# A STUDY ON THE DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY SENIOR STUDENTS OF ENGLISH IN WRITING ESSAY TASK 2

**Dieu Huong Phung,**
**Nguyen Van Anh Le[i]**
Faculty of English,
University of Foreign Language Studies,
The University of Danang,
Vietnam

**Abstract:**

This study focuses on understanding the obstacles encountered by senior students at FE-UFLS-UD when writing task 2 of the C1.2 End-of-Course Test, along with the factors contributing to these challenges and proposed remedies. Data was gathered from 42 students who studied in the C1.2 Writing subject and took the C1.2 End-of-Course Test. The study employed an open-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, the study employed thematic coding and qualitative methods to analyze the collected data, revealing the presence of affective, cognitive, and linguistic difficulties and their underlying causes. Based on these findings, the study offers recommendations to address these issues. Importantly, the research encourages students to utilize the insights gained from the study to enhance their study approaches and prepare for both the C1.2 End-of-Course Test and the VSTEP exam. Additionally, teachers can take the findings as guidance to assist students to improve their writing skills effectively.

**Keywords:** difficulties, writing task 2, the C1.2 End-of-Course Test, solutions, senior students.

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, proficiency in academic writing has become a crucial aspect of the English language. It is important not only for achieving competence in the English language but also for succeeding in learning other disciplines where English serves as the primary medium of instruction. According to Bjork and Raisanen (1997), the essence of writing lies in the fact that it is a thinking tool. Bitchener & Basturkmen (2006) and Bunton (2005) highlight the significance of writing, particularly academic writing, as a crucial skill for students. At the university level, academic writing has consistently been acknowledged as one of the most daunting aspects of English learning for both ESL and EFL

---

[i] Correspondence: email pdh28022002@gmail.com, lnvanh@ufl.udn.vn

undergraduates and graduates. Additionally, writing is not just a skill utilized to document knowledge; it serves as a fundamental stage where learning and comprehension intersect (Taylor, 2009).

However, among the four domains of language skills, writing is often considered the most challenging for English learners (Grami, 2012). This underscores the need for learners to undertake cognitive analysis and linguistic synthesis (Lamia, 2016). Revising writing demands considerable time and effort, encompassing not only grammatical and syntactical aspects but also the organization of ideas. Crafting an essay poses its own set of challenges. When starting to make an essay, they will ponder the choice of the essay's topic and the optimal way to articulate thoughts. Furthermore, the objective of essay writing is to persuade the audience, which typically exists in situations characterized by a clash of beliefs and attitudes between the writer or speaker and the reader or audience (Hyland, 2002). According to certain researchers, writing emerges as one of the most difficult skills, demanding an intricate combination of neurological, physical, cognitive, and affective competencies (Murray *et al.*, 2006). This implies that writers must analyze the quality and clarity of their writing, arranging words thoughtfully while acknowledging the distinction between writing and spoken language. It is this intricate nature of writing that leads many people to say that writing is a difficult activity.

Besides, students often exhibit passivity in the classroom, primarily due to a lack of confidence in being a peer editor for their classmates' essays. Additionally, they struggle to revise the feedback from the teacher perfectly (Cheng, 2007). A recent study by Al-Khairy (2013) highlighted students' challenges with grammatical errors, improper vocabulary selection, irregular verbs, incorrect punctuation, and spelling inaccuracies. Furthermore, Le, Dang, and Nguyen (2022) emphasized the struggles encountered by students in linguistics, including difficulties with grammar and vocabulary, writing styles, organizing ideas, background knowledge and various other difficulties. In the process of writing, learners' writing performance might be affected by several factors. In general, the previous studies underscore the paramount importance of English writing as a skill for achieving proficiency, despite its renown as the most challenging due to various obstacles.

In this study, an immediate survey will be conducted on 42 senior students from the Faculty of English at the University of Foreign Language Studies, The University of Danang, who are enrolled in the C1.2 subject (Writing) in the first semester of 2023-2024 period. The anticipation is that about 644 senior students at FE-UFLS-UD will encounter difficulties in task 2 of the C1.2 End-of-Course Test, specifically focusing on essay writing. This course aims to give students exposure to a series of sample letters and essays as well as guided writing activities which assist them in using appropriate layout, register and language in a letter or an essay. Therefore, they are more confident and practice of writing using the theory learned. Additionally, students are encouraged to use acquired information to explore and express personal ideas, enhancing their writing skills in terms of text organization, idea development, and the use of supporting techniques and cohesive devices for coherence. Beyond skill development, through the course establishes

a strong foundation for students to undertake the Vietnamese Standardized Test of English Proficiency (VSTEP), which is a prerequisite for graduation. Significantly, task 2 in the C1.2 End-of-Course Test is similar to the structure of task 2 in the VSTEP writing format.

However, just a few studies have delved into the challenges associated with enhancing writing skills and the factors influencing writing performance. Thus, this qualitative investigation aimed to uncover the common obstacles faced by senior students during the 2021-2022 academic term at the Faculty of English, University of Foreign Language Studies, The University of Danang, particularly concerning the writing essay task 2 of the End-of-Course Test. The study also aimed to find out the factors that impact their performance in this task. Ultimately, the research proposes practical solutions to aid these students in enhancing their writing abilities.

## 1.1 Aims, Objectives and Research Questions

The study aims to identify and address the challenges faced by senior students of the Faculty of English at the University of Foreign Language Studies, The University of Danang, specifically in Writing Task 2 of the C1.2 End-of-Course Test. It seeks to assist students in recognizing the difficulties and reasons behind their writing problems, with the final goal of developing effective learning strategies for this task. The objectives of the study include identifying the difficulties encountered by students and examining the reasons behind these challenges.

The research questions focus on understanding the difficulties encountered by senior students and the reasons for these challenges in Writing Task 2 of the C1.2 End-of-Course Test. The study holds significance for English teachers, learner students, and researchers by offering insights into students' struggles and providing assistance in overcoming these difficulties. It aims to enhance students' understanding of their obstacles, motivate them to adopt suitable learning strategies, and offer recommended solutions to support their essay writing. Additionally, it provides valuable insights for educators to direct and assess students' writing proficiency.

## 2. Literature Review

## 2.1 Previous Studies Related to the Research
### 2.1.1 Papers Conducted in the World

Some researchers argue that writing is arguably one of the most challenging skills, demanding a complex blend of neurological, physical, cognitive, and affective competencies (Murray *et al.*, 2006). This implies that a writer must analyze whether his/her writing is good and understandable or not. It involves meticulous arrangement of words, coupled with the awareness that writing is different from speaking, contributing to the perception that writing is a challenging activity. In the realm of language skills, writing is frequently deemed the most challenging for English learners (Grami, 2012) because it demands cognitive analysis and linguistic synthesis (Lamia,

2016). The process of revising is time-consuming and demanding, extending beyond considerations of grammar and syntax to encompass the organization of ideas.

