

**" PARAGRAPH WRITING BARRIERS : A STUDY ON THE
FIFTH-SEMESTER ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENS IN
THE 2025/2026 ACADEMIC YEAR AT UNIVERSITAS
MUHAMMADIYAH BENGKULU"**

THESIS



BY:

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FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF BENGKULU
2025/2026**

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MUHAMMADIYAH BENGKULU"
UNDERGRADUATE THESIS**

Submitted as a partial requirement for the “Sarjana” Degree in English
Education Study Program.



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MOTTO

لصبر ان وعد الله ح في

“Dan bersabarlah kamu, sesungguhnya janji Allah Adalah benar”
(Q.S Ar-Rum:60)

“aku membahayakan nyawa ibuku untuk lahir kedunia, jadi tidak mungkin aku tidak ada artinya.”

DEDICATION

With deep gratitude and thanks, I dedicate this thesis for:

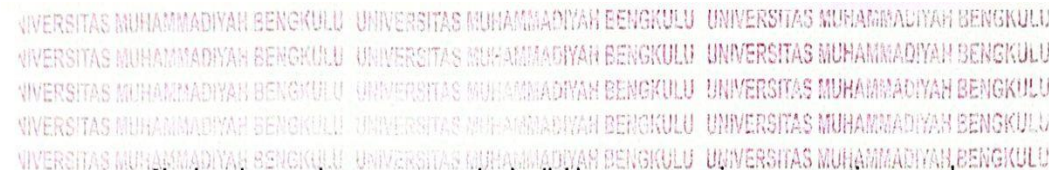
1. To my beloved parents, Mr. Erwanto and Mrs. Azmiar Fianti, two precious gems entrusted by God to guide me through the strong currents of life. It is hard to imagine this life without your presence, prayers, and unconditional love. In every prostration, I always pray to God to grant you long life, good health, and endless happiness. For 24 years, I have been educated, nurtured, and raised with patience and sincerity. Every drop of sweat sheds for my future, every tear that may have been hidden behind your encouraging smiles, stands as a witness to the depth of your love and sacrifice.

Not a single step I take today is separated from the prayers and sacrifices you have given! Today, with deep gratitude and love, I dedicate this Bachelor of Education (S.Pd.) degree to you as a symbol of my devotion and appreciation. This degree is not mine alone; it is the result of your prayers, struggles, sacrifices, and never-ending love. May this small step be the beginning of my journey to make you happy and proud, in this world and the hereafter. Thank you for being my home, my protectors, and the strongest reason I never give up.

2. With great respect and gratitude, I dedicate this work to Mr. Eki Saputra, M.Pd., my supervisor, who patiently, sincerely, and attentively guided me throughout every step of the process of writing this thesis. Thank you for all the help, guidance, and support you have provided. Your guidance, not only academic, but also motivation for your students to complete their studies quickly and graduate, along with the confidence you have consistently instilled in me, have been a great strength for me to continue moving forward until this thesis is successfully completed. Even when I faced difficulties, you were there to provide solutions and advocate with wisdom.

3. To someone no less important, Harsen Subakti, thank you for being a part of my life's journey. You have contributed so much to the writing of this paper, both in terms of energy, time, and materials.





You have been my home, my companion in all things, accompanying me, supporting me, and comforting me through sorrow, listening to my complaints, and giving me the encouragement to never give up. Thank you for fighting together until this moment.

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5. To the owner of NPM 21100045, thank you for once accompanying the writer from the school years through college, walking step by step until the writer was able to stand at this point, in the phase of completing this thesis. There have been many stories, laughter, and struggles engraved throughout that long journey. Your presence once became a source of spirit, support, and strength during difficult times. Although in the end this journey is no longer taken together and destiny has led our paths in different directions, the writer still realizes that your presence was once an important part of the growing process. The writer continues to hold gratitude for every moment, prayer, effort, and support that you once gave. May every kindness you have planted return to you in the form of happiness and success. Thank you for being part of this journey.

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7. To my fellow comrades of the 2021 English Education Study Program, thank you for all the motivation and understanding you have given. May our friendship remain everlasting.



