

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# THE EFFECTS OF VOCABULARY MASTERY AND SELF-CONFIDENCE TOWARDS THE STUDENTS' WRITING SKILLS OF ENGLISH DESCRIPTIVE TEXT AT PRIVATE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

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**Abstract:** This research aims to investigate the effects of vocabulary mastery and self-confidence on the English descriptive writing skills of grade 7 students from private junior high schools during the 2023-2024 academic year. Specifically, the study examines (1) the combined influence of vocabulary mastery and self-confidence on writing skills, (2) the individual effect of vocabulary mastery, and (3) the individual effect of self-confidence. The study follows a quantitative methodology, utilizing test results and questionnaires as data collection tools. A sample of 60 students, 30 from each school, was analyzed using statistical methods. The findings reveal significant effects of both vocabulary mastery and self-confidence on students' writing skills, as indicated by a significance value (Sig.) of  $0.000 < 0.05$  and an F value of 245.648. Vocabulary mastery alone shows a significant positive effect on writing skills, with a Sig. of  $0.000 < 0.05$  and a t-value of 4.432. Similarly, self-confidence also positively influences writing skills, with a Sig. of  $0.001 < 0.05$  and a t-value of 3.591. These results underscore the importance of both vocabulary knowledge and self-confidence in enhancing students' descriptive text writing abilities. Future research could explore interventions that further develop these skills.

**Keywords:** vocabulary mastery; self-confidence; writing skill; descriptive text

**PENGARUH PENGUASAAN KOSAKATA DAN KEPERCAYAAN DIRI TERHADAP KETERAMPILAN MENULIS TEKS DESKRIPTIF BAHASA INGGRIS SISWA SMP SWASTA**

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**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki pengaruh penguasaan kosakata dan kepercayaan diri terhadap keterampilan menulis deskriptif bahasa Inggris siswa kelas 7 SMP swasta selama tahun ajaran 2023-2024. Secara khusus, penelitian ini mengkaji (1) pengaruh gabungan penguasaan kosakata dan kepercayaan diri terhadap keterampilan menulis, (2) pengaruh individual penguasaan kosakata, dan (3) pengaruh individual kepercayaan diri. Penelitian ini mengikuti metodologi kuantitatif, dengan memanfaatkan hasil tes dan kuesioner sebagai alat pengumpulan data. Sampel sebanyak 60 siswa, 30 dari setiap sekolah, dianalisis menggunakan metode statistik. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan pengaruh signifikan dari penguasaan kosakata dan kepercayaan diri terhadap keterampilan menulis siswa, sebagaimana ditunjukkan oleh nilai signifikansi (Sig.) sebesar  $0,000 < 0,05$  dan nilai F sebesar 245,648. Penguasaan kosakata sendiri menunjukkan pengaruh positif yang signifikan terhadap keterampilan menulis, dengan Sig. sebesar  $0,000 < 0,05$  dan nilai t sebesar 4,432. Demikian pula, rasa percaya diri juga memengaruhi keterampilan menulis secara positif, dengan Sig.  $0,001 < 0,05$  dan nilai t sebesar 3,591. Hasil ini menggarisbawahi pentingnya pengetahuan kosakata dan rasa percaya diri dalam meningkatkan kemampuan menulis teks deskriptif siswa. Penelitian di masa mendatang dapat mengeksplorasi intervensi yang lebih mengembangkan keterampilan ini.

**Kata kunci:** penguasaan kosakata; kepercayaan diri; keterampilan menulis; teks deskriptif

## INTRODUCTION

English has emerged as the dominant language for international communication, playing a pivotal role in various global sectors. It serves as a bridge for people from different linguistic backgrounds, facilitating exchanges in trade, diplomacy, and culture. In many universities and multinational corporations, English is the primary language of instruction and communication, while scientific research and the tourism industry also heavily rely on it. Furthermore, English dominates online content, enabling individuals to access vast amounts of information and engage with global digital communities. Proficiency in English is closely linked to advancements in science and technology, underscoring its importance in today's interconnected world (Durand, 2006, as cited in Ruslanudin, 2023). In Indonesia, while Indonesian remains the official language, English is taught as a compulsory foreign language, with the government emphasizing its importance for global competitiveness. In this context, mastering the four core language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—is essential for effective communication, with writing being one of the most complex skills to develop.

