



Reading Habits and Their Influence on Student English Writing Skill in Indonesia: A Systematic Review

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Abstract

This systematic review investigates the influence of reading habits on the writing skills of Indonesian EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students, based on 24 selected articles from a pool of 30 Scopes-indexed studies from 2014-2024. The findings reveal a clear connection between regular reading habits and enhanced writing proficiency, particularly in grammar, creative thinking, and content organization. However, challenges such as limited exposure to English, inadequate meta-cognitive strategies, and a lack of reading culture hinder progress. Technological integration can mitigate these barriers and foster reading and writing development if effectively implemented. The study highlights strategies to promote reading habits, including using multimedia tools, encouraging independent learning, developing meta-cognitive strategies, and fostering international collaboration in academic research. By addressing these areas, educational practices in Indonesia can more effectively support EFL learners in improving their English writing skills through enhanced reading engagement.

Keywords: *Reading habits, Writing skills, EFL students, English language learning, Systematic review.*

Introduction

Reading is a fundamental method for acquiring essential information in daily life (Kim & Zagata, 2024). As humans navigate their environment, the ability to read plays a critical role in facilitating understanding and knowledge acquisition. This importance of reading is particularly evident in education, where reading is not only a source of information but also a requisite skill that influences various aspects of learning, including writing proficiency. Despite the recognised benefits of reading, many students exhibit reluctance toward engaging with reading

materials, which can hinder their academic performance. This study explores the relationship between reading habits and writing skills among Indonesian students, focusing on the premise that increased reading engagement may enhance students' writing abilities. Researchers found that Indonesian students have low reading competence (Ratminingsih et al., 2020).

Reading is an analytical process that transforms written content into meaningful information, facilitating an indirect flow of ideas between the writer and the reader (Mozafari & Barjesteh, 2016). For students, reading is often perceived as an assignment rather than an enjoyable activity. This perception can lead to resistance, particularly when students must read materials that do not capture their interest. The role of the teacher in this context becomes crucial, as educators are tasked with guiding students to appreciate the value of reading (Bojadjevska, 2019). The challenge arises when students exhibit aversion to these directives, impeding their ability to fulfil educational requirements. The ultimate goal of education is to cultivate knowledge, yet many students struggle to navigate the pathways to acquiring it.

Habits, settled tendencies or customary behaviours significantly shape an individual's skills. In language acquisition, habitual reading is linked to improved writing skills (Linuwih & Winardi, 2020). Highlights the importance of writing as a productive skill in language development, particularly in English, which serves as a global medium for knowledge dissemination (Guo & Li, 2024). posits that writing performance can be significantly improved through consistent practice (Sudirman et al., 2020). However, a common issue among students is the tendency to produce writing that lacks depth and quality, often resulting in mere rewrites that prioritise correctness over creativity and originality. Therefore, enhancing writing quality necessitates incorporating reading as a fundamental practice.

The relationship between reading and writing is underscored by the premise that effective writing is rooted in the ability to read widely and critically (Jelani et al., 2023). Students who engage in regular reading will likely develop a broader vocabulary and a deeper understanding of language structures, enhancing their writing capabilities. This research focuses on the literature review of some articles that exhibit writing proficiency challenges, primarily demonstrating strength in oral communication. The disparity between speaking and writing skills requires a closer examination of the factors contributing to this imbalance. Nazurty et al. (2019) assert that reading habits are crucial for fostering writing skills, emphasising that writing is inherently a product of reading. Consequently, students who cultivate strong reading habits are better equipped to produce coherent and engaging written texts.

Some preview articles reveal that many students struggle with writing due to limited vocabulary, which correlates with their infrequent reading habits. Despite having access to reading materials, a lack of motivation impedes students' engagement with texts, particularly those written in English (Perdana et al., 2023).

As such, students often resort to reading only when instructed by their teachers, resulting in a superficial understanding of the content. During this teaching program, the students were permitted to use dictionaries to aid their comprehension and vocabulary expansion. This controlled approach facilitates quality writing by encouraging students to explore new words and concepts. This study's primary research question is: "Is there a correlation between reading habits and writing ability?" This inquiry investigates the relationship between students' reading practices and their capacity to produce quality written work. The research also explores the role of reading in developing writing skills among students.

