



How Do EFL Students Perceive Challenges Towards Writing Short Drama Script of Narrative Text?

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Abstract

The present study aims to find out the dominant challenges experienced by 11th-grade students in writing short drama scripts of narrative text. One hundred six students were involved as research participants. The method used was quantitative descriptive with a questionnaire as the instrument consisting of 15 items about the students' challenges in writing short drama scripts. The questionnaire was distributed to the participants via WhatsApp group, and the teacher researcher asked them to submit it within 20 minutes after it was distributed. The researcher analyzed the participants' results of the questionnaire by using SPSS to find out the mean scores of each item. The mean scores gave information about which items on students' challenges were more dominant. The results show that the students do not experience the challenges of writing short drama scripts because of basic knowledge that the students already have. The willingness of students to read and practice several narrative texts helps increase the students' insight, the use of cooperative learning in class, as well as the readiness and sufficient background knowledge of the teacher to give to the students, are very helpful in developing and writing short drama scripts.

Keywords: *Challenges; EFL; Narrative Text; Short Drama Script; Writing*

Introduction

Writing is one of the language skills that EFL students are expected to master for written communication and academic writing, such as essays, papers, articles, project reports, *etc.* As one of the basic language skills, writing is also as important as other skills, namely listening, reading, and speaking (Nurmawarni & Kamaruddin, 2022). Adam (2021) reports that someone can express ideas, opinions, feelings, or experiences coherently and accurately in writing in a foreign language. In other words, someone can communicate indirectly through writing (Sasmita & Setyowati, 2021).

In education, the writing process is crucial because it can help students practice thinking, express ideas, and solve problems. They are expected to enrich their views on the topics they want to write and improve their writing techniques

(Asiah et al., 2020). However, mastering writing skills cannot be done instantly. They must be honed with practice and experience. This makes writing a challenging skill for EFL students.

Writing skills are complex and sometimes difficult to teach (Heaton, 1975). Kartika (2017) says the writing skills students consider difficult are their limited understanding of language aspects and writing components. Moreover, students' low grammar and vocabulary and inability to create good paragraphs and develop each element of topic sentences become the concerns of students' challenges. Alisha et al. (2019) divided writing challenges into three categories. They are linguistics, physiology, and cognitive difficulties. Linguistic difficulties include grammar, vocabulary, language use, and sentence choice in writing. Physiological difficulties focus more on the writer's difficulty in interacting directly with readers and getting feedback from them when writing. This type of difficulty relates to developing written material or essay content. The cognitive difficulties are related to organization and mechanics: spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing.

In writing class, types of writing text are presented, such as writing descriptive, recount, procedural, anecdotal, expository, and narrative. The narrative text is one of the materials taught in senior high school writing class. Alviano et al. (2020) stated that narrative text tells stories that happened in the past to entertain the readers dealing with complications or problematic events that lead to a crisis and, in turn, find a resolution. Writing narrative text is an activity that requires students to express their ideas and feeling in written form (Hasibuan & Handayani, 2019). While expressing ideas using a foreign language takes a significant effort. Therefore, in teaching narrative texts, teachers must explain narrative texts and generic structures to let students understand. In addition, teaching with methods or media will make parts easily understood by students.

A highly demanded writing activity in the narrative text is developing short drama scripts to compose and communicate ideas through drama performance activities based on folklore or legend. Astuti & Nurhayati (2016); Inderawati et al. (2022) said that such activities are considered helpful for students to be active and creative since they are required to express their ideas and creativity freely but still in the context of writing narrative text. In developing short drama scripts, students work in groups and are demanded to write their dialogue, the source of which can be taken from legends and folklore in the local context. In addition, they have to consider if their drama scripts convey entertaining and refreshing stories and moral values for the audiences (Reko, 2023).

Some previous studies have been conducted to describe the phenomena of learning narrative text. Laia (2019), Telaumbanua (2020), Mulyaningsih (2018), Afifah & Hakim (2022), Sukran & Kurniawan (2022), Setiyani (2022), Rofi'i (2022), Sinaga (2020) and Koilara et al. (2020), reveal that students found difficulties in writing, such as generic structure and language use. However, no previous studies discussed writing narrative text in the form of short drama scripts.

