program at Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kediri. The results of this study show that participants had positive responses toward free writing in the class. Participants felt that free writing was an effective way to teach writing, helping them improve their writing and stay motivated in learning using free writing in the classroom. Their feedback and responses indicate general agreement with free writing as a beneficial teaching strategy.

*Keywords: Student' Perception. Free Writing Techniques, Writing Skill, EFL Classroom*

## INTRODUCTION

Writing is essential for learners because when they want to write an educational essay or homework, they must write correctly. People have good skills in writing that they must learn and do in their daily activities. Writing is different than speaking. Speaking can be learned naturally as you grow, but writing cannot be learned naturally and must be learned first. According to (1998), writing can be anything that comes to mind, even if it seems nonsense, lacks proper grammar, or is irrelevant to your current project or prompt. Freehand writing is a very flexible exercise, so you can use paper and pencil or a computer, whichever suits you best. You can start with a prompt or write down whatever comes to mind. According to Eshghinejad (2021), Learning how to write well is not easy because when learners try to report, they have many problems and obstacles. Those obstacles include lack of material, vocabulary, ability to structure paragraphs, poor choice of topic, and poor idea development. As a result, they get stuck when writing. So, they need a strategy to improve their ability.

(Elbow, 1998) states that one way to improve writing skills is to practice free writing regularly. It can also be a valuable medium for students to start writing. According to Alnufaie and Grenfell (2012) cited in (2021), Free writing is a prescriptive method in which a person writes continuously for some time without regard to spelling, grammar, or subject matter. The accessible writing method means writing whatever comes or pops into your mind. It can take you to many places. Free writing allows students to write what they feel and think based on their style without being harassed by teachers. Writing freely discourages students from correcting their writing with spelling and many other things. The purpose of this method is to give students the freedom to write down whatever comes to their minds and quickly get ideas to share in their papers.

(Elbow, 1998) found that free writing activities helped student learning. Do not worry if you are using good words or if you are using the right words; keep writing. (Chen, 2019) Also, freewriting is a technique that makes students write whatever comes to their mind without worrying about grammar, spelling, structure, or even basic meaning. The main goal of free writing is to put something on the page. This method has been widely used in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms to help students improve their writing skills.

According to Yoko Iwai (2011) cited in (Si, 2019), they defined EFL as people learning English in a non-English speaking country. (For example. Japanese who learn English in their own country are EFL learners). According to the definitions of EFL and ESL, the target audience for EFL includes nations like China, Japan, and South Korea, where English is not the native tongue or the official language. English is not required for daily contact in these nations. There are, however, two distinct audiences for ESL. One is for individuals; The other is for countries that once colonized English-speaking countries, such as Africa and several nations in Southeast Asia, and is for immigrants to English-speaking countries. Whether or not these nations can exist depends on how well-versed they are in English. Although both EFL and ESL are meant to help students learn English, there are considerable distinctions in the goals and techniques of instruction. Even though the teacher usually starts the class activities, students take the lead in ESL lessons.

Various studies have been conducted on using free writing in EFL classrooms. (Park, 2020) concluded that An analysis of 30 freewriting writers showed similar trends, with all students improving their language skills during the semester. Students generally reported positive attitudes towards freewriting activities. They generally agreed that it improved self-confidence, reduced fear of judgment, and deepened thinking, but disliked the lack of feedback, choice of topics, and time limits for activities. (Chang, 2020) also concluded that 16 weeks of guided free writing practice positively affected English writing in general. Most students agreed that practicing guided free writing positively affected their confidence and motivation when writing in English.

The study's primary objective is to know students' perception of using free writing in the EFL Classroom. Based on the result, the research was conducted on the students' perception of free writing, and this study was carried out in an EFL classroom at the State Islamic Institute of Kediri. To this objective, the researchers are investigating the following research questions: 1) What are students' perceptions of free writing in EFL classrooms? 2) What are the effects of the use of free writing towards EFL students' writing skills?; 3) What factors influence the effectiveness of free writing in improving EFL students' writing skills?

**Literature Review**

Writing is considered an essential skill for EFL/ESL learners because it reflects their grammatical knowledge as it applies to ideas written in the target language. Additionally, writing skills ensure a student's academic success (Chang, 2020). Many learners fear writing and worry about Spelling, handwriting, and sentence or paragraph construction (Park, 2020). So, teachers must have strategies to improve students' skills, especially writing skills. Non-strategic writers often encounter writing difficulties (El-Koumy, 1991) cited in (Calhoun & Haley, 2013).