Writing, particularly in a foreign language, demands continuous effort in organizing ideas, revising content, and refining language to produce coherent and engaging texts. It is considered one of the most challenging skills for students to master, requiring the ability to create and structure sentences in a clear and compelling manner. Descriptive writing, which is often used in English classrooms, allows students to articulate their sensory experiences and emotions. However, many students struggle with using precise vocabulary and developing engaging writing styles, leading to monotonous texts. Vocabulary mastery plays a critical role in addressing these challenges, providing students with the tools to express themselves clearly and creatively. In addition to vocabulary, self-confidence significantly influences students' writing performance, empowering them to express ideas without fear of judgment. Both vocabulary mastery and self-confidence are key factors that contribute to the development of writing skills, making them important areas for research and pedagogical focus.

The theory of students' English descriptive text writing skills highlights the complexity of crafting descriptive texts, which involves portraying the characteristics of subjects to facilitate effective communication. A "text" is understood as a structured form of communication that conveys ideas or experiences through written symbols, transcending time and space. Descriptive writing specifically aims to depict the attributes of people, objects, or places vividly, enabling readers to visualize the subject matter clearly. This form of writing is foundational for more advanced writing skills, merging factual observation with rich imagery to engage readers. It serves purposes ranging from informing and describing to persuading, making it a vital component of both academic and everyday writing practices.

Writing skill itself is intricate, involving a synthesis of cognitive, linguistic, and psychomotor processes. Westwood (2008) considers writing the most challenging language skill due to its demand for organizing and expressing ideas coherently. Harmer (2004) notes that writing fosters accurate language use and intellectual growth, as it often involves problem-solving. Proficiency in writing encompasses content mastery, attention to linguistic accuracy, and adaptability to various writing types, as described by Doyin & Wagiran (2010) and Kendall (2014). Thus, writing skill varies widely among individuals, reflecting different levels of competence and expertise.

The theory of vocabulary mastery and self-confidence underscores the pivotal role of vocabulary in language proficiency and effective communication. Vocabulary encompasses a range of words, phrases, and specialized terms used in diverse contexts, with mastery involving not just a broad knowledge of words but also the ability to apply this knowledge skillfully. Vocabulary mastery is critical for all language skills—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—impacting clarity and expressiveness in communication. Assessments such as multiple-choice questions are commonly used to evaluate vocabulary knowledge, and a significant correlation exists between vocabulary mastery and writing proficiency. Self-confidence, defined as firm trust in one's abilities and effective action in challenging situations, is essential for language learning, enhancing motivation and engagement. It combines a positive perception of one's skills with the practical ability to apply them, contributing to a proactive and successful approach to both learning and communication.

The existing literature, as evidenced by studies conducted by Syifa Fauziah (2020), Sri Ayumi (2020), Fina Fahriah (2021), and Iswanto (2022), consistently highlights the significant effects of vocabulary mastery and self-confidence on various language skills such as writing, speaking, and reading comprehension. Fauziah's research focused on the impact of these variables on narrative writing skills, demonstrating a substantial contribution of both vocabulary mastery and self-confidence to students' writing abilities. Similarly, Ayumi's research explored their effects on speaking skills, affirming that both factors play a crucial role in enhancing oral communication. Meanwhile, Fahriah's work linked vocabulary mastery and learning motivation to descriptive text writing, and Iswanto examined their influence on reading comprehension, further substantiating the role of these two variables in language proficiency.

While these studies shed light on the importance of vocabulary mastery and self-confidence, they primarily focus on narrative and general writing skills, speaking, and reading comprehension. A gap in the literature emerges concerning the specific exploration of descriptive text writing, a genre that demands detailed observation, vivid imagery, and precise language. Only Fahriah's study touches on descriptive writing, yet her work introduces learning motivation as an additional variable, leaving room for deeper investigation into the direct influence of vocabulary mastery and self-confidence on this particular type of writing. This gap is significant because descriptive writing requires distinct skills, including the ability to convey clear and vivid images, which may be heavily influenced by a student's vocabulary knowledge and self-confidence.