One of the authors also found an interesting phenomenon when teaching narrative text writing in her three classes. She found that about 50% of the students took quite a long time to compose a script because they had to use their imagination to arrange the text sequence. However, other students need several hours to develop

a play script. [Simbolon & Indrawati \(2021\)](#) state that writing short drama scripts is challenging, especially for senior high school students. During their assessment of the students' drama scripts, most students still used present tense rather than past tense. They continued to write short drama scripts with grammatical errors, and the most obvious challenge was that most of them still needed help to develop and improve storylines. Based on the previous studies and empirical evidence from the teaching experience of one of the researchers, the present study was conducted to find out students' perceptions of challenges in developing and writing short drama scripts from narrative texts.

Method

This present study used descriptive quantitative. This method was used to investigate social problems and phenomena by collecting numerical data, which were analyzed using math-based methods ([Bhawna & Gobind, 2015](#)). One hundred six students in the 11th grade at one of the public senior high schools in East Java, Indonesia taking English class as an elective subject, were recruited. To collect the data from the participants, a questionnaire was used as the instrument, containing 15 items about the problems of writing difficulties. It was divided into three categories, according to [Pratiwi \(2016\)](#) linguistic difficulties (vocabulary and language use), physiological difficulties (content), and cognitive difficulties (mechanics and organization).

The questionnaire was adapted from an article entitled EFL Students' Difficulties in Writing Narrative Text ([Falihah et al., 2022](#)). A four-point Likert Scale was used, coded as Strongly Agree (SA) with 4 points, Agree (A) with 3 points, Disagree (D) with 2 points, and Strongly Disagree (SD) with 1 point. The questionnaire was distributed to the participants via WhatsApp group, and the teacher researcher asked them to submit it within 20 minutes after it was distributed. The researcher analyzed the participants' results of the questionnaire by using SPSS, the researcher starts with find the frequency of answers for each item. Then, the frequency will be multiplied by the Likert score. The results obtained will be multiplied by the Likert score, per frequency of answer and item. Total the multiplication of all answers per item. After the researcher gets the total score, the results will be divided by the number of participants. The researcher will get the mean scores. The mean scores gave information about which items on the students' challenges were more dominant.

Results

The results of the analysis are presented in the form of a mean score. The mean scores represent the results of each item in the questionnaire, categorized into three dimensions, as shown in Figure 1.

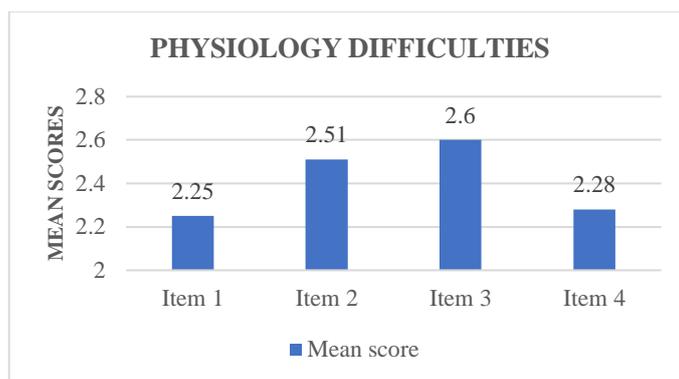


Figure 1. The mean score of each item in dimension 1

The overall data in Figure 1 shows that the mean score of students' challenges in dimension 1 varies. In dimension 1 (*physiological difficulties*), item 1, *students have difficulties in expressing ideas*. The participants disagreed that they had difficulty expressing ideas, as indicated by the low mean score of 2.25. In item two, *students have difficulties writing correct sentences*, and the mean score is 2.51, meaning that the participants do not agree if they have difficulty writing correct sentences. Item three, *students have a limited understanding of using the generic structure of the narrative text*, has a mean score of 2.6. The participants do not have limited knowledge of the structure of the narrative text. In item four, *students do not share their written texts with their friends to get feedback* showing a mean of 2.28. The participants disagreed if they never shared their thoughts and ideas with fellow group members. The overall mean score in dimension 1 is 2.41. From these results, in dimension 1, the participants do not have significant challenges while writing short drama scripts.

The results on mean scores of each item in dimension 2 (*linguistic difficulties*) as presented in Figure 2.