According to (1989), Freewriting can help students focus on writing by reducing the mental strain of thinking about the right words. Freewriting is a technique that makes students write whatever comes to their mind without worrying about grammar, spelling, structure, or even basic meaning. Freewriting is often defined as a quick writing activity, with few breaks and no editing, that helps the writer generate ideas (Park, 2020). Using guided freewriting, teachers can create specific outlines for learners to follow, while writing hints can reduce learner fear. Several types of research have spoken of the effectiveness of free-writing journals as a viable technique for improving writing skills. Learn about the benefits of journaling processes that facilitate the expression of personal feelings and thoughts (Alharthi, 2021).

Perception is another term that describes a perceptible view or opinion about something. A student's positive perception of learning is believed to lead to success. (Feldman, 1999) Perception is a constructive process that seeks to construct meaningful situations beyond the stimuli presented. In other words, perception can be defined as what a person experiences. From the definition above, it can be concluded that perceptions arise based on each individual's experiences and emotions. Perception is the response that each individual possesses through the perceptual process.

EFL Learners' perception of writing activities can influence writing activities through free writing. Instruction can create a specific outline, and writing hints can reduce learner anxiety. Alnufaie and Grenfell (2012), cited in 2021) found that free writing facilitates learners' expression and ability to translate concepts into sentences. Freewriting does not focus on linear, organised paragraphs. Instead, it emphasises the student's creative process and writing ability.

(Gebhard, 2006) Describes EFL as the learning of English by individuals living in environments where English is not used as a primary language. He said children cannot practice their English outside the classroom in such situations. EFL explained how students learn English for use with other English speakers worldwide. Suppose the student is a tourist or businessman (Harmer, 2007). According to (Alsalihi, 2020), EFL learners learn and study English as a foreign language. This means that learners of a foreign language have little opportunity to practice honest conversations about the language, people, and culture (Berwald & Chastain, 1977).

## RESEARCH METHOD

The study aims to find out student's perceptions of the use of free writing in EFL classrooms. The researcher used a quantitative descriptive technique to obtain thorough responses and student thoughts on free writing. In the last, after the researcher gets the data. The data is interpreted to conclude the research. The participant of this study is EFL students in the English Education study program at Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kediri. Afterwards, the researcher chose 26 students as a representative of EFL students in the English Education study program. The participants have classification where they used free writing before, EFL students of the English Education study program at Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kediri.

The instrument used in the data collection process is a questionnaire. The participants were asked to complete a questionnaire. The data collection started with giving the questionnaire to the respondents. Then, the data will interpreted by research. In this research, the questionnaire was adapted from the study of Chang (2020), which related to students' perception of the use of free writing in EFL Classrooms. The Questionnaire was adapted from Nurhaliza, Yusmalia (2023), "STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON FREEWRITING TECHNIQUE AT ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OF UIN SUSKA RIAU." The questionnaire consists of 14 statements that were distributed through Google Forms. The researcher uses the Likert Scale starting from Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. This research used a 4-point Likert scale for the questionnaire item. Strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree. A four-point scale was used to remove the neutral point, reasonable in a clear decision. This approach allowed us to better measure the strength of participants' attitudes and opinions. After collecting data from the questionnaire, data needs to be analysed. The data from the questionnaire is summarised in the form of frequency and percentage. The frequency and rate results were copied from Google form results. Then, the researcher interpreted the data into rates and frequency of describing student perceptions about participation in free-writing activities in the classroom.

## FINDINGS

The first item talks about how there are no limits to all-out idea generation when I free-write about a topic. Four students (15,4%) said "strongly agree", 16 students (61,5%) said "agree", three students (11,5%) said "disagree", and three students (11,5%) said "strongly disagree". Based on the result, we can conclude that most students in the EFL Classroom at IAIN KEDIRI agree that there are no limits to idea generation when free to write about a topic.

The second item talks about how to learn free writing in daily activities, which is an excellent practice to get more ideas from activities for writing. Four students (15,4%) said "strongly agree", 17 students (65,4%) said "agree", three students (11,5%) said "disagree", and two students (7,7%) said "strongly disagree". Based on the result, we can conclude that most students in the EFL Classroom at IAIN KEDIRI agree that free writing activities are excellent practice for getting more ideas for writing.

