

# Perceptual Alignment: Investigating EFL Teachers' Perspectives on Students' Writing Difficulties

Novika Amalia<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The University of Palangka Raya

## Article history:

Received  
31 December 2024

Revised  
5 January 2024

Accepted  
8 January 2025

Available online  
15 January 2025

This paper is licensed  
under Creative Commons  
Attribution 4.0  
International License



**Abstract:** The study investigates the alignment between EFL teachers' perceptions of students' writing difficulties and the actual performance of students in vocabulary, grammar, organization, and mechanics. Using semi-structured interviews with five certified EFL teachers and written tests from 28 junior high school students, the research employs thematic and content analysis. Results show strong alignment in vocabulary and grammar, highlighting issues such as limited vocabulary range and frequent grammatical errors. However, significant misalignment is found in organization and mechanics, with teachers overestimating students' skills in structuring essays and using punctuation. The findings underscore the pressing need to address these gaps, as the misalignment between teachers' perceptions and student performance hinders effective instruction and student progress in writing proficiency. Bridging this gap is crucial for fostering holistic EFL writing skills. Suggestions include structured feedback rubrics, peer evaluations, and professional development workshops to enhance teaching practices. This study contributes to improving EFL instruction by identifying gaps in teacher-student alignment and proposing targeted interventions for better writing proficiency.

**Keywords:** English writing, pedagogical competence, students' difficulties, teacher's perception

## INTRODUCTION

Writing is utilized in both academic and professional contexts and is a crucial component of studying English as a foreign language (EFL). For EFL learners, writing properly is crucial because it increases their vocabulary, sharpens their grammar, and increases their level of language proficiency. Children who write well typically do better academically because it enables them to communicate in a number of ways and provide a clear and succinct explanation of complex ideas (Al-Ahdal & Abduh, 2021). Writing is an essential tool for success in university settings, as students must explain their comprehension of subjects across disciplines, and it also fosters higher-order thinking skills. However, EFL students

\*Corresponding author: [novikaamalia@fkip.upr.ac.id](mailto:novikaamalia@fkip.upr.ac.id)

To cite this article: Amalia, N. (2025). Perceptual Alignment: Investigating EFL Teachers' Perspectives on Students' Writing Difficulties. *Ebony --- Journal of English Language Teaching, Linguistics, and Literature*, 5(1) 2025, 26-40.

often face numerous challenges when learning to write, which can affect their academic performance (Jashari & Fojkar, 2019; Sasmita & Setyowati, 2021).

In an EFL context, mastering writing is a complex process that involves a number of essential elements (Al-Ahdal & Abduh, 2021). The four key components of writing proficiency: organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics, serve as vital auxiliary elements (Trabelsi, 2021). The term "content" describes how ideas are developed inside a text, and EFL students must convey their ideas in a way that makes sense and is pertinent to the assignment. The structure of ideas and the text's logical flow are both important aspects of organization (Trabelsi, 2021). The foundations of language accuracy are grammar and vocabulary, which show how well students can express meaning using suitable linguistic forms. Lastly, mechanics, which includes spelling, capitalization, and punctuation, helps make written communication easier to read and understand (Trabelsi, 2021). Because students have to switch between the writing conventions of the new language and their native language structures, these components are especially difficult for EFL learners (Butt, Quraishi, & Bhatti, 2019). Common challenges identified by students include difficulties with content unity, coherence, grammar, and vocabulary (Alamri & Yaseen, 2021; Sasmita & Setyowati, 2021).

In addition to mastering these components, the relationship between teachers and students plays a significant role in writing instruction. Specifically, the alignment between teachers' perceptions and student writing performance is crucial for effective learning (Cheng et al., 2021). Teachers believe that EFL learners commonly struggle with issues such as vocabulary, writing anxiety, grammar difficulties, and poor structure organization, which are often exacerbated by a lack of reading and writing practice (Jashari & Fojkar, 2019). Teacher-student writing conferences, where oral feedback is provided, significantly improved the use of cohesive devices in students' writing (Alfalagg, 2020). This suggests that teachers' understanding of student challenges in writing can lead to more targeted and effective interventions. Additionally, internal factors like fear of making mistakes and lack of confidence significantly hinder students' writing abilities (Sasmita & Setyowati, 2021). Collaborative learning strategies help students develop critical thinking skills, which are closely tied to their ability to organize and articulate ideas in writing (Chen & Preston, 2021). When teachers accurately perceive the difficulties their students face in areas like vocabulary and grammar, they can provide precise feedback that fosters language acquisition and improves overall writing performance. Furthermore, providing positive reinforcement can boost students' confidence and improve their writing outcomes (Adelita et al., 2023; Sasmita & Setyowati, 2021).