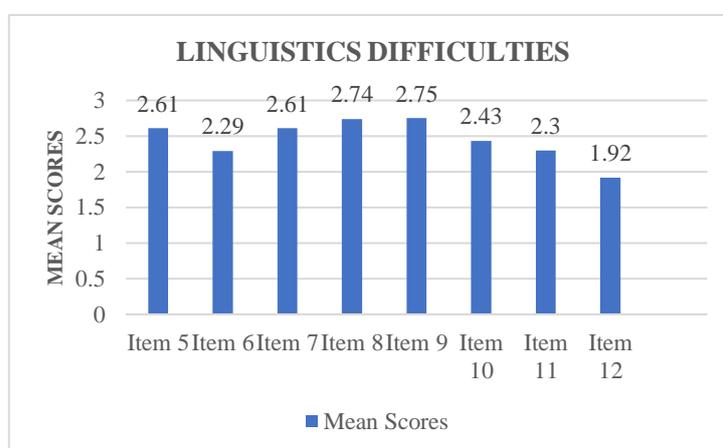


Figure 2. The mean scores of each item in dimension 2

Figure 2 shows that item 5, *students experience difficulties in using the correct tenses*, has a mean of 2.61. This result shows that the participants disagree if they experience difficulties in tenses. *Students only use the present tense in writing texts*, as item 6 explains that the participants do not use the present tense in writing, with a mean of 2.29. Item 7, *students have difficulties in using the appropriate vocabulary*,

also has a mean score of 2.61, indicating that the participants have no difficulty in vocabulary. Item 8, *students with limited vocabulary*, have a relatively high mean score of 2.74, meaning they can handle limited vocabulary to write short drama scripts. In item 9, *students have difficulties using proper grammar*, with a mean of 2.75. Moreover, item 10, *students cannot write structured sentences according to correct grammar*, has a mean score of 2.43. These illustrate that the participants can correctly write sentences according to the grammar structure. Item 11, *students have difficulties in using proper diction*, have a mean score of 2.30, and the participants use the right words. *Students have difficulties in distinguishing synonyms and antonyms*, as item 12 has the lowest mean score of 1.92. They strongly disagree if they have difficulty determining synonyms and antonyms. The overall mean score of dimension 2 is 2.46, the highest average of all dimensions. However, on this dimension, the writer still does not find the dominant challenges faced by the participants while writing short drama scripts of narrative texts.

The mean scores of each item in dimension 3 (*cognitive difficulties*) as shown in Figure 3.

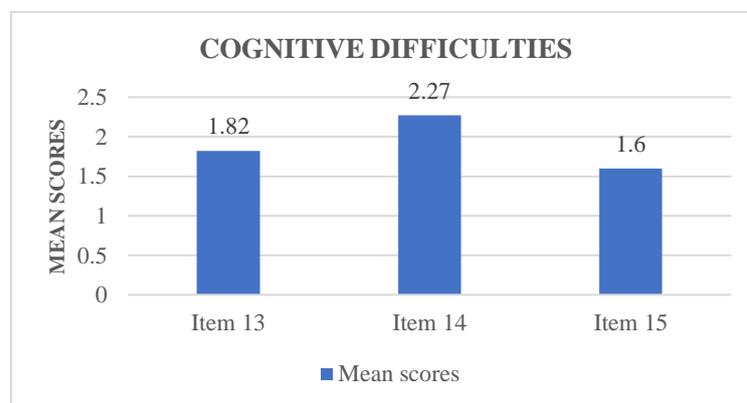


Figure 3. The mean score of each item in dimension 3

Dimension 3 (cognitive difficulties) contains three items, 13 to 15. The results explain that in item 13, *students have a limited understanding of using punctuation*, having a mean score of 1.82. It means that the participants have no difficulty in using punctuation. Besides, *the use of incorrect spelling by students* in item 14 has a mean of 2.27. They can use the spelling correctly. In item 15, *students have difficulties in using capital letters* have the lowest mean score of 1.60. The mean score of dimension 3 is 1.90. Overall, the participants chose the disagree option, meaning they do not experience challenges in dimension 3.

Figure 4 shows the results of the overall mean scores for each dimension. For linguistic difficulties, the highest mean score is 2.46, followed by physiological difficulties with a mean of 2.41, and the last cognitive difficulties with the lowest mean score of 1.90.