Recent studies have explored the relationship between reading habits and writing skills among EFL learners. Several researchers found a positive correlation between reading habits and writing performance (Nguyen, 2022) (Linuwih & Winardi, 2020) (Nguyen, 2022) and observed that nearly 60% of reading pattern segments significantly contributed to writing ability. Linuwih and Winardi (2020) concluded that reading habits influence students' writing skills, particularly in content development. However, (Noor, 2022) found a weak and negative correlation between reading habits and writing ability, suggesting that solid reading habits do not always translate to improved writing skills. Despite this discrepancy, most studies recommend encouraging students to develop good reading habits to enhance their writing performance (Linuwih & Winardi, 2020).

Method

The systematic literature review examined the relationship between reading habits and English writing skills, specifically in Indonesia. We pursued the research question: How do various reading behaviors influence English writing proficiency among Indonesian learners? We analyzed studies published in English from the Scopus database, restricted to 2014 to 2024. We used the following keywords: reading habits, reading behavior, literacy practices, study patterns, English writing skills, writing proficiency, composition ability, literary competence, and Indonesia. A computerized database search initially generated 30 articles. The PRISMA flow diagram illustrates the selection process of studies (Fig. 1).

ALL (("reading habits" OR "reading behavior" OR "literacy practices"OR"study patterns") AND ("english writing skill" OR "writing proficiency" OR "composition ability" OR "literary competence") AND ("indonesia"OR"Indonesian")) AND PUBYEAR >2013 AND PUBYEAR <2025 AND PUBYEAR >2014 AND PUBYEAR <2025 AND (LIMIT-TO (SRCTYPE,"j"))

From the 30 articles identified in Scopus, 24 were selected for detailed review. Six articles were excluded. The remaining 24 studies provided relevant information on research methodology, reading behaviour, and its effect on English writing skills in Indonesian. These studies explored different aspects of reading habits, such as frequency, motivation, and types of reading materials, and how they

contributed to improved writing proficiency.

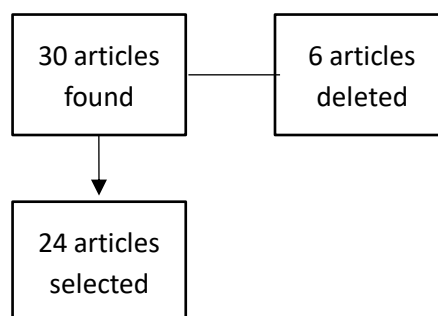


Figure. 1 PRISMA flow diagram.

Result

Table 1. Cluster

Cluster 1	occurrences	total link strength
adaptive learning	1	4
digital literacy	1	4
digital literacy instruction	1	4
self-determination motivation	1	4
writing skills	3	12
Cluster 2		
barriers	1	5
cognitive	1	5
linguistic competence	1	5
literacy	1	5
motivation	1	5
Cluster 3		
creative thinking	1	3
grammar knowledge	1	3
reading habits	2	6
reasoning ability	1	3
sentence structure	1	3
Cluster 4		
academic writing	3	10
disciplinary research writing	1	3

discourse competence	1	3
EFL learners	1	4
Cluster 5		
academic writing phrases	1	4
EFL students	1	4
research proposals	1	4
writing	1	4

The provided table shows a breakdown of five distinct clusters, each containing critical terms related to reading habits, writing skills, and broader language learning concepts, along with their occurrences and total link strength.

Cluster 1 focuses heavily on writing skills, which appears three times with a high link strength of 12, indicating its strong association with other concepts in the field. Related terms like adaptive learning, digital literacy, and self-determination motivation (all with a link strength of 4) suggest that this cluster explores the relationship between technological learning tools and motivation in improving writing skills. This is especially relevant in modern educational practices where adaptive learning and digital literacy are pivotal in language acquisition (Arono et al., 2022).