Numerous studies have delved into the factors impacting learners' writing performance, revealing a range of influences on their ability to produce written work. For instance, Al-Khairy (2013) highlighted issues such as grammatical errors, vocabulary inadequacies, irregular verb usage, punctuation inaccuracies, and spelling mistakes among students. Similarly, Alfaki (2015) identified various factors contributing to students' writing challenges, including lack of motivation, writing anxiety, and insufficient background knowledge. Additionally, Fanene (2021) found that low self-motivation, poor time management, inadequate reading skills, and limited exposure to academic discourses were prevalent obstacles encountered by tertiary-level students in academic writing.

In conclusion, researchers have identified factors contributing to these challenges that learners have coped with in the process of acquiring proficiency in English writing. Besides, the current body of literature review shows that previous research mainly focused on the quantitative method (Murray *et al.*, 2006) or mixed method (Grami, 2012) and (Lamia, 2016). There are few studies concentrated on qualitative methods to English major students, particularly senior students at FE-UFLS-UD. This group of students should be involved in this method for more generalized findings. Additionally, the prior studies also highlight difficulties in developing writing English skills, but the previous researchers did not investigate the problems of writing by the applicants which faced in writing essay task 2 of the End-of-Course Test and the reasons for making problems while the fact there were so many participants who made errors in writing essay task 2 of the End-of-Course Test.

## 2.1.2 Papers Conducted in Vietnam

In Vietnam, Quynh and Nguyen (2008) conducted research examining the writing challenges and practices among Vietnamese students. Through in-depth interviews, they found that participants often overlooked grammar and spelling errors in their essays. Similarly, Dang *et al.* (2020) identified various challenges faced by students in terms of linguistic competence, including difficulties with vocabulary, grammar, coherence, essay structure, and critical thinking application.

To investigate the difficulties encountered by freshmen majoring in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in writing skills, Phuong (2021) employed two questionnaires and an interview as research instruments to identify factors influencing the writing performance of English-majoring sophomores. The findings revealed that issues related to allotted time, background knowledge, idea organization, and the influence of the mother tongue were significant difficulties. Especially, among these challenges, the aspect of "allotted time" was the most significant problem for the learners. Similarly, Do and Le (2023) carried out on 104 English majors at a private university in Vietnam. The results show that Verb + Noun and Adjective + Noun are the two most common lexical collocation errors, which are attributed to learners' lack of competence, negative transfer,

synonym strategy, and approximation. The interview results suggest EFL learners do not understand collocations adequately.

However, previous studies have primarily focused on general writing challenges without specifically addressing the obstacles related to essay writing, particularly regarding task 2 essays. Researchers both globally and in Vietnam have explored and identified various difficulties encountered by students in writing. For instance, Al-Khairy (2013, 2015) and Fanene (2021) have investigated and highlighted several challenges faced by students in their writing efforts. However, there are few studies investigated on identified the challenges associated with writing task 2 of the C1.2 End-of-Course Test has been conducted. The study titled "Investigating the Challenges Faced by Senior students in Writing Essay Task 2 of the End-of-Course Test (EOCT) during the 2021-2022 Academic Year at the Faculty of English, University of Foreign Language Studies, The University of Danang" was undertaken to delve into the underlying reasons behind these difficulties and to offer assistance to English learners, especially senior students at the specified institution, in identifying and addressing their writing challenges. By providing practical solutions, the research aims to propose practical solutions to enhance their writing skills effectively. Hence, the researcher anticipates a positive impact on students' writing proficiency through the implementation of these solutions.

## 2.2 Theoretical Background
### 2.2.1 Definition of "Writing"
Various experts offer diverse definitions of writing. Elbow (1973) proposes a dual-step framework, focusing on establishing meaning before articulating it into written language. Rivers (1981) defines writing as conveying information or consecutively expressing original ideas. Brown (2001) sees writing as a thinking process, subject to meticulous planning and revisions. Tarigan (2008) views writing as a productive language activity for indirect communication. Byrne (1988) and Heaton (1990) emphasize the complexity of writing, involving grammatical mastery and conceptual thinking. Troyka, cited in Lauri (2011), defines writing as communicating a message with a specific purpose. Abu Rass (2015) highlights the challenges of balancing multiple aspects in writing. The study aligns with Tarigan's definition, emphasizing writing as a productive skill for indirect communication. Writing is crucial in modern life, characteristic of an educated person or nation, enabling individuals to articulate, analyze, argue, or persuade in an organized manner.

## 2.2.2 Definitions of Essay and the Basic Structure of Essay
### 2.2.2.1 Definitions of Essay
In Huxley's Collected Essays (1923), an essay is characterized as a short piece, while Cambridge Learner's Dictionary (2007) defines writing as producing words on a surface. Harmon and Holman's Handbook to Literature defines an essay as a moderately brief prose discussion. Zemach (2005) describes it as a collection of paragraphs focused on a single topic, typically consisting of at least three paragraphs. Oshima and Hogue (1981)

assert that an essay comprises an introductory paragraph, a body, and a concluding paragraph. Overall, essay writing involves producing a group of paragraphs on a single topic, consisting of a thesis statement and supporting paragraphs, to be comprehensible to readers.

### 2.2.2.2 The Basic Structure of Essay

While essays may vary in type, they frequently adhere to a consistent structure. As outlined by Peter, Samuel, Sean, and Yoko (2020), a standard English college essay, often referred to as a one-three-one or five-paragraph essay, typically consists of three primary sections: the introduction, body paragraphs containing supporting paragraphs, and a conclusion. They presented an overview of this conventional essay structure in the table below:

**Table 1:** The Basic Structure of Essay

| | |
|---|---|
| **Introductory paragraph** | • Hook: The first sentence (or sentences) of an essay should catch the reader's attention<br>• Building sentences: the following sentences should provide background information to give readers some context about the topic.<br>• Thesis statement: it presents the essay topic and the writer's position on that topic |
| **Body paragraphs** | • Topic sentence 1: The first sentence of a body paragraph expresses the topic of the paragraph and provides a controlling idea about the topic.<br>• Supporting sentences 1: present logical thoughts, evidence, and explanations in support of the controlling idea.<br>• Concluding sentence 1: The paragraph may end with a concluding thought on the paragraph topic. It may also show a transition to the next paragraph. |
| | • Topic sentence 2<br>• Supporting sentences 2<br>• Concluding sentence 2 |
| | • Topic sentence 3<br>• Supporting sentences 3<br>• Concluding sentence 3 |
| **Concluding paragraph** | • Restated thesis: the thesis is restated in words different from those in the introduction.<br>• Summary of main ideas: The main ideas from each of the body paragraphs are summarized as a reminder to the reader.<br>• Final thought: for example, by stating an opinion, a solution, or a prediction. |

### 2.2.3 Factors that Cause Writing Difficulties to Learners
### 2.2.3.1 Lack of Background Knowledge

Spratt (2005) and Weigle (2002) highlight the distinction between writing and speaking, emphasizing their differences in textual features, socio-cultural norms, usage patterns, and cognitive processes. While both are productive skills, writing serves as a cognitive tool to stimulate thinking processes and organize ideas, making it a crucial aspect of language learning.