However, research also points to a significant gap in the alignment between teachers' perceptions and actual student performance (Cheng et al., 2021; Trabelsi, 2021). While much of the literature has explored teacher perceptions in general (Borg, 2018), fewer studies have focused on how accurately these perceptions reflect students' real writing difficulties. One area where this misalignment often occurs is in organization and mechanics. Teachers may overestimate their students' ability to structure their writing logically and apply appropriate punctuation and spelling rules, leading to interventions that miss the mark. For example, discrepancies between teacher expectations and student performance in these areas

negatively impacted student writing, as teachers often focused on higher-order concerns like content at the expense of basic organizational and mechanical skills (Cheng et al., 2021; Tu & Phung, 2023). This gap calls for a deeper investigation into how teacher perceptions can be better aligned with the actual challenges that students face.

This study seeks to address a pressing gap in the alignment between EFL teachers' perceptions of their students' writing difficulties and the actual challenges students face in vocabulary, grammar, organization, and mechanics. Misalignments in these areas can lead to ineffective instructional strategies, hindering students' writing development and overall language proficiency. As EFL writing remains a cornerstone of academic and professional success, addressing these discrepancies is crucial for ensuring that teaching practices meet the evolving needs of learners in increasingly diverse and digitalized learning environments. The study contributes to both theoretical and practical advancements by analyzing this alignment. Theoretically, it expands on prior research by exploring the dynamics of teacher-student alignment in specific contexts. Practically, it provides actionable strategies to help teachers offer precise feedback and interventions, enhancing students' writing outcomes.

The research question which guides this study is : to what extent do EFL teachers' perceptions of their students' writing difficulties align with the actual challenges students face in vocabulary, grammar, organization, and mechanics? This study aims to enhance EFL writing education. By identifying critical areas of misalignment, the findings will inform the development of more effective teaching strategies, enabling educators to better support students' writing skills in both classroom and digital learning settings. This research underscores the need for immediate attention to bridging teacher-student alignment gaps to ensure more impactful and inclusive EFL instruction.

## METHOD

### Design

The alignment between EFL teachers' perceptions of their students' writing challenges and the students' actual performance in critical writing domains was examined in this study using a qualitative case study design since it allows for a thorough, context-specific investigation of the relationships between teacher perceptions and student writing performance within a specific educational setting. Through an examination of the dynamics inside this limited system, the research offers a thorough comprehension of writing difficulties related to vocabulary, grammar, structure, and mechanics.

### Participants

Students from junior high school and certified EFL teachers were both participants in this case study. Participants included 28 junior high school students who were chosen from a school in Palangka Raya. To ensure a varied range of writing abilities, these students were selected based on the instructor's evaluations of their academic performance, language competence, and motivation levels. This sampling made it possible to have a general grasp of the typical writing difficulties that students of different skill levels face.



Five certified EFL teachers with at least four years of classroom experience each also took part in the study. The teachers were chosen to offer a variety of approaches and techniques to teaching at various grade levels. Because of their acquaintance with the students, it was possible to compare instructor perceptions and student writing performance directly, which made their insights especially useful for the case study.

### **Data collection**

The data collection process was conducted in two phases to ensure that teacher perceptions were captured independently of student performance. In the first phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the five EFL teachers before the students submitted their written tasks. The interviews focused on questions on students' general writing performance, and on the four components of writing: vocabulary, grammar, organization, and mechanics. Doing the interview before the writing task ensured that teachers' perceptions were not influenced by the actual writing samples under analysis. Each interview was recorded and transcribed for subsequent analysis. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and confidentiality was maintained. In the second phase, students' written tests were collected voluntarily after the teacher interviews. The task required students to write a short essay, about 100-150 words, on a genre and topic of their choices. Participation was voluntary, and all data were anonymized to ensure confidentiality.

Data collection occurred over two sessions in a junior high school in Palangka Raya, in June 2024. Interviews were conducted at the school, while writing tasks were completed during class sessions under researcher supervision. These instruments were designed to analyze the relationship between teachers' perceptions and student writing performance.