The second cluster emphasises more cognitive and motivational aspects of learning. Terms like barriers, cognitive, linguistic competence, and motivation all have strong link strengths of 5, suggesting that challenges related to language learning, including mental barriers and linguistic proficiency, are crucial factors influencing literacy and writing development. This cluster likely reflects learners' psychological and practical obstacles in developing writing skills, especially in the EFL (English as a Foreign Language).

Cluster 3, reading habits stand out in this cluster with two occurrences and a link strength of 6, highlighting the importance of habitual reading in developing writing proficiency. Other related terms like creative thinking, grammar knowledge, and sentence structure have lower occurrences and link strengths, indicating that while these aspects are essential, reading habits play a more central role. This cluster seems to focus on the cognitive benefits of reading and how it enhances writing abilities by improving creative thinking and grammatical accuracy.

Cluster 4 is centred on academic writing (3 occurrences, link strength of 10) alongside related concepts such as disciplinary research writing and discourse competence. The emphasis here is on formal writing skills, especially in academics, which are essential for EFL learners (with a link strength of 4). This cluster highlights how academic writing is a specialised language that requires specific instruction and competence, especially for learners in higher education or research settings.

Cluster 5 links academic writing phrases and research proposals with EFL students and writing. Each term appears once with a link strength of 4, indicating moderately connected themes. This suggests that EFL students mainly focus on mastering academic writing conventions and research-oriented tasks, an essential part of their language development journey.

In conclusion, these clusters collectively provide a comprehensive overview of the critical areas influencing English writing skills, particularly concerning reading habits, academic writing, and language learning strategies. Each cluster presents a different aspect, from the cognitive and motivational challenges (Cluster 2) to the technological and motivational supports for writing improvement (Cluster 1), highlighting the multifaceted nature of the topic.

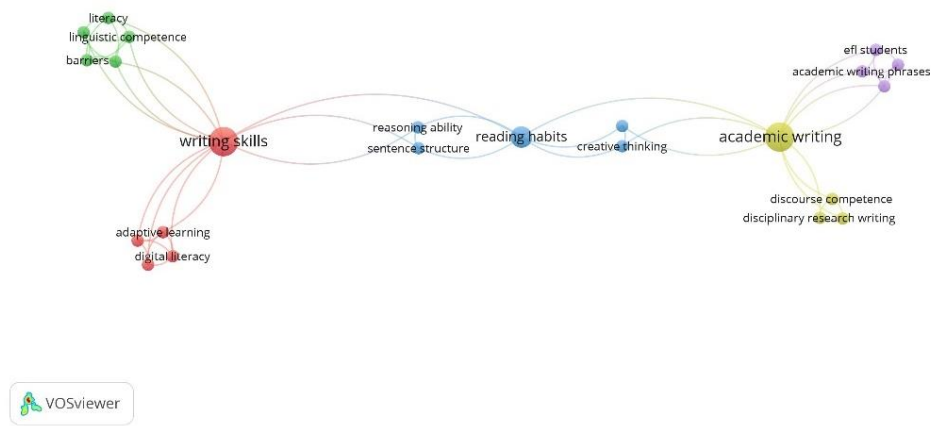


Figure 2. Vosviewer Result

Table 2. Studies included: participants' nationality

id	country	documents
1	China	2
2	Hong Kong	1
3	Indonesia	17
4	Iran	2
5	Japan	1
6	Malaysia	1
7	New Zealand	1
8	Philippines	1
9	Spain	1
10	Taiwan	1
11	Thailand	1
12	Turkey	1
13	United States	3
14	Yemen	1

The table displays the distribution of documents, citations, and total link strength from different countries, as analysed using VOSviewer. Indonesia stands out with 17 documents and 138 citations, demonstrating a significant contribution to research, particularly in topics related to reading habits and writing skills. DEFLite, with a large number of citations, Indonesia has a relatively modest total link strength of 3, suggesting moderate collaboration or influence across global research networks.