PREFACE

The author expresses her deepest gratitude to Allah SWT for His blessings and mercy, which have enabled her to complete this thesis. This thesis entitled "*Paragraph Writing Barriers: A Study on the Fifth-Semester English Department Students in the 2025/2026 Academic Year at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu*" is submitted as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for obtaining the degree of Sarjana Pendidikan. at the English Education Study Program, Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu.

The author realizes that there were many challenges encountered during the process of writing this thesis. However, with the assistance, guidance, and cooperation from many individuals, those challenges were successfully overcome. Therefore, the author would like to express her sincere gratitude to:

1. Washlurachim Safitri, M.Pd., as the Head of the English Education Study Program, Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu.
2. Eki Saputra, M.Pd., as the supervisor, who has given valuable guidance, support, and contributions in completing this thesis.
3. Agung Suhadi, M.A., and Dr. Yupika Maryansyah, M.Pd., as the examiners, for their valuable evaluation, suggestions, and constructive feedback for the improvement of this thesis.
4. All lecturers of the English Education Study Program who have taught and guided the author during her years of study.
5. All parties who have contributed to the completion of this thesis and cannot be mentioned one by one.

The author fully realizes that this thesis still contains several shortcomings and is far from being perfect. Limitations in experience, knowledge, and insight have become contributing factors affecting the completion of this academic work. Nevertheless, the author hopes that

this thesis has achieved its intended objectives and provides meaningful contributions. Therefore, constructive criticism and suggestions from various parties are sincerely welcomed as valuable input for future improvement.

CURICULUM VITAE



The author, Silfi Angraini, was born in Sungai Batang on September 10, 2002. She has a strong interest in education, particularly in English. Since an early age, she has shown enthusiasm for learning languages and has continuously strived to develop both her academic and personal abilities. Her formal education began at SD Negeri 09 Kota Bengkulu, which she completed in 2015. She then continued her studies at SMP Negeri 07 Kota Bengkulu and graduated in 2018. She completed her senior high school education at SMA Muhammadiyah 01 Kota Bengkulu in 2021. In the same year, she was admitted to the English Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu.

During her undergraduate studies, she actively participated in various academic and student organizational activities. In 2023, she was involved in a community service program through an English course for elementary school students at SD Negeri 09 Kota Bengkulu and served as the treasurer of the program. In addition, she participated in various campus activities as part of her academic and personal development during her studies.

ABSTRACT

Silfi Angraini, 2026. "Paragraph Writing Barriers: A Study on Fifth-Semester English Department Students in the 2025/2026 Academic Year at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu". Thesis, English Education Study Program Faculty of Teacher Training and Education Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu. Supervisor: Eki Saputra, M.Pd.

Writing paragraphs in English is an important academic skill; however, many students still experience various difficulties, especially in the digital era that also influences their writing habits. This study aimed to identify the barriers faced by fifth-semester students in writing paragraphs and to determine the factors that influence their writing ability, including the role of digital technology. This research employed a descriptive qualitative design. The participants of this study were fifth-semester students of the English Education Study Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu. The data were collected through questionnaires and interviews. The results showed that students experienced linguistic, cognitive, technical, and technological barriers. Linguistic barriers were the most dominant, particularly in vocabulary, grammar, and spelling. In addition, students also experienced difficulties in cohesion, mechanics, organization, and coherence. Digital technology also became a factor influencing students' writing ability. Although technology helps students correct errors and develop ideas, excessive dependence on these tools can reduce students' confidence and their ability to write independently. It can be concluded that limitations in vocabulary and grammar are the main barriers, and digital technology is an important factor that provides both positive and negative influences on students' paragraph writing ability.

Keywords: Paragraph Writing, Writing Barriers, Digital Technology, Linguistic Barriers, Writing Factors.

ABSTRAK

Silfi Angraini, 2026. Paragraph Writing Barriers: A Study on the Fifth-Semester English Department Students in the 2025/2026 Academic Year at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu. Skripsi, Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu. Pembimbing: Eki Saputra, M.Pd.