The current research aims to fill this gap by focusing specifically on the effects of vocabulary mastery and self-confidence on students' ability to write descriptive texts. Descriptive text writing involves unique cognitive and linguistic demands compared to other forms of writing, making it a crucial area for investigation. Given the importance of descriptive writing in both academic and real-

world communication, understanding how these two factors influence this skill could provide valuable insights into language teaching practices, especially in enhancing students' ability to convey detailed and vivid descriptions. Moreover, the study aims to highlight the distinct roles vocabulary and self-confidence play in a genre that blends creativity with precision.

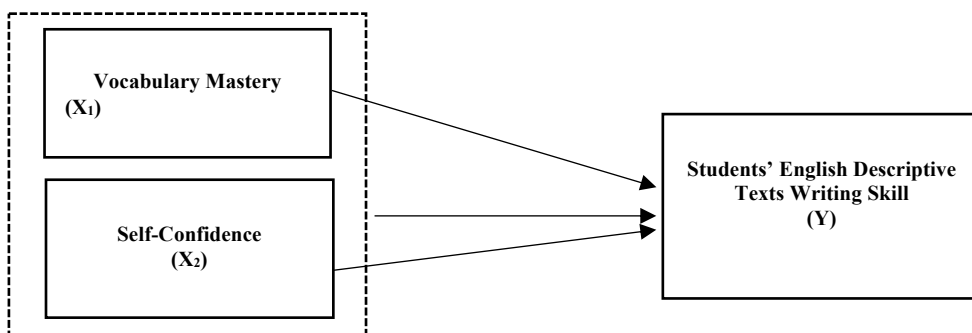
The novelty and importance of this research lie in its targeted focus on descriptive writing, a relatively underexplored area compared to narrative writing, speaking, and reading comprehension. By homing in on vocabulary mastery and self-confidence in the context of descriptive texts, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how students can improve this specific writing skill. It also has practical implications for educators, suggesting that strategies to boost vocabulary and build self-confidence could be particularly effective in enhancing students' descriptive writing abilities, thereby filling an important gap in both research and pedagogy. The statement of the problems of the research are:

1. Are there any effects of vocabulary mastery and self-confidence towards the students' English descriptive texts writing skills?
2. Is there any effect of vocabulary mastery towards the students' English descriptive texts writing skills?
3. Is there any effect of self-confidence towards the students' English descriptive texts writing skills?

The importance of this research lies in its contribution to the understanding of how vocabulary mastery and self-confidence influence students' ability to write descriptive texts in English. It adds to the existing body of knowledge by exploring these variables in the context of Private Junior High Schools in Tangerang Regency, focusing specifically on descriptive writing—an area that has been underexplored in previous studies. The study is relevant as it provides both theoretical insights and practical applications for language learning, offering valuable information for students, teachers, and institutions on improving writing proficiency. The research scope is limited to examining vocabulary mastery and self-confidence in descriptive text writing among junior high school students, with constraints likely related to the sample size and focus on a specific demographic. However, the findings are expected to have broad implications, informing future research and practical strategies for improving English writing skills.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The research employs a quantitative methodology, focusing on objective measurements and the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data gathered through questionnaires, surveys, and computational techniques. The study examines the dependent variable (Y) - students' proficiency in writing English descriptive texts - and the independent variables - vocabulary mastery ( $X_1$ ) and self-confidence ( $X_2$ ). Data is sourced from test results and questionnaire responses. As outlined by Sugiyono (2016), cited in Wadu, Supeno, & Engliana (2021), this approach emphasizes the measurement and analysis of relationships between variables. Leavy (2017), cited in Fahriah (2021), supports this by stating that quantitative research involves measuring variables and examining their relationships to uncover patterns, correlations, or causal connections. This study aims to assess the relationships between the dependent and independent variables, using quantitative methods to evaluate how vocabulary mastery and self-confidence influence students' writing proficiency. Within this study, the independent variables encompass vocabulary mastery and self-confidence, while the dependent variable pertains to the students' English descriptive texts writing skill. The connection between these independent and dependent variables is visually represented in the following Illustration 1.