The lack of background knowledge, as described by Proverb (1990), Biemans, and Simons (1996), and Brody (2001), is identified as an obstacle to effective writing. Knudson (1992) underscores its importance in academic writing, stating that students must write essays on topics they are knowledgeable about to avoid unsubstantiated statements.

Insufficient background knowledge limits students' ability to express perspectives on new topics, resulting in less coherent essays.

Moreover, vocabulary plays a crucial role in academic writing, as noted by Thornbury (2002) and Zughoul and Husain (1985). A deficiency in vocabulary poses a significant challenge for learners, restricting their capacity to articulate ideas effectively. Grammar proficiency is also essential, as emphasized by Philips (1979), Coghill, Magendanz (2003), and Rajoo (2010). A strong command of grammar enables students to craft grammatically accurate sentences, ensuring proper composition with meaning. Mastery of tenses and sentence structures is imperative for constructing well-formed paragraphs.

Arifin and Tasai (2006) define a paragraph as a collection of sentences that collectively address a specific idea or topic. Coherence, achieved through the effective use of cohesive devices, ensures the logical interconnection between sentences and paragraphs. Additionally, mechanics, including spelling and punctuation, are crucial for readability and overall writing quality, as highlighted by Harmer (2004). Proficiency in correct mechanics ensures that sentences are readable and align appropriately with their intended meaning.

Overall, developing proficiency in writing requires a combination of skills, including background knowledge, vocabulary, grammar, paragraph organization, and mechanics. By improving these skills, learners can express ideas clearly and concisely, facilitating effective communication in written form.

### 2.2.3.2 Lack of Learners' Motivation

Brookes and Grundy (2017) highlight motivation as pivotal in developing writing skills, as motivated learners exhibit greater interest and participation. Davies (1998) and Silva (1997) advocate for topic choice autonomy to enhance student motivation. Lipstein and Renninger (2007) emphasize the importance of a positive attitude, leading to practical goal setting and feedback seeking. Additionally, the paragraph discusses the complexity of writing, including lexical challenges (Thornbury, 2002; Zughoul and Husain, 1985), grammatical proficiency (Philips, 1979; Coghill and Magendanz, 2003; Rajoo, 2010), paragraph organization (Arifin and Tasai, 2006), and mechanical aspects (Harmer, 2004). Students dedicating substantial time to writing tend to develop writing skills more rapidly than those allocating less time to it. Consequently, familiarity with specific content types specific the foundation for writing abilities and significantly influences students' writing abilities.

### 2.2.3.3 Additional Problems

Brown (2004) emphasizes the importance of relevant and comprehensive content in effective writing, which involves organizing and developing ideas coherently. Hedge (2005) highlights paragraph unity, coherence, and cohesion as essential aspects of organizational skills in writing. Additionally, language use, including grammar and sentence complexity, is crucial for constructing coherent texts (Brown, 2004). Many

students struggle with organizing ideas, particularly distinguishing between topic and supporting sentences, which affects essay cohesion. Translating ideas from Vietnamese to English also poses challenges, leading to redundant content. Despite essay length, these issues hinder students from achieving high marks. The significance of addressing these challenges is underscored by the limited research in this field, particularly regarding the C1.2 End-of-Course Test Writing Task 2, which holds substantial weight in overall assessment scores (Brown, 2004). This highlights the need for focused research to address specific writing difficulties faced by senior students.

### 2.2.4 Factors Affecting Writing Performance

The issue of writing anxiety among students stems from various factors, including lack of practice, inadequate time, and confusion stemming from teachers' feedback. According to Hettich (1994), writing apprehension is a significant concern for both teachers and learners. Grabe and Kaplan (1996) emphasize the importance of practice in developing writing skills, suggesting that proficiency directly correlates with the amount of practice students engage in. Guantum and Chakraverty (2002) highlight the challenge of inadequate time for writing tasks, which affects students' ability to brainstorm, organize, draft, and revise their work. Carson (2001) argues that proper writing activities require sufficient time for proofreading, rewriting, and organizing ideas. Additionally, Zamel (1985) notes that students may feel confused by teachers' feedback, which can be brief or ambiguous, impacting their confidence in their writing skills. Graham (2008) criticizes English teachers for not providing adequate guidance on writing skills, leading to students feeling shy or unconfident in seeking clarification. Chou (2011) finds that students may hesitate to ask for clarification from teachers, while Can (2009) suggests that conflicting feedback from instructors further undermines students' confidence. Overall, anxiety significantly hinders the learning process and impacts writing skills, emphasizing the importance of focusing on self-expression, idea coherence, meeting expectations, boosting confidence, and finding enjoyment in academic writing (Zhang, 2001; Hilleson, 1996).

### 2.2.5 The Basic Structure of the C1.2 End-of-Course Test

The structure of the C1.2 End-of-Course Test at the Faculty of English, University of Foreign Language Studies, University of Danang, primarily evaluates writing skills, constituting 60% of the total score at the C1 level. This assessment includes two sections:
- Part 1: Letter writing (20 minutes),
- Part 2: Essay writing (40 minutes).

The test aims to assess students' ability to produce clear, well-structured texts on complex topics, showcasing proficiency in organizing extended discourse, expressing opinions, justifying viewpoints, and presenting original ideas (Faculty of English, University of Foreign Language Studies, University of Danang).