Menulis paragraf dalam bahasa Inggris merupakan keterampilan akademik yang penting, namun masih banyak mahasiswa yang mengalami berbagai kesulitan, terutama di era digital yang turut memengaruhi kebiasaan menulis mereka. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi hambatan (barriers) yang dihadapi mahasiswa semester lima dalam menulis paragraf serta mengetahui faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi kemampuan menulis mereka, termasuk peran teknologi digital. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain deskriptif kualitatif. Partisipan penelitian adalah mahasiswa semester lima Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner dan wawancara. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa mengalami hambatan linguistik, kognitif, teknis, dan teknologi. Hambatan linguistik merupakan hambatan yang paling dominan, khususnya dalam aspek kosakata, tata bahasa, dan ejaan. Selain itu, mahasiswa juga mengalami kesulitan dalam kohesi, mekanik, organisasi, dan koherensi. Teknologi digital juga menjadi faktor yang memengaruhi kemampuan menulis mahasiswa. Meskipun teknologi membantu mahasiswa dalam memperbaiki kesalahan dan mengembangkan ide, ketergantungan yang berlebihan dapat mengurangi kepercayaan diri dan kemampuan menulis secara mandiri. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa keterbatasan kosakata dan tata bahasa merupakan hambatan utama, dan teknologi digital menjadi faktor penting yang memberikan pengaruh positif maupun negatif terhadap kemampuan menulis paragraf mahasiswa.

Kata kunci: Penulisan Paragraf, Hambatan Menulis, Teknologi Digital, Hambatan Linguistik, Faktor Menulis

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

English is an international language that is widely used in various fields of life, including education, technology, science, economy, and diplomatic relations between countries. Its role as a lingua franca makes English the primary means of communication in global interactions. Therefore, mastering English has become an essential need in the era of globalization, especially for the younger generation and those in academic environments.

In Indonesia, English is learned as a foreign language or English as a Foreign Language (EFL). This means that English is not used in daily life as a first language, but instead taught in schools and universities as a subject or course. English learning in Indonesia is inseparable from various challenges, including motivational factors, learning environment, teaching methods, and the limited opportunity for learners to actively use English outside the classroom. According to Abu Ayfah (2020), EFL countries such as Indonesia face specific challenges in developing English proficiency because the surrounding environment does not fully support the natural and continuous use of the language.

One of the essential aspects of English learning is writing skills. Writing is one of the four fundamental language skills, along with listening, speaking, and reading. These skills are generally acquired gradually, starting from receptive skills (listening and reading), followed by productive skills (speaking and writing).

Compared to other language skills, writing is often considered the most difficult and the latest to be mastered by language learners. This difficulty does not solely arise from the technical ability to assemble letters or words, but because writing requires a more complex cognitive process. Writing refers to the activity of expressing ideas in written form, which requires the ability to arrange words and sentences so that the reader can understand the intended message. Good writing skills not only reflect the learner's understanding of the content but also demonstrate their critical thinking, logical reasoning, and ability to express ideas systematically. One fundamental aspect of writing skills is the ability to construct paragraphs effectively

paragraphs that contain one main idea supported by relevant and well-structured supporting sentences.

However, in practice, writing a good paragraph remains a significant challenge for many university students. The difficulty becomes more apparent when it relates to students' ability to develop ideas, choose accurate vocabulary, apply correct grammar, and maintain coherence across sentences. These issues often contribute to the low quality of students' written work, especially when they are required to produce essays, reports, or other academic writing independently.

Paragraph writing skills serve as an important foundation for university students. A good paragraph must contain a clear main idea, supported by coherent and structured supporting sentences. Nonetheless, many students still struggle to construct well-organized paragraphs. These challenges include limited vocabulary, grammatical errors, difficulties in developing ideas, and a lack of coherence across sentences (Alkhasanah & Kholis, 2024). This condition affects the overall quality of students' academic writing, particularly when completing assignments such as essays, reports, or scientific articles.