The third item discusses the effect of free writing, which makes learners accessible and enjoy getting ideas for writing free papers. Seven students (26.9%) said "strongly agree", 15 students (57.7%) said "agree", one student (3.8%) said "disagree", and three students (11.5%) said "strongly disagree". So, we can conclude that most students in the EFL Classroom at IAIN KEDIRI agree that Using free writing makes it accessible.

The fourth item talks about daily activities. When the learners get some more ideas and do free writing, they try their best to write. Three students (11,5%) said "strongly agree", 14 students (53,8%) said "agree", six students (23,1%) said "disagree", and three students (11,5%) said "strongly disagree". Based on the result, we can conclude that most students in the EFL Classroom at IAIN KEDIRI agreed that free writing can make them try their best to write.

The Fifth item talked about the learners feel free and enjoy when they write more with free writing. 6 students (23,1%) said "strongly agree", 13 students (50%) said "agree", four students (15,4%) said "disagree", three students (11,5%) said "strongly disagree". Based on the result, we can conclude that most students in the EFL Classroom at IAIN KEDIRI agreed that free writing makes students feel like and enjoy writing more.

The sixth item talks about writing about assigned free writing topics, which is not difficult if they want to try hard to get ideas for the learners. Writing freewriting helps you feel more comfortable framing your thoughts and writing down the words of this language. One student (3.8%) said "strongly agree", 19 students (73.1%) said "agree", three students (11.5%) said "disagree", and three students (11.5%) said "strongly disagree". Based on the result, we can conclude that most students in the EFL Classroom at IAIN KEDIRI agree that free writing makes it difficult for students to write about assigned free writing topics difficult for them.

The seventh item talks about the learners' thinking that free writing in daily activities can help them write fluently; free text helps create rough drafts as it helps record basic ideas and thoughts. You can use this material to continue your design and improve your free writing fluently. One student (3.8%) said "strongly agree", 22 students (84.6%) said "agree", and three students (11.5%) said "strongly disagree". Based on the result, we can conclude that most of the EFL Classroom students at IAIN KEDIRI agreed that free writing activities help them to write fluently.

The eighth item concerns the learner's confidence that they can complete the free writing activity in 10 minutes or less. Three students (11,5%) said "strongly agree", 14 students (53,8%) said "agree", six students (23,1%) said "disagree", and three students (11,5%) said "strongly disagree". Based on the result, we can conclude that most students in the EFL Classroom at IAIN KEDIRI agreed that free writing makes students confident to complete the free writing activity in 10 minutes or less.

The ninth item talk about after writing, the learners feel more confident in English writing in general. One student (3.8%) said "strongly agree", 19 students (73.1%) said "agree", three students (11.5%) said "disagree", and three students (11.5%) said "strongly disagree". Based on the result, we can conclude that most students in the EFL Classroom at IAIN KEDIRI agreed that students feel more confident in their English writing after using free writing.

The tenth item talks about the learners think they can quickly write more sentences after doing free writing activities. 2 students (7,7%) said "strongly agree", 18 students (69,2%) said "agree", three students (11,5%) said "disagree", three students (11,5%) said "strongly disagree". Based on the result, we can conclude that most students in the EFL Classroom at IAIN KEDIRI agree that students can quickly write more sentences after doing free writing activities.

The eleventh item talks about the learners wanting to do some activities before doing the free writing. 2 students (7,7%) said "strongly agree", 18 students (69,2%) said "agree", three students (11,5%) said "disagree", three students 11,5%) said "strongly disagree". Based on the result, we can conclude that most students in the EFL Classroom at IAIN KEDIRI agree that students want to do free writing more.

The twelfth item discusses how learners like to do free writing activities for their assignments. Sixteen students (61,5%) said "agree", eight students (30,8%) said "disagree", and two students (7,7%) said "strongly disagree". Based on the result, we can conclude that most students in the EFL Classroom at IAIN KEDIRI agree that students like to do free writing activities for their writing assignments.

The thirteenth item discusses the iconic picture, giving some fantastic images to help them visualise the topic and write freely. Four students (15,4%) said "strongly agree", 20 students (76,9%) said "agree", and two students (7,7 %) said "strongly disagree". Based on the result, we can conclude that most EFL Classroom students at IAIN KEDIRI agreed that Photos and images help them visualise their topic and write freely.