## 2.2.6. Writing the C1.2 End-of-Course Test Assessment Criteria and Rubrics

**Table 2:** Cited Rubric for the final test-C1.2 (Compiled by Ministry of Education and Training)

| Score | Test Fulfilment | Organization | Vocabulary | Grammar |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | - Fully and effectively meet the requirements of the assignment<br>- Present a fully developed piece of writing with appropriate, expanded, and well-substantiated ideas. | - Organizes information and idea logically.<br>- Uses a variety of cohesive devices and organizational structures flexibly.<br>- Uses paragraphing sufficiently and appropriately | - Uses a very wide range of vocabulary, including less common words, accurately and flexibly.<br>- Shows full control over writing style and collocation, but there may still be some inconsistencies.<br>- Almost no errors, or only 1-2 unintentional errors. | - Uses a wide range of structures precisely.<br>- Errors are very rare with just one or two minor slips. |
| 9 | - Covers all the requirements of the task sufficiently<br>- Presents a clear point of view throughout the response.<br>- Presents a fully developed piece of writing with relevant, extended, and well-supported ideas. | - Organizes information and ideas coherently.<br>- Uses a variety of cohesive devices and organizational structures.<br>- Uses paragraphing sufficiently and appropriately. | - Uses a wide range of vocabulary, including less common words, accurately.<br>- Shows good control over writing style and collocation, but there are still some mistakes.<br>- Non-systematic errors or non-impeding errors. | - Uses a variety of simple and complex structures precisely.<br>- The vast majority of sentences are error-free.<br>- Non-systematic errors or non-impeding errors. |
| 8 | - Covers all the requirements of the task.<br>- Presents a generally point of view throughout the response.<br>- Develops main ideas with most relevant details. | - Organizes information and idea precisely.<br>- Uses a range of cohesive devices appropriately, although there may be some under-over use.<br> - Uses paragraphing relatively well. | - Uses precisely a good range of vocabulary including less common words.<br>- Shows relatively good control over writing style and collocation.<br>- Non-systematic errors or non-impeding errors. | - Uses a range of simple and complex structures with good control.<br>- Most sentences are error-free.<br>- Non- systematic errors or non-impeding errors. |
| 7 | - Covers all the requirements of the task.<br>- Presents a generally point of view throughout the response. But in some parts, the conclusion may be repetitive or unclear.<br>- Develops main ideas with most relevant details, but one or two ideas may be incompletely developed or unclear. | - Organizes information and idea precisely.<br>- Uses many linking words and linking devices in sentences and between sentences appropriately, but sometimes uses them incorrectly.<br>- Uses paragraphing not logical. | - Uses precisely a good range of vocabulary.<br>- Uses less common words but can be used incorrectly.<br>- Non-impeding errors. | - Uses a range of simple and complex structures.<br>- Some sentences make mistakes, but they rarely lead to misunderstandings. |

| Score | Test Fulfilment | Organization | Vocabulary | Grammar |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | - Covers almost all the requirements of the task.<br>- Presents a generally point of view throughout the response. But in some parts, the conclusion may be repetitive or unclear.<br>- Covers most of the main points, but some details may not be relevant.<br>- Develops main ideas with most relevant details, but some ideas may be incompletely developed or unclear. | - Organizes information and idea precisely.<br>- Uses many linking words and linking devices in sentences and between sentences appropriately, but sometimes uses them incorrectly.<br>- Uses paragraphing relatively good. | - Uses precisely a good range of vocabulary.<br>- Uses less common words but most of them can be used incorrectly.<br>- Non-impeding errors. | - Uses a range of simple and complex structures.<br>- Some sentences make mistakes, but they rarely lead to misunderstandings. |
| 5 | - Covers half of all the requirements of the task.<br>- Presents a generally point of view throughout the response, but it is not clearly and conclusions may not be drawn.<br>- Presents some main ideas, but some ideas may be incompletely developed; may have inappropriate details. | - Organizes information and idea precisely.<br>- Uses some prominent linking words and linking devices in sentences and between sentences appropriately.<br>- Uses paragraphing not good or the paragraph division is inconsistent. | - Uses the minimum amount of words.<br>- Makes impeding errors. | - Good control of simple structures.<br>- Uses some simple and complex structures, but most of them are errors.<br>- Some sentences make mistakes, non-impeding errors. |
| 4 | - Covers part of all the requirements of the task.<br>- Presents a generally point of view throughout the response, but it is not clearly and conclusions may not be drawn.<br>- Presents some main ideas, but they are not fully developed with appropriate details. | - Organizes information and ideas.<br>- Uses some prominent linking words and linking devices in sentences and between sentences, but sometimes repeated or inaccurate.<br>- Uses paragraphing not good or the paragraph division is not suitable. | - Controls simple vocabulary.<br>- Makes quite a few errors and makes impeding errors. | - Controls the simple structure.<br>- Uses some simple and complex structures, but most of them are errors.<br>- Some sentences make mistakes. |
| 3 | - Not fully answer any requirements of the question.<br>- Not express opinions.<br>- Presents few ideas, but most of these ideas are not developed. | Presents information and ideas in a series of simple sentences linked together by only basic linking words. | - Uses a limited amount of words.<br>- Makes frequent mistakes that change meaning. | - Uses correctly some simple structures.<br>- Makes basic mistakes that change the meaning. |
| 2 | - Not meet any requirements of the question.<br>- Not express opinions.<br>- Presents one or two main ideas, but these ideas are not developed. | - There was little sign of organization. | - Uses a very limited amount of words.<br>- Makes a lot of mistakes, that change the meaning. | - Writes a few phrases that have been memorized before.<br>- Appears a lot of errors and changes the meaning. |

| Score | Test Fulfilment | Organization | Vocabulary | Grammar |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | -The article is completely inappropriate or incomprehensible. | - No sign of the organizing. | - Can only write a few single words. | - Cannot write in sentences. |
| 0 | - Skip the exam. <br> - Not write any words. <br> - Rewrite an article from memory. | | | |

Special cases: Candidates only rewrite so that the article or answer is not related to the topic or goes off topic: Score 1.

According to the cited rubric by the Ministry of Education and Training, students can get from score 0 to 10, taking into account four key elements: task fulfillment, organization, vocabulary, and grammar. Specifically, the criteria for each score are different based on:

- The extent to which a diverse range of grammatical structures is used accurately and flexibly in the writing.
- The extent to which a broad spectrum of vocabulary and idioms related to the topics is employed.
- The degree of idea development, including the smooth elaboration of details, support for ideas with examples, and well-structured or noticeable paragraphing.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

This research employs a qualitative approach to investigate the challenges encountered in writing Task 2 of the C1.2 End-of-Course Test among senior students at FE-UFLS-UD. Following Creswell's constructivist perspective, the study directly engages with participants through open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Data collection involves the online distribution of questionnaires via Google Forms, followed by interviews conducted in the participants' mother tongue to ensure clarity. The study comprises two main stages: the open-ended survey and formal interviews. Through qualitative analysis, the research aims to understand the nature of students' difficulties and propose effective solutions, with interviews providing deeper insights into the investigated issues (Creswell, 1994).

### 3.2 Research Method

This study applies various methods to gather qualitative data for its research questions: The open-ended questionnaire serves to find out students' perspectives and attitudes towards English writing activities, with a focus on practicing for task 2 of the C1.2 End-of-Course Test. Additionally, the questionnaire helps identify the difficulties students encounter in task 2 of the C1.2 End-of-Course Test and the root causes of these problems. This methodology was chosen for its efficacy in swiftly gathering data from a broad sample size, chosen for its efficiency in collecting data from a large number of people in a short time. Document analysis was employed to grasp the intricacies of writing performance and learner challenges. Open-ended questionnaires allowed students to

freely express their thoughts. Additionally, semi-structured interviews provided deeper insights into students' perspectives, offering a comprehensive understanding of their experiences. Follow-up questions were utilized during interviews to elaborate on participants' responses. The study employs qualitative data analysis techniques within the framework of the open-ended questionnaire to analyze the gathered data thoroughly.