### **Data collection**

The data were analyzed using two different qualitative analysis methods: thematic analysis for the teacher interviews and content analysis for the students' written tests. Thematic analysis was applied to the interview transcripts to identify recurring themes regarding teacher perceptions of student writing difficulties. The interview data were coded, and patterns were established based on the teachers' observations and their perceptions of the key writing challenges faced by their students. Themes emerged in areas of vocabulary limitations, grammatical struggles, organizational difficulties, and mechanical errors. This approach allowed for a detailed exploration of how teachers perceive and address these writing challenges in their classroom practices.

Content analysis was conducted on the students' written tasks. The students' essays were analyzed using the same aspects as those used to assess the teacher perceptions, focusing on identifying specific instances of writing difficulties related to vocabulary, grammar, organization, and mechanics. This method helped uncover patterns of writing errors and provided a concrete assessment of how these difficulties manifested in student work. The content analysis also allowed for the classification of errors into relevant categories, which were then compared with the themes identified in the teacher interviews.



Table 1. Rubric for Students' Essays

Indicators	Organization	Grammar	Vocabulary	Mechanics
5-4	Ideas are logically and cohesively organized, with clear transitions and structure.	Consistent use of complex and correct grammatical structures with very few or no errors.	Uses varied and precise vocabulary suitable for the task.	Accurate use of punctuation and capitalization with no or minor errors.
3-2	Ideas are organized but may lack clarity or cohesion in some parts.	Some grammatical errors, but they do not hinder understanding.	Vocabulary is somewhat appropriate but may lack precision or variety.	Some errors in punctuation or capitalization that occasionally hinder understanding.
1-0	Ideas are poorly organized or incoherent.	Frequent grammatical errors that hinder understanding.	Vocabulary is limited and inappropriate for the task.	Numerous errors in punctuation or capitalization that significantly hinder understanding.

A comparison was made between the findings from the thematic analysis of teacher interviews and the content analysis of student writing samples to assess alignment and discrepancies. The comparison helped determine where teachers' perceptions accurately reflected student performance and where gaps existed between perceived and actual writing difficulties.

Member checking was conducted with the teachers after the interview sessions by confirming the conclusions drawn from their interviews, which was done to ensure the accuracy of the interview transcripts and discovered themes in order to guarantee the validity and reliability of the data analysis (Bailey, 2018; Birt et al., 2016). Peer debriefing was also used during the analytic process to double-check the written and interview data interpretation and coding, ensuring that the conclusions accurately represented the perspectives of the participants and were rigorously evaluated. This involved engaging a peer external to the research to critically review and challenge the coding, interpretations, and conclusions derived from the data (Bailey, 2018).

## RESULTS

This section presents the key findings from the study, comparing teachers' perceptions with student performance in writing, particularly focusing on vocabulary, grammar, organization, and mechanics. The results are structured to highlight areas of alignment and misalignment, based on data obtained from both thematic analysis of teacher interviews and content analysis of student written tests. These findings are compared to relevant literature to offer a comprehensive understanding of the alignment between teachers' perceptions and students' actual writing performance.

Table 2. Summary of EFL Teachers' Perceptions and Students' Writing Difficulties

Theme	Teacher's Perception	Common Issues of Students Writing	Conclusion
<b>Vocabulary</b>	80% Teachers were concerned about students' limited vocabulary and overuse of simple words. (indicators 1-0, 3-2)	78.57% Overuse of simple words and lack of variety in word choice. (indicators 1-0, 3-2)	Aligned
<b>Grammar</b>	100% Teachers noted frequent grammatical errors, especially in tense and subject-verb agreement. (indicators 3-2)	64.29% Inconsistent tense usage, incorrect spelling, awkward sentences. (indicators 1-0, 3-2)	Aligned
<b>Organization</b>	60% Teachers overestimated students' ability to structure essays logically. (indicators 3-2, 5-4)	53.57% Lack of logical flow between ideas, missing transitions. (indicators 1-0, 3-2)	Discrepant
<b>Mechanics</b>	80% Teachers assumed students would follow basic punctuation and capitalization rules, but errors were common. (indicators 5-4)	71.42% Frequent punctuation and capitalization errors. (indicators 1-0, 3-2)	Discrepant