The United States shows three documents and 47 citations, but it has the highest total link strength of 4, indicating solid interconnections and a robust presence in collaborative research. China follows with two documents and 46 citations, although its total link strength is lower, at 1, pointing to limited collaboration with other countries.

Some countries, such as Taiwan, which has 91 citations from just 1 document, show high individual impact but lack link strength, suggesting that while their research is influential, it may not be well-integrated into global academic networks. Japan and New Zealand have 1 document and 30 citations, indicating impactful research but with minimal international collaboration (total link strength of 1 each).

On the other hand, countries like Yemen, Iran, and the Philippines have lower citation counts and link strength, reflecting smaller research output or newer areas of study with less international engagement. These data highlight the importance of both research output and global connectivity in determining the broader influence of a country's academic work.

Critical Challenges in Enhancing EFL Skills in Indonesian Students. One of the primary challenges Indonesian EFL students face is the limited exposure to English in their daily lives. This is evident from the fact that liking English is not directly proportional to its daily use with friends (12%) and family (24%) (Rafika et al., 2021). The lack of regular practice and authentic communication opportunities hinders students' ability to develop fluency and confidence in using English. Many Indonesian students lack effective metacognitive strategies for language learning. This is evident because students cannot study independently at home and still need parental guidance (Hellystia & Hermawati, 2024). The absence of self-regulated learning skills can significantly hinder progress in EFL acquisition.

Leveraging Technology to Enhance EFL Skills in Indonesian Students. Technology offers significant potential to enhance English as a Foreign Language (EFL) skills among Indonesian students. Integrating reading and writing instruction using technology can have synergistic effects on developing both skills. This approach mainly benefits EFL learners, as reading and writing draw on shared language systems and skills. Technology enables teachers to make reading-writing connections explicit, which is crucial for facilitating transfer between the two skills (Kim & Zagata, 2024). Multimedia and technology-based English teaching

materials are becoming an essential need in education. Interactive videos, photos, and images can help attract students' interest and maintain their attention. Multimedia allows students to understand complex concepts in a short time more efficiently. It also provides opportunities for students to engage with content through multiple channels, stimulating learning (Rafika et al., 2021).

Effective Strategies for Integrating Reading Habits to Enhance Writing Skills. Reading and writing are closely interconnected skills mutually reinforcing (Yohana et al., 2021). This connection is supported by empirical evidence showing that students who are strong in word reading tend to be strong in spelling, and those strong in reading comprehension tend to be strong in written composition. The Interactive Dynamic Literacy Model illustrates how reading and writing skills are interwoven, forming hierarchical, interactive, and dynamic relations (Kim & Zagata, 2024). Encouraging students to engage in independent reading and writing activities is crucial for skill development.

While guidance is essential, students should also have opportunities to apply their skills independently, transferring what they have learned from reading to their writing (Celik, 2020). Research suggests that integrating reading and writing activities can significantly enhance EFL students' writing skills. Effective strategies include summarising, paraphrasing, short story writing, comparing and contrasting, discovery learning, and project-based learning (Anaktototy et al., 2023).

Challenges and Barriers to Promoting Reading Habits to Improve Writing Skills in EFL. One of the primary challenges in promoting reading habits to improve writing skills in EFL is the lack of a strong reading culture (Pardede et al., 2023). Many students are not avid readers and do not make reading a habit. This issue extends beyond English, as many students have not read much literature in their native language. The gap between students who read regularly and those who do not is significant, with the latter outnumbering the former. EFL students often face difficulties in reading and writing due to limited language proficiency. This creates a significant obstacle in using reading to improve writing skills. The language barrier can make it challenging for students to comprehend texts fully, limiting their ability to learn from and apply what they read to their writing (Ratminingsih et al., 2020).

How reading habits on writing skill? Research suggests that reading can significantly improve English writing skills. Studies have shown that integrating reading into writing tasks enhances writing performance and motivates students to read more (Habibi et al., 2016). Extensive reading programs have been found to improve overall writing quality, including content, organization, vocabulary, and mechanics. The reading-writing connection appears more vital for students with higher language proficiency, suggesting that a linguistic threshold may be necessary for optimal benefits. Independent reading enhances narrative and descriptive writing quality, while independent writing improves reading

comprehension) (Jouhar & Rupley, 2020). A meta-analysis confirms that reading interventions positively impact various aspects of writing performance. Additionally, students with good reading habits demonstrate better writing skills. Overall, these studies highlight the importance of fostering reading habits to enhance writing skills in English language learners.