## 3.4 Data Collecting Procedure

In the current study, the researcher employed two research instruments, an open-ended questionnaire, and a semi-structured interview, to address the research questions. Initially, participants were selected for data collection. The questionnaire, distributed via Google Forms, aimed to gather insights into senior students' attitudes towards difficulties in English essay writing at FE-UFLS-UD. Following Creswell's content analysis procedure (2009), the qualitative methodology involved five steps: systematic organization of data, thorough review for understanding, coding for categorization, identification of themes, and data interpretation drawing on existing literature or theories.

Following that, face-to-face interviews were conducted to gather additional information and clarify responses from the questionnaire. The interview transcripts underwent initial coding, listing identified codes, and writing memos to aid second-level coding. Qualitative content analysis involves interpreting data and drawing conclusions. The study aimed to establish patterns in students' dynamic motivational systems, addressing the research questions and discussing findings based on the literature. Finally, all data from questionnaires and interviews were compiled for further analysis. The table included in the study presents the research questions, research instruments, and participant counts utilized for each research question. (Authors referenced: Creswell, 2009).

## 3.5 Population and Sampling

In the population and sampling section, the study targets students enrolled in the C1.2 subject who participated in the C1.2 End-of-Course Test at FE-UFLS-UD, comprising about 42 senior students. A combination of probability and convenience sampling methods was employed to select participants. Probability sampling, specifically random selection, was used to gather data from 42 students through an open-ended questionnaire. Conversely, convenience sampling was applied to select fifteen students for interviews based on their availability and information-rich responses to the questionnaire. The sampling method aimed to ensure representation and gather qualitative insights from a subset of the student population.

The selection of interview participants followed a criterion sampling approach, as outlined by Patton (2001), wherein participants meeting specific criteria were chosen. These criteria included comprehensive completion of the questionnaire, provision of detailed responses, and willingness to participate in interviews. Participants were native Vietnamese speakers aged 21 to 22, with a minimum of 5 years of formal English training

and experience with the C1.2 subject and End-of-Course Test. Their enrollment in a Bachelor's Degree program at FE-UFLS-UD ensured a thorough understanding of essay writing challenges.

Data collection occurred in two stages: an open-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire, based on literature review findings, aimed to address two research questions and collect detailed responses efficiently. Interviews provided deeper insights into students' perspectives on factors affecting their writing performance. Conducted in Vietnamese, the interviews were later translated, validated by English Faculty graduates, and analyzed using qualitative techniques alongside questionnaire data. Each interview session, lasting around 30 minutes, was recorded and focused on participants' experiences with essay writing and reasons for encountering difficulties. Follow-up questions were used to probe further into responses, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of students' self-regulated learning in writing performance.

Overall, the research employed a thorough approach to gather insights into students' experiences and challenges in essay writing, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a holistic understanding of the phenomenon (Patton, 2001).

## 3.6 Data Analysis

The data encounter thematic analysis, beginning with open-ended questionnaires and individual interviews. Both note-taking and audio recording were utilized during interviews, with transcripts later transcribed for analysis. Following Corder's approach, the analysis involved familiarization with data, code generation, establishing clear headings, reviewing codes, and refining titles before interpretation. This systematic process, outlined by Kaharuddin *et al.* (2018), allowed for the identification, classification, and explanation of data, facilitating a coherent and compelling presentation of findings.

## 3.7 Reliability and Validity

Reliability ensured through meticulous survey design and Thematic coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006), is evaluated using Cohen's kappa for interrater reliability. Validity is ensured by aligning themes with research goals and providing transparent descriptions of data collection and analysis methods, supported by feedback from thesis supervisors.

## 4. Finding and Discussion

### 4.1 Findings
### 4.1.1 Challenges Encountered in Writing Task 2: "Write an essay..."
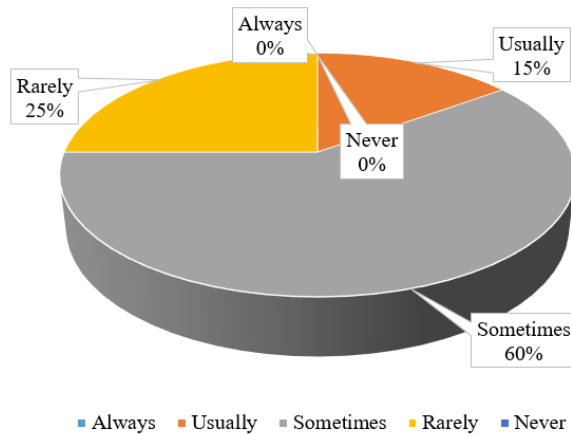


*Figure 1. Frequency of practice Task 2 in the C1.2 subject at home*

The diagram discusses students' attitudes toward Task 2 in the C1.2 subject, highlighting their frequency of practice outside the classroom and their perspectives on the task. According to Figure 1, the majority of participants (60%) only practice Task 2 "Sometimes," indicating inconsistency in their approach. Reasons for this inconsistency include a lack of understanding about the importance of regular practice, emotional factors like low motivation, and the belief that occasional practice is sufficient. The diagram emphasizes the significance of consistent practice for improving writing skills and performing well on the test. Figure 2 illustrates that 68% of students perceive the requirement to "Write an essay..." as "Normal," indicating that they encounter challenges in this aspect of the test and students aiming to reach an advanced level (C1) often encounter difficulties in meeting the linguistic demands of the test. This suggests challenges in this aspect of the test due to linguistic demands, unfamiliarity with assessment criteria, inadequate preparation, and time limitations. Overall, students' difficulties in Task 2 of the End-of-course Test result from various factors such as linguistic proficiency, unfamiliarity with test requirements, inadequate preparation, and time limitation, all of which collectively hinder their progress in this aspect.
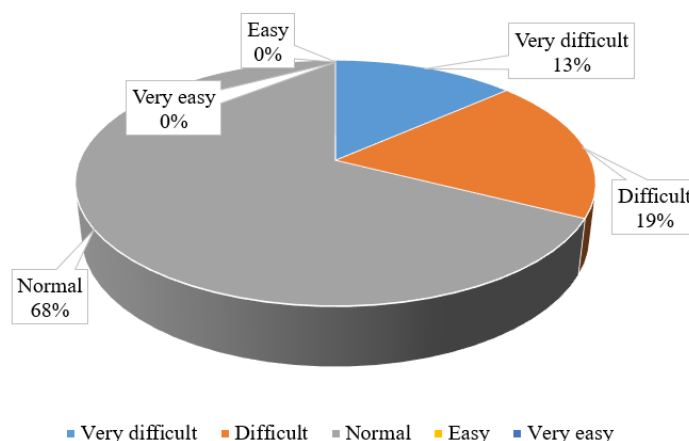
*Figure 2. Students' Attitude toward Task 2 in the End-of-course Test.*

### 4.1.2 Difficulties in Writing Task 2: "Write an essay..."?

The study's findings, based on both questionnaire responses and interviews, unveil several challenges confronting participants in their writing endeavors. These encompass:

- **Lack of Background Knowledge**

Background knowledge emerged as a significant hurdle for participants, particularly in tackling discussion essays. For example, Hung (P1) said that:

*"There were instances when the essay prompt required me to discuss complex societal issues or historical events that I wasn't familiar with."* (P1)

Similarly, Hang (P2) expressed how essential background knowledge is in essay writing.