### Alignment Between Teacher Perceptions and Student Performance

The first key finding is the strong alignment between teacher perceptions and student performance in the areas of vocabulary and grammar. From the thematic analysis of teacher interviews, it became clear that most teachers recognized the limited vocabulary of their students. Four out of five teachers expressed concern over the overuse of simple words and the lack of variety in students' word choices. For instance, one teacher noted, "Many students tend to use basic words repeatedly instead of expanding their vocabulary." Similarly, another teacher observed that students "rely on the same set of words, which limits expression." This perception is strongly supported by the results of the content analysis of student writing, where 78.57% of the students exhibited a limited vocabulary. Common phrases like "take" or "do" were overused, reducing the expressiveness and depth of student writing. These findings align with previous research which found that limited vocabulary often restricts EFL learners' ability to communicate complex ideas effectively (Al-Ahdal & Abduh, 2021).

The teachers' perceptions of grammar issues also aligned well with actual student performance. All five teachers highlighted frequent grammatical errors, particularly in tense consistency and subject-verb agreement. For instance, one teacher remarked, "Tense consistency is a big problem, students often mix past and present tenses within a sentence." Another teacher commented on subject-verb agreement, saying, "Subject-verb agreement mistakes are very common." The content analysis of student writing confirmed these observations, with 64.29% of the students making consistent errors in these areas. Examples such as "I walk to the school every day" (incorrect subject-verb agreement) and "Yesterday I am playing football" (tense inconsistency) were prevalent in student writing. These

grammatical mistakes impede comprehension, as noted in previous studies which argued that native language interference often exacerbates grammatical errors in EFL contexts (Borg, 2018; Tu & Phung, 2023).

### **Discrepancies Between Teacher Perceptions and Student Performance**

While teacher perceptions aligned with student performance in vocabulary and grammar, significant discrepancies emerged in the areas of organization and mechanics.

Three out of five teachers expressed confidence in their students' ability to structure essays logically. For example, one teacher noted, "I thought they knew how to structure an essay, but the lack of coherence is apparent." Another teacher mentioned the absence of flow between paragraphs, observing, "There's little flow from one paragraph to another." Yet according to a content analysis of student writing, 53.57% of the students had serious difficulties with essay organization. Because they neglected to employ transitions like "first," "next," or "in conclusion," the students' writing was fragmented. One student wrote, "I went to the store," for example. It started to rain. I purchased some food," exhibiting an incoherent thought process. Teachers frequently presume a higher level of writing organization than students can really display (Cui et al., 2021). This discrepancy suggests that teachers may have overestimated their students' organizational ability.

Similar discrepancies were found in mechanics. Four out of five educators anticipated that their students would follow conventions regarding capitalization and punctuation. One teacher remarked, "Capitalization and punctuation are areas where students really struggle," while another said, "They don't seem to grasp the importance of punctuation in making the writing clear." On the other hand, the content analysis of the student writing revealed that 71.42% of the students consistently messed in capitalization and punctuation. "take a glass and then add sugar and coffee" is an example of a phrase that lacks capitalization and a full stop, demonstrating how frequently students miss them. Additionally, students commonly ignored the use of commas and periods, resulting in sentences which were difficult to read. These findings highlight a significant gap between teacher expectations and student performance in mechanics, confirming previous observations reporting that EFL students often struggle with the mechanical aspects of writing, even when teachers believe these skills should have been mastered earlier (Tu & Phung, 2023).

## **DISCUSSION**

The results of this study demonstrate both alignment and misalignment between the real writing performance of students and the perceptions of EFL teachers. Teachers' assessments of students' difficulty in vocabulary and grammar were highly correlated with the issues they saw in the students' writing. Teachers accurately pinpointed issues frequently found in students' assignments, such as limited vocabulary and recurring grammatical errors. However, significant differences were discovered in the mechanics and organization parts. Teachers misjudged their students' abilities in using capitalization, punctuation, and writing format. These results provide a key understanding of where EFL teachers excel in meeting their students' needs and where extra support may be necessary to address writing skill deficiencies.

### **Alignment in Vocabulary and grammar**

The research discovered a considerable agreement in vocabulary and grammar between teacher beliefs and student achievements. Teachers demonstrated a strong understanding of the specific language challenges their students faced, particularly considering the limited vocabulary and common grammatical mistakes present in the students' writing. This alignment is crucial as it demonstrates the teachers' ability to pinpoint their students' writing flaws accurately, enabling them to offer targeted feedback and solutions.