On the other hand, the development of digital technology such as Grammarly, QuillBot, and ChatGPT provides various tools that can assist students in improving grammar, sentence structure, and spelling. Studies have shown that using digital technology can enhance students' writing quality and help them write more effectively (Khonirin & Roslaini, 2024; Ramadhan et al., 2024). However, this convenience also introduces new challenges. Excessive dependence on technology leads students to rely on automatic corrections without making efforts to understand their mistakes. As a result, their writing skills do not improve independently, and it may even diminish their critical thinking skills in constructing arguments (Fan, 2023; Selan Dakhi et al., 2024). In this context, digital technology is not the main obstacle, but rather an external factor that influences the writing process.

This phenomenon is evident among fifth-semester students who are expected to have better academic writing abilities because they have already completed several semesters of English learning. Ideally, students at this level should be able to organize paragraphs with proper structure, use accurate vocabulary, and present logical arguments. However, the reality shows that many students still encounter difficulties in writing effective English paragraphs. These

difficulties arise from various factors, including linguistic limitations, lack of writing strategies, challenges in organizing ideas, and low motivation.

Therefore, this study aims to identify the difficulties faced by fifth-semester students in writing English paragraphs. By understanding these challenges more comprehensively, it is expected that more appropriate teaching strategies can be developed to improve students' writing skills. Furthermore, the findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of English language teaching, particularly in encouraging students to write paragraphs independently, coherently, and in accordance with academic standards, while still considering the influence of digital technology as a supporting factor in the learning process.

1.2 Research Questions

The problems of the study were formulated as follows:

1. What barriers are faced by fifth-semester students of the English Education Study Program at the University of Muhammadiyah Bengkulu in writing English paragraphs?
2. What factors cause the barriers in paragraph writing among fifth-semester students, and how does digital technology influence their writing process?

1.3 Research Objectives

This study aims to:

1. To identify and describe the barriers faced by fifth-semester students of the English Education Study Program at the University of Muhammadiyah Bengkulu in writing English paragraphs.
2. To identify the factors that cause those barriers and to understand how digital technology influences the paragraph writing process of fifth-semester students.

1.4 Limitation of the Research

This study is limited to identifying and describing the barriers faced by fifth-semester students of the English Education Department at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu in

writing English paragraphs, as well as the factors causing those barriers and the influence of digital technology on their writing process.

This research does not aim to measure the level of writing proficiency, determine the most statistically dominant barrier through advanced quantitative analysis, or compare differences among individual students. In addition, the study does not examine in depth which specific barrier is the most influential or analyze the dominance level through experimental or comparative design. The focus of this research is solely on describing the types of barriers and the contributing factors based on qualitative findings.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions as follows:

1. Theoretical Significance

This research is expected to contribute to the development of studies on writing skills, particularly in paragraph writing within the context of foreign language learning (EFL). Specifically, it aims to deepen the understanding of the barriers faced by students when writing paragraphs in the digital era, whether related to linguistic aspects, idea organization, or technical factors.

The study may also enrich theoretical perspectives regarding the influence of digital technologies, such as online translation tools, grammar checkers, and AI writing tools, on the quality of students' written paragraphs. The findings are expected to strengthen the theoretical foundation concerning the importance of learner autonomy and cognitive load theory in technology-based learning, particularly in relation to students' critical thinking skills and their ability to construct coherent paragraphs. Thus, this research contributes to the development of a theoretical framework for integrating digital technology into EFL students' academic writing skills.

a. For Students

This study is expected to help fifth-semester students of the English Education Department at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu better understand the barriers they face in paragraph writing, whether related to linguistic issues, idea development, or the use of digital

technologies. Such understanding is expected to encourage students to engage in self-evaluation, thereby increasing their motivation to improve the quality of their writing continuously.

Moreover, the study seeks to encourage students not to rely entirely on digital technologies such as online translators, grammar checkers, or AI writing tools. Students are expected to use technology appropriately as a supportive medium rather than as a substitute for critical thinking. In this way, they can develop critical thinking skills, autonomy, and the ability to organize ideas effectively to produce coherent paragraphs.