*"I struggled to provide comprehensive explanations and lacked confidence in addressing the intricacies of the subject matter."* (P2)

Khoa (P3) also viewed background knowledge as an essential factor affecting her writing performance.

*"Lacking background knowledge can hinder the ability to establish coherent connections among ideas, ultimately affecting the overall quality and coherence of the written work."* (P3)

Examples from respondents illustrate instances where prompts required delving into unfamiliar topics or complex issues, leading to difficulties in providing comprehensive explanations and relevant examples. The importance of background knowledge in essay writing was underscored, emphasizing its role in constructing coherent arguments and persuading readers effectively.

- **Lack of Grammar and Vocabulary**

In terms of grammar and vocabulary, participants cited various challenges such as confusion over grammatical structures, misuse of words, and struggles in finding synonyms. Minh (P4) said:

*"Despite having a general understanding of grammar, there are occasions when I misapply certain parts of speech."* (P4)

Thinh (P7) shared his views as follows.

*"Sometimes, I struggled to find synonyms or alternative phrases to avoid repetition in my writing. This affected the flow and coherence of my essays." (P7)*

Mai (P8) also stated the lack of vocabulary as one of her biggest challenges when writing essay.

*"There were instances when I struggled to find the right words to express my ideas effectively. This led to repetitive language use and limited my ability to convey nuanced arguments."* (P8)

Limited exposure to diverse grammatical structures and the influence of native language grammar rules were identified as contributing factors. Similarly, deficiencies in topical vocabulary were attributed to factors like limited exposure to collocational patterns and inadequate practice in using words in meaningful contexts.

- **Idea Arrangement and Writing Anxiety**

Organizing ideas and managing writing anxiety emerged as common difficulties among participants. Fear of judgment or criticism led to meticulous self-editing, disrupting the natural flow of thoughts.

*"I often had multiple ideas in mind but struggled to arrange them coherently within the essay structure. This sometimes led to unconnected paragraphs and a lack of clarity in my arguments."* (P9)

*"The pressure to perform well and meet the expectations of the test often made me feel buried and uncertain about how to approach the task. This anxiety sometimes delayed my ability to think critically and express my ideas effectively."* (P10)
*"I would often feel stressed about whether my arguments were strong enough or if I was adequately addressing the essay cause."* (P11)

Overall, participants struggled with organizing ideas and managing writing anxiety due to unfamiliarity with essay structure. They stressed the importance of

instruction in writing strategies, a supportive environment, practice, and feedback for overcoming these challenges, alongside linguistic improvements, to enhance writing skills holistically.

### 4.1.3 Factors Affecting the Writing Performance in task 2 of the End-of-Course Test

- **Lack of Writing Practice**

Insufficient writing practice hampers skill development and essay quality. Consistent practice aids in constructing coherent essays, and enhancing proficiency, fluency, and confidence, crucial for succeeding in academic assessments.

Phuong (P12) shared her views as follows.

*"I don't write essays frequently outside of class, so when it comes to the test, I struggle to organize my thoughts and structure my essay effectively."* (P12)

Similarly, Vuong (P14) mentioned the reason why she encountered the factor.

*"I find it difficult to find the time to practice writing essays regularly. As a result, I feel unprepared and stressed during the test."* (P14)

- **Problems Related to Time Management**

In the context of writing essay task 2 of the End-of-Course Test, problems related to time management encompass various challenges that students encounter when allocating and utilizing their time effectively during the writing process. For example, Hang (P2) said that:

*"I end up rushing through the writing process and don't have sufficient time to revise and edit my work."* (P2)

Anh (P5) shared his point of view on this factor as follows.

*"I spend too much time on one aspect and then have to rush through the rest".* (P5)

Therefore, students struggle to balance idea generation, organization, and writing, leading to rushed essays.

- **Problems Related to Teacher's Feedback**

Teacher feedback is essential for guiding students' writing development by providing constructive criticism and reinforcement of strengths. However, inadequate feedback can hinder progress.

Mai (P8) also stated the teacher's feedback as one of her challenges when writing essays.

*"I wish my teacher would give more detailed feedback on my essays. It's hard to know what specific aspects of my writing I should focus on without specific guidance."* (P8)

(P10) and (P2) shared their views as follows.

*"I feel discouraged when I receive negative feedback without any positive reinforcement. It would be helpful to receive praise for what I'm doing well alongside constructive criticism."* (P10)

*"I often feel confused by the feedback provided by my teacher. It's sometimes too general, and I struggle to understand exactly what I need to improve."* (P2)

From that, effective teacher feedback is essential for students' writing development, as it provides specific guidance and motivation. Inadequate feedback can hinder progress, while prompt, tailored feedback empowers students to excel in writing tasks. Therefore, the quality and impact of teacher feedback play a crucial role in shaping students' writing skills and achievements.

- **Additional Problems**

The Writing Essay Task 2 of the End-of-Course Test presents various challenges for students, including comprehending complex prompts, adhering to specific essay structures, and overcoming language proficiency issues. Students may struggle with generating relevant content, crafting concise thesis statements, and maintaining coherence and cohesion in their essays. In summary, these challenges underscore the multifaceted nature of assessing writing proficiency and emphasize the need for targeted instruction and support to equip students with the necessary skills and confidence to excel in task 2 and meet the demands of the End-of-Course Test effectively.