Discussion

The analysis of the selected studies reveals the interconnectedness of reading habits, writing skills, and EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learning strategies, particularly within the Indonesian context. Cluster 1, which emphasizes writing skills as a core focus, suggests that technological integration, such as adaptive learning and digital literacy tools, is pivotal in enhancing writing proficiency, especially for EFL learners. This aligns with modern educational practices where technology bridges gaps in learning and motivates students (Arono et al., 2022). Cluster 2 emphasizes the cognitive and motivational barriers to language learning. It highlights Indonesian students' psychological and practical challenges in developing writing skills. This may stem from limited exposure to English, insufficient self-regulated learning skills, and the absence of effective meta-cognitive strategies ((Hellystia & Hermawati, 2024).

The findings in this cluster reveal a disconnect between students' liking for English and its daily application, further underscoring the need for structured interventions to overcome these barriers. Cluster 3 centres around the crucial role of reading habits in improving writing skills. The findings indicate that regular reading enhances grammatical accuracy, creative thinking, and overall writing performance. Studies show that students who read more tend to develop more vital writing skills (Jouhar & Rupley, 2020). This connection is reinforced by the Interactive Dynamic Literacy Model, which illustrates the interdependent relationship between reading and writing (Kim & Zagata, 2024). Clusters 4 and 5 focus on academic writing and its significance for EFL students. Mastering academic writing conventions, disciplinary research writing, and research proposals is crucial for students in higher education or research settings. As EFL learners progress, they focus on mastering formal writing and research tasks, vital for academic success.

The analysis of the participants' nationalities highlights Indonesia's significant contribution to research on EFL, particularly on reading habits and writing skills, with 17 documents and a considerable number of citations. However, the country demonstrates moderate global collaboration, reflected in its low total link strength. This suggests a need for greater integration into global academic networks to enhance the visibility and influence of Indonesian EFL research.

Conclusion

The findings from this systematic review underscore the importance of fostering reading habits to improve writing skills among Indonesian EFL learners. Research clusters focus on various aspects of language learning, including technology integration, cognitive challenges, and the academic writing requirements for EFL learners. Reading habits are a critical factor influencing writing proficiency, with regular readers demonstrating better writing performance across various metrics, including grammar, creative thinking, and content organization. In Indonesian EFL, limited exposure to English, insufficient meta-cognitive strategies, and a lack of reading culture significantly challenge improving writing skills. However, when effectively leveraged, technology can support reading and writing development, enabling students to engage with content in ways that stimulate language learning.

Several strategies can be implemented to address the challenges identified in promoting reading habits and improving writing skills in Indonesian EFL students. Integration of Technology, Schools and educational institutions should prioritise using multimedia and technology-based English teaching tools. Interactive videos, digital texts, and e-books can help make reading more engaging for students, especially those who may not have developed a strong reading habit. Encouraging Independent Learning, Self-regulated learning should be encouraged by promoting independent reading and writing activities outside the classroom. Establishing extensive reading programs and writing workshops can foster more vital reading habits, enhancing writing skills. Developing Meta-cognitive Strategies, Teachers should focus on developing students' meta cognitive skills, enabling them to self-monitor their learning process, set goals, and develop strategies for reading comprehension and writing tasks.

This will help bridge the gap between liking English and applying it in practical, daily situations. Collaboration in Program: Given Indonesia's moderate global program collaboration, initiatives should be taken to engage more with international academic networks. Joint research projects, conferences, and collaborations with foreign institutions can enhance the global visibility of Indonesian research on EFL. By addressing these implications, educational practices in Indonesia can better support the development of English writing skills by promoting regular reading habits and the effective use of technology and self-regulated learning strategies.

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