Teachers often noticed that students had a restricted vocabulary, mainly using a small set of basic phrases and relying heavily on common verbs and nouns. The students' written work, which lacked diversity in vocabulary, supported this observation. Students often used words such as "do," "take," or "get" instead of more specific language when necessary. This outcome is particularly important because it shows that teachers recognize a key issue for EFL learners, which is the need to enhance their vocabulary (Al-Ahdal & Abduh, 2021). Studies support this discovery, underscoring the importance of integrating vocabulary teaching with other educational skills (Alhujaylan, 2020). Merging reading and writing teaching methods notably improves both reading and writing skills, enabling learners to experience and apply new words in different situations. The findings of this research indicate that teachers are well-placed to utilize integrated-skill teaching methods, which have the potential to enhance students' vocabulary learning (Alhujaylan, 2020; Rotjanawongchai, 2019).

In the same way, grammar showed a strong alignment. Educators accurately observed that students struggled with fundamental aspects of grammar like subject-verb agreement and maintaining consistent tenses. Many students frequently made errors in their writing, such as confusing past and present tenses or forgetting to verify subject-verb agreement. Sentences such as "Yesterday I am playing football" and "She walks to the store every day" were frequently found in the students' work. This alignment is essential as grammar is a fundamental element of language skills, and teachers' capacity to identify these mistakes enables specific, focused feedback (Cheng et al., 2021). This discovery aligns with the studies showing that providing feedback on grammar improved student writing skills significantly (Cheng et al., 2021; Cui et al., 2021). When teachers correctly identify grammatical errors, they can provide focused instruction that helps students develop stronger linguistic foundations.

The implications of this alignment are significant for EFL teaching practice. Teachers are better able to provide feedback that helps students learn when they accurately identify vocabulary and grammar difficulties. Effective feedback systems are essential for improving students' writing abilities, regardless of whether they concentrate on improving vocabulary or grammatical precision (Cui et al., 2021). The results of this study support the role of feedback methods in the development of syntactic complexity (Pojslova, 2021). Teachers who offer their students specific, focused feedback on language and grammar assist them in honing the skills necessary to progress in their writing. Moreover, the accuracy in which educators identified these issues suggests that their teaching methods are aligned with their students' needs, facilitating targeted feedback to address significant student challenges effectively (Alamri & Yaseen, 2021; Jashari & Fojkar, 2019; Sasmita & Setyowati, 2021).



Nevertheless, it is crucial to take into account how teachers could improve their feedback strategies even more (Cheng et al., 2021). The interactive feedback techniques allow students to participate more in the feedback process, aiding in the internalization of grammar rules and the enrichment of their vocabulary (Cui et al., 2021; Tu & Phung, 2023). Integrating these approaches can support the consistency and potential improvement of the connection between teachers' views and students' achievements, guaranteeing the ongoing growth of students in writing.

### **Misalignment in Organization and Mechanics**

In the areas of organization and mechanics, the study found a considerable misalignment between teacher expectations and student performance. Teachers thought their students understood the fundamentals of essay organization, such as how to employ concise introductions, body paragraphs, and conclusions. However, the analysis of student writing showed that a significant number struggled to maintain coherence and logical progression (Trabelsi, 2021). Several essays did not have proper transitions between ideas, leading to paragraphs being disjointed and lacking a cohesive storyline (Trabelsi, 2021; Tu & Phung, 2023). Educators thought students could write well-organized essays, but in reality, many students lack the necessary organizational skills to write coherent and structured essays (Suthipiyapathra, 2021).

In addition to organizational difficulties, the study found a considerable gap in teacher expectations versus student performance in mechanics, particularly punctuation and capitalization. Teachers assumed that students were acquainted with these fundamental writing patterns from earlier in their education and expected them to be applied consistently; however, a lot of students often committed mechanical mistakes, such as forgetting to capitalize a sentence's opening letter or skipping the period at the conclusion of sentences. These mistakes seriously hindered the students' work's legibility and revealed a more serious problem with the way mechanics are taught and practiced in EFL contexts (Alamri & Yaseen, 2021; Cheng et al., 2021; Sasmita & Setyowati, 2021).