## 4.2 Possible Suggestions

The analysis reveals that students encounter linguistic, affective, and performance-related challenges in writing task 2 of the C1.2 End-of-Course Test. Overcoming these obstacles is crucial for improved performance. Three key elements for enhancing writing skills include self-assessment, patience, and regular reflection on practice. Learners are advised to assess their writing ability autonomously, seek guidance, and evaluate their progress regularly. Moreover, students should allocate sufficient time to gradually improve their writing skills in line with the C1 level criteria. Regular practice outside the classroom, utilizing various online resources, participating in writing workshops, and enrolling in additional writing courses are recommended strategies for improvement. Websites such as Purdue OWL and Hemingway Editor offer valuable writing guidance, while platforms like Breaking News English provide topical knowledge and vocabulary enhancement. Through group practice sessions and peer feedback, collaborative learning fosters skill development and confidence. Furthermore, practicing with online VSTEP

Test helps students simulate exam conditions and evaluate their performance. Improving grammatical proficiency through systematic learning and targeted practice is essential for producing clear and coherent essays. By implementing these strategies, learners can address their writing challenges and enhance their performance in writing task 2 of the C1.2 End-of-Course Test.

### 4.3 Discussion

The discussion addresses research questions concerning challenges in writing task 2 of the C1.2 End-of-Course Test and factors influencing writing proficiency. Students face hurdles such as lack of background knowledge, grammar and vocabulary issues, poor idea organization, and writing anxiety, as highlighted by Phuong (2021), Dang *et al.* (2020), Phan and Nguyen (2023), Murray *et al.* (2006), and Fanene (2021). These findings underscore the need for strategies to address these obstacles and enhance students' writing competence. Overall, the research aligns with existing literature and offers insights into potential solutions for learners.

## 5. Conclusion

The study employs a qualitative approach to uncover challenges faced by senior students, especially in writing task 2 of the C1.2 End-of-Course Test, offering potential solutions. These findings not only benefit future researchers and students seeking to improve their writing skills but also provide insights for both teachers and students to address specific writing problems. Despite limitations like a lack of references and limited topic knowledge, the study aims to be a valuable resource. Moreover, future research could enhance understanding by incorporating additional instruments like observations in writing skills classes.

## 6. Limitations

The study encountered several limitations that could affect the reliability and breadth of its findings. Firstly, the absence of gender analysis overlooks potential differences in writing challenges between male and female students, limiting the study's comprehensiveness. Secondly, time constraints may have hindered the thorough exploration of proposed solutions. Focusing only on task 2 neglects insights from other test sections, diminishing understanding of overall student performance. Additionally, limitations such as lack of references and the researcher's limited expertise may impact reliability. Incomplete questionnaire responses further challenge credibility. Nonetheless, the study aims to offer valuable insights for educators and students despite these constraints.

**Conflict of Interest Statement**
The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

**About the Author(s)**

**Dieu Huong Phung**, Senior Student, Faculty of English, University of Foreign Language Studies, The University of Danang, Vietnam. Areas of Interest: Language Teaching, Foreign Language, Sociolinguistics, Second Language Acquisition.

**Nguyen Van Anh Le (PhD)**, Lecturer, Faculty of English, University of Foreign Language Studies, The University of Danang, Vietnam. Areas of Interest: Phonetics, Phonology, Linguistics, Sociolinguistics, Second Language Acquisition.

**References**

Abu Rass, R. (2015). Education Challenges Face Arab Students in Writing Well-Developed Paragraphs, *English Language Teaching*, Vol. 8, No. 10.

Ackerman, J. (2006). *Motivation for writing through blogs (Master of Arts Thesis)*. Graduate College, Bowling Green State University.

Adedokun, O. A., Parker, L. C., Henke, J. N., & Burgess, W. D. (2017). Student perceptions of a 21st century learning space. *Journal of Learning Spaces, 6(1), 1-13.* http://libjournal.uncg.edu/jls/article/view/1339.

Al-Eiadeh, A. R., Al-Sobh, M. A., Al-Zoubi, S. M., & Al-Khasawneh, F. (2016). Improving English language speaking skills of Ajloun National University students. *International Journal of English and Education*, *5*(3), 181-195.

Alfares, N. (2017). Benefits and difficulties of learning in group work in EFL classes in Saudi Arabia. *English Language Teaching*, 10(7), 247-256. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v10n7p247

Akyol, H., & Aktaş, N. (2018). The relationship between fourth-grade primary school students' story-writing skills and their motivation to write. *Universal Journal of Educational Research,6*(12), 2772-2779. Doi: 10.13189/ ujer.2018.061211.

Alfaki, M. (2015). University students' English writing problems: Diagnosis and remedy. *International Journal of English Language Teaching*, *3*(3), 40-52.

Al-Khairy, M. (2013). Saudi English-Major undergraduates' academic writing problems: A Taif University perspective. *English Language Teaching, 6*. Doi:10.5539/eltv6n6p1.

Arifin, E. Z. dan S. Amran Tasai (2009). *Cermat Berbahasa Indonesia untuk Perguruan Tinggi*. Jakarta: Akademika Pressindo.

Ağın-Haykır, H. (2012). *The relationship between the skills of reading comprehension and writing of the 6th, 7th and the 8th grade students* [Unpublished MA thesis]. Ahi Evran University.

Benson, P. (2013). *Teaching and researching: Autonomy in language learning*. Routledge.

Biemans, H. J., & Simons, P. R.-J. (1996). Contact-2: a computer-assisted instructional strategy for promoting conceptual change. *Instructional Science*, 24(2), 157-176.

Bitchener, J., & Basturkmen, H. (2006). Perceptions of the difficulties of postgraduate L2 thesis students writing the discussion section. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, *5*, 4-18.

Bjork, L. & Raisanen, C. (1997). *Academic Writing: A University Writing Course*. Student Literature.

Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo, Tài liệu "Hướng dẫn áp dụng Định dạng đề thi đánh giá năng lực sử dụng tiếng Anh từ bậc 3 đến bậc 5 theo Khung năng lực ngoại ngữ 6 bậc dùng cho Việt Nam trong việc xây dựng đề thi và chấm thi (Phê duyệt kèm theo Quyết định số: 730/QĐ-BGDĐT ngày 11 tháng 3 năm 2015 của Bộ trưởng Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo).

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77-101.

Brody, S. (2001). Teaching reading language, letters & thought (2nd edition). *Milford, NH: Larc Publishing.*

Brookes, A., & Grundy, S. (2017). Motivation is the key element in acquiring writing skills. *International Journal of Teaching and Education, 3*(7), 31-24. https://doi.org/10.20472/ijte.2017.003.007

Brown, H.D. (2001). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy.* New York: Pearson Education.

Can, G. (2009). *A model for doctoral students' perceptions and attitudes toward written feedback for academic writing (Unpublished doctoral dissertation)*. Utah State University.

Cheng, C. M. (2007). Improving Interaction and Feedback with Computer Mediated Communication in Asian EFL Composition Classes: A Case Study, *Taiwan J. TESOL*,4(1),65–97, 2007.

Chou, L. (2011). An investigation of Taiwanese doctoral students' academic writing at a U.S. University. *Higher Education Studies*, 1(2), 47-60.