The fourteenth item discusses Free writing activities subtopics that help them write more. Five students (19,2 %) said "strongly agree", 18 students (69,2 %) said "agree", one student (3,8%) said "disagree", and two students (7,7%) said "strongly disagree". Based on the result, we can conclude that most students in the EFL Classroom at IAIN KEDIRI agree that free writing activities subtopics help students write more.

## DISCUSSION

Based on the student's responses to items one to 6, most participants agree with the statement delivered in the questionnaire. However, they have variants for their answer; in item 1 and item 2, most participants agree. After free writing, the learners feel free and get some ideas for writing. It can be an excellent practice to get more experience and no limits to idea generation when free writing about a topic. The result is related to the statement from Elbow (1980) that one way to improve writing skills is to practice free writing regularly. Based on responses, the learners feel free writing can improve their writing skills.

In item 3 and item 4, most participants agreed, so it can be concluded that the learner can do the best to write freely. Then, in items 5 and 6, most participants agree with the statement. So, it can be concluded that free writing can make students feel like and enjoy it until they feel the assigned free writing is not difficult for them.

According to the student's responses from item 7 until item 12, they can know the effects of using free writing. Starting from item 7 and item 8, the learners agree with those statements where free writing affects their writing process. Free writing makes students confident to complete the free writing activities in 10 minutes or less and write fluently.

In items 9 and 10, most participants agree with the effect of free writing. Free writing affects them, starting from feeling more confident in their English writing and quickly writing more sentences. In items 11 and 12, free writing gives effect to students who like and want to do free writing more.

Based on the student's responses in item 13 and item 14, some factors impact the effectiveness of free writing in improving EFL students' writing skills. Some elements that start from media and material support free writing in improving EFL students' writing skills. Such as Photos, Images, subtopics, etc.

Based on all the responses, the highest percentages of answers from participants were in the seventh item. The total rate is 84.6%, comprising 22 participants' answers where they chose the agree option. Meanwhile, the lowest % of responses from participants in the third item, sixth item, seventh item, ninth item, and fourteenth item are 3.8%, consisting of just one student answering this option. The option includes the disagree option in the third item, the

strongly agree option in the sixth item, the strongly agree option in the seventh item, the strongly agree option in the ninth item, and the disagree option in the fourteenth item.

Based on the result, there have been similar results with previous studies. The research was done by (Chang, 2020) and (Park, 2020). In their development, the participants also positively responded to free writing when doing free writing activities in class. Their participant also perceived free writing as an effective way to teach writing, which helped improve their writing skills and make them confident and more motivated to write.

The gap between this research and previous studies starts from the research design. In this research, the researchers use quantitative descriptive and questionnaires for data collection, and prior studies (Park, 2020) used pre- and post-writing anxiety surveys, freewriting, pre- and post-essays, and student reflections collected as data. The total of participants is different in this research; the researchers have 26 participants randomly from EFL students from the English Education study program at Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kediri. (Park, 2020) have 30 participants. They were all majoring in English and enrolled in an EAP writing course at a Korean university.

The second study (Chang, 2020) used questionnaires about three sections. The total of participants is different in this research: 26 random EFL students from the English Education study program at Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kediri. (Chang, 2020) have 42 participants in Taiwan participated.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Free writing activities help student learning, and this research aims to know students' perceptions of the use of writing in EFL Classrooms. This research uses quantitative descriptive methods and provides valuable insight into the use and effectiveness of free writing in the EFL classroom. The research involved 26 EFL students from the English Education study program at Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kediri. In this research, the researcher. This research also aimed to answer research questions that consist of 1) What are student's perceptions of the use of free writing in EFL classrooms? 2) What are the effects of the use of free writing towards EFL students' writing skills?; 3) What factors influence the effectiveness of free writing in improving EFL students' writing skills?

Regarding the first research question, the results suggest that most EFL students positively sense using free writing in language learning. Student feedback and responses indicate that they generally agree that free writing is a beneficial teaching strategy. The items that answer this research question start from item number 1 until item number 6. Responding to the second research question, the findings highlight the positive impact of free writing on EFL students' writing skills. Students reported improvements in various aspects of writing, such as generating ideas, organising thoughts, and improving general writing skills. The items that answer this research question start from item number 7 until item number 12. The results of this research have practical implications for EFL educators, highlighting the importance of gathering freewriting activities into classroom practice. Teachers can maximise the benefits of free writing by creating a supportive environment that encourages creativity, encourages self-expression, and provides constructive feedback.

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