**Figure 1.** The Correlation Between Variables

The research focuses on students from two private middle schools in Tangerang Regency. At SMP A, the total student population is 301, from which 90 students are selected for the research. At SMP B, out of 147 students, 45 are chosen for the study. Thus, the research population comprises 135 students from a total population of 448 students across both schools. The research sample is drawn from two private middle schools in Tangerang Regency. At SMP A,  $\pm 30\%$  of the research population of 90 students, equating to 30 students, are sampled. Similarly, at SMP B,  $\pm 30\%$  of the 45 students in the research population, also amounting to 30 students, are selected. This results in a total research sample of 60 students. The research took place at two accredited schools in Tangerang Regency. Both schools have an accreditation rating of A, providing an ideal environment for the study. The research was conducted over five months, from March to July 2024.

The instrument used to evaluate students' English descriptive text writing skills is a standardized writing test. This test includes prompts that require students to create descriptive compositions, assessing their grammar, vocabulary usage, organization, coherence, and adherence to descriptive writing conventions. Each student's written response is meticulously evaluated based on these criteria, offering a quantitative measure of their proficiency in expressing ideas through descriptive writing in English. The standardized format of the test ensures consistency and objectivity in assessing students' writing skills across the sample.

The tool used to assess vocabulary mastery is a multiple-choice written test. Each question offers four options (a, b, c, d). The test consists of 40 items designed to evaluate students' vocabulary proficiency. Scoring is straightforward: each correct answer earns 1 point, and incorrect answers receive 0 points, with the total score ranging from 0 to 40. This score is then converted to a scale from 0 to 100. The self-confidence assessment for students' English descriptive text writing skills is conducted using a structured questionnaire. This tool evaluates students' self-reported confidence in their ability to express themselves in written English, particularly within descriptive text composition. The questionnaire includes items that gauge students' comfort, assurance, and belief in their ability to effectively convey descriptive ideas. It comprises 40 questions, with both positive and negative statements to measure self-confidence. Respondents select from five possible answers: SS (Strongly Agree), S (Agree), R (Neither Agree nor Disagree), TS (Disagree), and STS (Strongly Disagree).

The data analysis in this study involves both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, using SPSS 22.0 for Windows. Descriptive statistics provide a numerical summary of the data, offering insights into the central tendency, spread, and shape of the distribution, as outlined by Jackson (2009) and cited in Fahriah (2021). This helps to describe and understand the overall characteristics of the collected data. Inferential statistics, on the other hand, are employed to make broader inferences or generalizations about the population from the sample data. These techniques



# The Effects of Vocabulary Mastery and Self-confidence towards Students' Writing Skills of English Descriptive Text at Private Junior High Schools

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allow the researchers to draw conclusions about the relationships between variables, such as the impact of vocabulary mastery and self-confidence on students' descriptive text writing skills, based on the patterns observed in the sample.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research presents the results of a study examining the effects of Vocabulary Mastery and Self-Confidence on seventh-grade students' English descriptive text writing skills. The research was conducted at two schools in Tangerang Regency, and data was collected through tests assessing the three variables: Vocabulary Mastery ( $X_1$ ), Self-Confidence ( $X_2$ ), and Descriptive Text Writing Skill ( $Y$ ). The analysis process began with descriptive statistics for each variable, followed by classical assumption tests, including the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests, which ensured the validity of the data for hypothesis testing. Regression analysis was then performed to explore both the combined and individual effects of Vocabulary Mastery and Self-Confidence on writing skills, with the assistance of IBM SPSS Statistics version 22. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the findings and their implications.