Coghill, Jeffrey and Stacy Magendanz (2003). *English Grammar.* New York: Wiley Publishing, Inc.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Dang, T.H., Chau, T.H., & Tra, T.Q. (2020). A study on the difficulties in writing argumentative essays of English-majored sophomores at Tay Do University, Vietnam. *Journal on English Language Teaching, 6*.

Dang, T. B. D., Le, V. L., & Nguyen, K. (2022). *Some common problems in writing essays of English majored sophomores at a university in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam*. *European Journal of English Language Teaching, 7*(3), 148.

Davies, Lawe (1998). *Coherence in Tertiary Students' Writing: Writers' Skills and Readers Expectations*, (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Western Australia).

Do, N. H. M., & Le, Q. T. (2023). Lexical Collocation Errors in Essay Writing: A Study into Vietnamese EFL Students and Their Perceptions. *International Journal of Language Instruction*, 2(2), 1–20. https://doi.org/10.54855/ijli.23221.

Elbow, P. (1973). *Writing without teachers* (pp.12–75). New York, NY: *Oxford University Press.*

El Said, A. M. (2006). The Effect of Using a Programme Based on the Writing Workshop Approach on the Writing skills and on the writing Apprehension of the second year Preparatory Student. Unpublished MA.

Fanene, N. (2021). A study of the academic writing problems of New Zealand-born Samoan students in tertiary institutions. *Auckland University of Technology.*

Graham, S., Morphy, P., Harris, K. R., Fink-Chorzempa, B., Saddler, B., Moran, S., & Mason, L. (2008). Teaching spelling in the primary grades: A national survey of instructional practices and adaptations. *American Educational Research Journal, 45*, 796–825.

Grami, G. M. A. (2012). Online collaborative writing for ESL learners using blogs and feedback checklists. *English Language Teaching, 5*(10), 43–48. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v5n10p43.

Heaton, J. B. (1990). *Writing English Language Test*. Longman.

Heaton, J. B. 1975. *Writing English Language Test*. London: Longman Group. https://search.worldcat.org/title/writing-english-language-Test-a-practical-guide-for-teachers-of-english-as-a-second-or-foreign-language/oclc/2407762 [December 25th 2013].

Hettich, R. L. (1994). *Writing apprehension: A critique (Doctoral dissertation)*. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. Retrieved from http://210.48.222.80/proxy.pac/docview/304130502?accountid=44024.

Hilleson, M. (1996). I want to talk with them, but I don't want them to hear. In K.M. Bailey & D. Nunan (Eds.), *Voices from the Language Classroom* (pp. 248-277). Cambridge: CUP.

Huxley, A. (1923). Collected Essays. Preface.

Hyland, K. (2002a). Authority and invisibility: Authorial identity in academic writing. *Journal of Pragmatics, 34*(8), pp. 1091-1112.

Kaharuddin, A., Arafah, B., and Latif, I. (2018). *Discourse Analysis for English Language Teaching*. Germany: LAP Lambert.

Knudson, R. (1992). Development and application of a writing attitude survey for grades 1 to 3. *Psychological Reports, 70*, 711-20. Doi: 10.2466/PR0.70.3.711-720.

Lamia, S. (2016). The effects of the EFL learners' mother tongue interference on their writing in English: An error analysis study (published MA thesis). Mohamed Khider University of Biskra, Algeria. http://archives.univbiskra.dz/bitstream/123456789/8696/1/a122.pdf

Lavelle, E., Smith, J., & O'Ryan, L. (2002). The Writing Approaches of Secondary Students. *The British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 72, 399-418. http://dx.doi.org/10.1348/000709902320634564.

Lipstein, R. L., & Renninger, K.A. (2007). Interest in writing: How teachers can make a difference. *English Journal*, 96(4), 79-85.

Mary Spratt, *et al.* (2005). *The TKT Teaching Knowledge Test Course*, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Murray, R. & Moore, S. (2006). *The handbook of academic writing*. New York: Open University Press.

Oshima, A., & Hogue, A. (2006). *Writing academic English* (4th edition). White Plains, NY: Pearson.

Patton, M. Q. (2001). *Qualitative research and evaluation components*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Peter, C., Samuel, R., Sean, W. & Yoko, Y., *Academic Writing Skills 2 Student's Book.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Philips, J. D. (1979). *The essay writing skills of undergraduate students*. University of Canterbury.

Phuong, W. T. (2021). Difficulties in studying writing of English-majored sophomores at a university in Vietnam. *European Journal of Education Studies*. 8(10) http://dx.doi.org/10.46827/ejes.v8i10.3962

Quynh, T.L., & Nguyen, H.T. (2008). Student writing process, perceptions, problems, and strategies in writing academic essays in second language: A case study. *VNU Journal of Science, Foreign Languages, 24*, 184-197.

Richards, Jack C. (1983). Listening comprehension: Approach, design, procedure. *TESOL Quarterly*, 17, 219-239.

Rajoo, S. A. (2010). Facilitating the development of students' oral presentation skills. *Voice of Academia*, 5 (1), 43-50. Retrieved October 18, 2015, from http://kedah.uitm.edu.my/v1/images/stories/industrial_linkages/uitm_press/voa_5_1_2010/5_1_2010_5.pdf.

Rivers, Wilga M. (1981). *Teaching foreign language skill*. USA. The University of Chicago.

Schweiker-Marra, K.E., & Marra, W.T. (2000). Investigating the effects of prewriting activities on writing performance and anxiety of at-risk students. *Reading Psychology, 21*, 99-114.

Silva, T. (2006*). Second language writing*. Purdue University, West Lafayette, USA,111-118. DOI: 10.1016/B0-08-044854-2/00631-3.

Tarigan, H.G. (2008). *Memulis*. Bandung: Angkasa

Taylor, G. (2009). *A student's writing guides*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Thornbury, S. (2011). *How to Teach Vocabulary*. Malaysia: Pearson Education Limited.

Troyka. 1987. Definition of writing ability. (Online), (http://teachingenglishonline.net/definition-of-writing-ability), Retrieved 7th February 2012.

Weigle, Sara Cushing (2002). *Assessing Writing*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Zamel, V. (1985). Responding to student writing. *TESOL Quarterly*, 19(1), 79-101. Retrieved on November 12, 2018 from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.2307/3586773.

Zemach, D. E. & Rumisek, L. A. (2005). *Academic Writing: From Paragraph to Essay*. Oxford: Macmillan Education.

Zemach D. E. & Rumisek L. A. (2005). *Academic Writing from Paragraph to Essay*. Macmillan.

Zhang, L. J. (2001). Exploring variability in language anxiety: Two groups of P.R. of China students learning ESL in Singapore: *RELC Journal, 32*, 73-91.

Zughoul, M., & Husain, R. (1985). *English for higher education in the Arab world – a case study of needs analysis at Yarmouk University.* ESP Journal 4, 133-52.