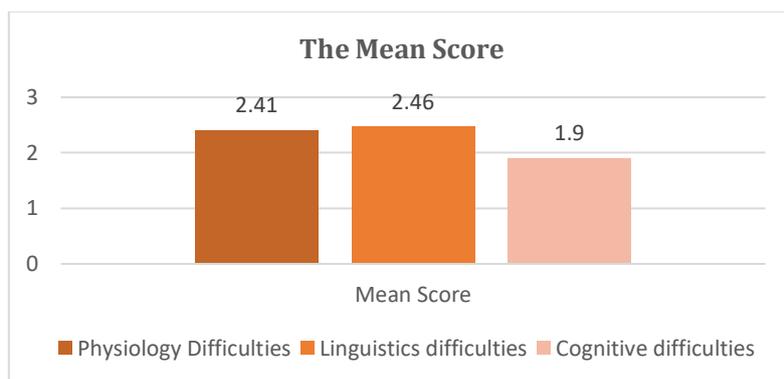


Figure 4. The mean score of each dimension

From figure 4, it can be concluded that students have less dominant challenges in developing and writing short drama scripts in narrative text.

Discussion

In the present study, the researchers found that the students have less challenges in 3 categories, namely physiology, linguistics, and cognitive difficulties (Pratiwi, 2016). From the existing data results, the students do not have dominant challenges when writing short drama scripts in narrative text. Specifically, in dimension 1 (*physiology difficulties*), students do not have dominant challenges in developing content. During the teaching and learning process, the teachers equip the students with background knowledge of narrative text before they start to write short drama scripts. Moreover, working in groups allows low-achievers to be supported by high-achievers. This benefits students to achieve their academic goals more effectively and improve peer skills without pressure (Alghamdy, 2019). However, this result differs from the previous study (Asi, 2019), saying that the students have challenges in physiological categories, especially the difficulties experienced by students in constructing generic narrative texts. In addition, students are often confused when writing, and they cannot develop their ideas. From this, it can be seen that students' background knowledge and interest in learning English, as well as the application of cooperative learning in the writing class, help students write short drama scripts well.

Dimension 2 (*linguistics difficulties*) shows that the students do not experience significant challenges in using vocabulary and language use. This differs from the previous study (Rosdiana, 2021), which explained that linguistic categories are the most challenging difficulties experienced by students in writing narrative texts. Students had limited vocabulary lists and poor word selection and needed help with grammatical structures. In contrast with the results of this study, the students have sufficient knowledge of linguistics, such as vocabulary and language use. The students are good at using tenses appropriately and have a reasonably rich vocabulary. These good things might be caused by their excellent understanding and basic knowledge of narrative texts provided by their teachers before they write short drama scripts. In addition, getting students used to reading a lot of narrative texts before class activity can improve students' ability in writing. This is also in line with (Linuwih, 2020) states that reading can influence because some parts of

understanding from reading play an essential role in the writing process. The students have a process to bring their understanding and ideas from reading material and organize them into good writing.

The findings in dimension 3 (*cognitive difficulties*) explain that the participants have less difficulties related to organization and mechanics. This is quite different from the previous study (Amely et al., 2022), indicating that the students need help in cognitive categories as students still make spelling and punctuation errors such as periods, commas, and quotation marks. In addition, some students also did not consider the use of capitalization for names of people, regions, and at the beginning of sentences. The previous result is different from the findings in this study; this good thing occurs since the students are asked to practice writing several narrative texts before starting to write short drama scripts. These learning experiences may increase the students' knowledge of organization and mechanics in writing.

Overall, the participants have less dominant challenges in dimensions 1 to 3 because the students joining English lessons as an elective subject are considered to have good basic English based on their own passion. In addition, providing narrative texts as text models by the teachers is also beneficial for them as their background knowledge to write short drama scripts. The more students read, the more knowledge they get. Furthermore, the teachers implement cooperative learning strategies to accommodate students with heterogenous abilities in groups to complete assignments to achieve teaching and learning goals (Prasetyawati, 2021).

Conclusion

Based on the results research, the three dimensions shows *physiological difficulties* with a mean score of 2.41, *linguistic difficulties* which have the result of 2.46, and *cognitive difficulties* which have the smallest mean score of 1.90. It can be conclude that the students do not experience dominant challenges in writing short drama scripts of narrative texts because of the basic knowledge that the students already have. The occurrence of minimal challenges in writing short drama scripts is due to sufficient teachers' readiness and students' background knowledge during the learning process of narrative text. The teachers also provide textbooks related to learning topics. In addition, the willingness of students to practice several narrative texts before starting the writing class provides insights for them. The use of cooperative learning in class also helps students solve problems in a discussion so that the process of writing short drama scripts becomes efficient and effective. This study suggests that future researchers can conduct similar research with different research settings and methods to get broader perspectives about writing short drama scripts in narrative text.

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