This research benefits students not only by raising awareness of writing barriers but also by fostering a positive attitude toward writing practice. As a result, students can achieve better academic skills and become more prepared to meet the demands of both academic and professional contexts in the digital era.

b. For Lecturers or Educators

The findings of this study can serve as a basis for lecturers in designing writing instruction that is more aligned with students' needs in the digital era. By identifying the barriers faced by fifth-semester students of the English Education Department at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu in paragraph writing, lecturers may adjust their approaches, methods, and teaching strategies to be more relevant and effective.

This research also provides benefits by helping lecturers recognize students' difficulties, whether related to linguistic limitations, idea development, or dependence on digital technologies. Such understanding enables lecturers to offer appropriate solutions, such as systematic writing exercises, collaborative activities, and constructive feedback that fosters critical thinking. Furthermore, the findings of this study can guide lecturers in promoting the wise use of digital technologies in writing instruction. Applications such as Grammarly, Quillbot, or ChatGPT may be utilized as supportive tools, but lecturers need to emphasize the importance of students' role in developing independent writing skills and coherent paragraph construction.

Overall, this research benefits lecturers or educators by supporting the design of teaching strategies that not only focus on the use of technology but also emphasize the development of critical thinking, responsibility, and student autonomy in paragraph writing within the digital era.

c. For Future Researchers

This study may serve as a reference for future research focusing on writing barriers in foreign language learning contexts, particularly among EFL students. The findings provide an initial overview of the challenges faced by fifth-semester students in writing paragraphs in the digital era, which can serve as a foundation for expanding investigations into more specific aspects.

Future researchers may explore particular types of writing barriers, such as paragraph coherence, idea development, or the use of academic vocabulary. In addition, further studies may examine in more detail the influence of specific digital technologies, such as Grammarly, Quillbot, or ChatGPT, on students' writing skills.

This research is also expected to inspire future studies to design and test innovative teaching strategies aimed at overcoming students' difficulties in paragraph writing. In this way, subsequent research will not only enrich the academic literature on writing barriers but also provide practical contributions to the development of English language teaching approaches that are relevant to students' needs in the digital era.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

A clear understanding of key terms is essential to avoid ambiguity and maintain consistency in this study. The following are the definitions of the main terms used:

1. Paragraph Writing

Paragraph writing is the skill of expressing a single main idea presented in a topic sentence and supported by logically and sequentially arranged supporting sentences. Oshima and Hogue (2017) explain that a good paragraph consists of a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence that are interconnected to produce coherent writing. In the context of EFL students, paragraph writing is a fundamental skill that must be mastered before moving on to more complex academic writing. Hyland (2019) adds that academic paragraph writing requires cohesion and coherence, which often remain as challenges for students.

2. Writing Barriers

Writing barriers refer to all forms of difficulties or challenges faced by students in writing, whether linguistic, cognitive, technical, or psychological. According to Alamri (2022), writing barriers may include limited vocabulary, grammatical errors, difficulties in organizing ideas, as well as anxiety and lack of self-confidence. In the context of EFL students, writing barriers are also influenced by the lack of exposure to authentic English and limited opportunities to practice. A recent study by Andika, Sari, and Rahmawati (2023) shows that in the digital era, writing barriers have become more complex due to students' dependence on technology, which results in less practice in developing writing independently.

3. Digital Technology

Information and communication technology has become an integral part of daily life, including in the field of education. The presence of the internet, learning applications, and artificial intelligence has influenced the way students learn and write. Warschauer and Liaw (2020) state that digital technology facilitates students in accessing information and producing written work, but it also presents challenges such as distractions, dependency, and the decline of critical thinking skills. In this study, the digital era refers to the use of digital technology by students in the process of paragraph writing, both as a learning resource and as a writing aid.

4. Fifth-Semester Students of the English Education Department

The fifth-semester students of the English Education Department at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu are the subjects of this research. They are at the intermediate stage of their study, where they have already taken writing skill courses. At this stage, students are expected to be able to write academic paragraphs by paying attention to structure, grammar, and coherence. However, based on preliminary observations, writing barriers are still frequently encountered despite the availability of digital technology to support their learning.