### The Effects of Vocabulary Mastery and Self-Confidence Towards the Students' English Descriptive Text Writing Skill

The analysis shows that Vocabulary Mastery and Self-Confidence significantly impact Students' English Descriptive Writing Skills, as indicated by a highly significant F value (245.648, Sig. = 0.000). The multiple regression analysis reveals that increases in Vocabulary Mastery and Self-Confidence contribute 0.550 and 0.403 points respectively to writing performance, with vocabulary having a slightly stronger effect. The very strong correlation ( $r = 0.947$ ) and high coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.896$ ) demonstrate that these two factors explain 89.6% of the variance in writing skills, underscoring their dominant influence.

**Table 1.** The Magnitude of Relationship and Contribution of Variables Vocabulary Mastery and Self-Confidence Together Towards Variable English Descriptive Text Writing Skill

Model Summary <sup>b</sup>				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.947 <sup>a</sup>	.896	.892	3.989
a. Predictors: (Constant), Self - Confidence, Vocabulary Mastery				
b. Dependent Variable: English Descriptive Text Writing Skill				

**Table 2.** Significance of the Relationship between Variables Vocabulary Mastery and Self-Confidence Together Towards Variable English Descriptive Text Writing Skill

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	7816.469	2	3908.235	<b>245.648</b>	<b>.000<sup>b</sup></b>
Residual	906.864	57	15.910		
Total	8723.333	59			
a. Dependent Variable: English Descriptive Text Writing Skill					
b. Predictors: (Constant), Self - Confidence, Vocabulary Mastery					

From Table 2, it was found that the computed F value is 245.648 and the significance value (Sig.) is  $0.000 < 0.05$ . Because the significance value is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that there

is a significant influence between vocabulary mastery and self-confidence together towards the Students' English descriptive text writing skill.

Furthermore, it can be determined the multiple regression equation through the values appearing in the Unstandardized Coefficients column under part B. Based on this data, the regression line can be expressed as follows:

$$\hat{Y} = 2,374 + 0,550X_1 + 0,403X_2$$

The multiple regression equation above indicates that an increase of one unit in vocabulary mastery and self-confidence variables contributes 0.550 points from vocabulary mastery and 0.403 points from self-confidence to the students' English descriptive text writing skill. Furthermore, the correlation coefficient (R) and coefficient of determination (KD) values are shown. The correlation coefficient value  $r = 0.947$  indicates a very strong influence between vocabulary mastery and self-confidence together towards the students' English descriptive text writing Skill. Additionally, the coefficient of determination value shown in the  $R_{square}$  column is 0.896 or 89.6%. This explains that vocabulary mastery and self-confidence together contribute 89.6% towards the students' English descriptive text writing Skill. The remainder is influenced by other undefined factors.

### **The Effects of Vocabulary Mastery Towards the Students' English Descriptive Text Writing Skill**

The hypothesis test results show a highly significant value (Sig. = 0.000), indicating that the observed effect of Vocabulary Mastery on Students' English Descriptive Writing Skill is unlikely due to chance. With a strong t-value of 4.432, the data provides robust evidence of the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and writing skills. Vocabulary Mastery alone explains 49.69% of the variation in students' writing abilities, emphasizing its critical role in improving students' descriptive writing skills in English. Nearly half of the differences in writing performance can be attributed to students' mastery of vocabulary. The significance value (Sig.) obtained is  $0.000 < 0.05$  and the t-value = 4.432. Therefore, the researcher concludes that there is a significant partial effect of Vocabulary Mastery towards the students' English descriptive text writing skill. The partial contribution of the vocabulary mastery variable to English descriptive text writing skill can be expressed by the following formula:

$$KD = \text{Beta}_{x_1y_1} \times \text{Zero Order Score} \times 100\%$$

$$KD = 0,532 \times 0,934 \times 100\%$$

$$KD = 49,69 \%$$

Based on the calculation above, it can be concluded that Vocabulary Mastery partially contributes 49.69% to English Descriptive Text Writing Skill.

### **The Effects of Self-Confidence Towards the Students' English Descriptive Text Writing Skill**

The hypothesis test reveals a significant value (Sig. = 0.001) and a t-value of 3.591, indicating a statistically significant partial effect of Self-Confidence on Students' English Descriptive Writing Skill. This suggests that the impact of Self-Confidence is meaningful and not due to chance. The analysis further shows that Self-Confidence accounts for 39.59% of the variation in students' writing abilities, highlighting its substantial role in shaping their proficiency in English descriptive writing.

The obtained significance value (Sig.) is  $0.001 < 0.05$  and the t-value is 3.591. Therefore, the researcher concludes that there is a significant partial effect of Self-Confidence on English Descriptive Text Writing Skill. The partial contribution of the Self-Confidence variable to English Descriptive Text Writing Skill can be expressed with the following formula:

$$KD = \text{Beta}_{x_2y_2} \times \text{Zero Order Score} \times 100\%$$

$$KD = 0,431 \times 0,927 \times 100\%$$

$$KD = 39,59 \%$$

Based on the calculation above, it can be concluded that Self-Confidence partially contributes 39.59% to English Descriptive Text Writing Skill. The results of this study indicate that both vocabulary mastery and self-confidence have significant effects on students' English descriptive text

writing skills. The high F-value (245.648) and the significance level (Sig. = 0.000) support the conclusion that these two variables, when combined, substantially influence writing outcomes. The very strong correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.947$ ) and high coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.896$ ) suggest that 89.6% of the variance in writing skills among the students can be explained by their vocabulary knowledge and confidence levels. This finding is in line with Nation (2001), who emphasized that vocabulary knowledge is foundational for language competence, including writing skills.

Vocabulary mastery showed a stronger partial effect on students' descriptive writing ability, with a significant t-value ( $t = 4.432$ ) and a contribution of 49.69% to the variance in writing performance. This supports previous findings by Laufer and Nation (1995), who asserted that vocabulary size is one of the best predictors of writing quality in a second language. Vocabulary allows students to select appropriate and nuanced words for expressing ideas clearly and descriptively, which is a critical component in writing descriptive texts.

Self-confidence also had a statistically significant partial effect on writing skills ( $t = 3.591$ ; Sig. = 0.001), contributing 39.59% to the variance. This is consistent with the theory of affective factors in second language acquisition, particularly Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, which posits that learners with higher confidence are more likely to succeed in language tasks due to a lower affective filter. Moreover, MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) argued that anxiety and lack of self-confidence negatively influence language performance, while confident learners are more willing to take risks and engage in meaningful output activities such as writing.

The interdependence of linguistic competence and affective disposition observed in this study further supports the notion that both cognitive and emotional dimensions must be addressed in language education (Dörnyei, 2005). A student with extensive vocabulary but low confidence may hesitate to use their language skills effectively. Conversely, a highly confident student lacking vocabulary may produce insufficient or vague writing. Hence, educational practices should incorporate strategies that enhance both vocabulary acquisition and learner self-confidence to promote writing proficiency.

In general, the moderate average scores in all three variables suggest that while students possess a fair level of vocabulary and confidence, there remains potential for improvement. Teachers are encouraged to integrate vocabulary instruction with confidence-building activities, such as cooperative learning, writing workshops, and positive feedback sessions, to maximize students' descriptive writing abilities. These findings highlight the importance of a holistic approach to language instruction, where both skill development and emotional support are prioritized.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to investigate the effects of vocabulary mastery and self-confidence on the English descriptive text writing skills of seventh-grade students in Tangerang Regency. The results reveal that both variables significantly contribute to students' writing performance, with vocabulary mastery showing a slightly stronger influence than self-confidence. The combined effect of the two variables accounts for 89.6% of the variance in students' writing skills, indicating that linguistic knowledge and affective factors play a critical role in the development of effective writing abilities. Individually, vocabulary mastery was found to explain nearly half of the variance in writing skill (49.69%), confirming its essential role in descriptive writing where precise and varied word choices are necessary. Similarly, self-confidence explained 39.59% of the variance, demonstrating that students who feel more confident in their abilities are better able to express their ideas in writing.

These findings suggest that English language instruction at the junior high school level should not only emphasize vocabulary acquisition but also incorporate strategies that foster students' confidence. Doing so can lead to more meaningful engagement with writing tasks and improved overall language competence. Future research could explore the interaction of additional affective



and cognitive variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of what contributes to writing proficiency in EFL contexts.

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