The consequences for teaching practice of this misalignment are significant. Teachers may require additional explicit training or resources in order to effectively evaluate students' skills in organization and mechanics. Even though teachers can accurately pinpoint issues with vocabulary and grammar, their inflated assessment of students' skills in organization and mechanics indicates a deficiency in their ability to evaluate effectively. Teacher training programs could tackle this issue by placing emphasis on improving teachers' skills in evaluating these writing elements with greater efficiency (Cheng et al., 2021; Jashari & Fojkar, 2019). New teachers frequently encounter inconsistencies between their beliefs and actions when it comes to feedback techniques (Adelita et al., 2023), which may also impact how they assess students' organization and mechanics in performance.

The misalignment in these areas can hinder students' overall writing proficiency and development. Even with excellent substance and grammar, poor organization and bad mechanics can make concepts difficult to understand. Students may find it difficult to express their ideas clearly, which may cause them to become frustrated and lose confidence in their writing. This supports the findings contending that when students struggle to

efficiently organize their ideas, writing anxiety and subpar performance are frequently associated (Al-Ahdal & Abduh, 2021). Furthermore, students may be less motivated to engage in writing if they do not receive clear guidance on improving these areas (Trabelsi, 2021).

In order to address this misalignment, teachers might find it helpful to utilize more organized resources, like specific rubrics focusing on organizational and mechanical abilities. Moreover, teacher-student conferences have been proven to enhance students' capacity to organize their writings cohesively and employ mechanical rules accurately by providing feedback on these particular writing elements (Jashari & Fojkar, 2019; Suthipiyapathra, 2021). By implementing these techniques, educators can more closely match their expectations with the true abilities of students, leading to enhanced writing results for English as a Foreign Language students (Adelita et al., 2023; Bisriyah, 2022).

### **Relevance to Contemporary EFL Practice**

The findings of this research showcase common problems in contemporary EFL classrooms, such as teachers focusing more on vocabulary and grammar than on key writing components like organization and mechanics. In EFL teaching, a common issue arises when teachers prioritize improving students' language skills, which often leads to addressing surface-level errors rather than deeper structural and mechanical issues (Jashari & Fojkar, 2019; Trabelsi, 2021). Since grammar and vocabulary corrections are more measurable and are closely connected to language fluency, many EFL teachers nowadays focus heavily on these areas of teaching. However, neglecting mechanics and organization may hinder students' ability to effectively convey complex ideas clearly and cohesively (Bisriyah, 2022; Sasmita & Setyowati, 2021; Trabelsi, 2021).

The findings of the research highlight the importance of teaching all aspects of writing, not only focusing on vocabulary and grammar. While it is crucial to tackle the linguistic hurdles, students also need to focus on improving their organizational skills and grasp of writing mechanics (Trabelsi, 2021). Integrating verbal feedback during writing conferences between teachers and students can greatly improve the coherence of students' writing (Alfalagg, 2020), particularly when addressing aspects such as logical progression and organization within paragraphs. This specific feedback could assist in rectifying the discrepancy between teacher and student performance in organization and mechanics, as outlined in this research.

Moreover, the findings indicate the significance of customized training for educators. A lot of differences identified in this research between how teachers see things and how students actually perform indicate that teachers may lack the necessary resources or training to effectively assess and help students with things such as organization and mechanics (Bisriyah, 2022; Cheng et al., 2021). Professional development initiatives should focus on enhancing educators' teaching methods, particularly in teaching writing as a holistic skill. This may involve training teachers on providing detailed feedback on writing structure or utilizing diverse assessment tools to evaluate students' writing skills (Alamri & Yaseen, 2021; Reyes et al., 2017). Educators might also find custom training programs helpful as

they integrate the TPACK framework, enabling them to utilize technology for delivering more insightful and beneficial feedback (Adelita et al., 2023).

Studies on the flipped classroom method indicate a need for a well-rounded teaching approach for writing, as it boosts students' writing skills by focusing on various aspects of writing at once in a student-centered manner (Moussaoui & Moubtassime, 2022). Giving students increased independence and chances for peer assessment allows teachers to approach writing's language and structural components more holistically (Cui et al., 2021). Employing cooperative learning methods can improve students' writing fluency by promoting teamwork and peer learning, leading to better organizational and mechanical skills through group tasks (Namaziandost et al., 2020).

### **Practical Implications for Teacher Training and EFL Instruction**

The findings of this study highlight several key areas for improvement in EFL instruction, particularly in terms of professional development and teaching strategies. One essential intervention is the implementation of professional development workshops that focus on teaching the often-overlooked aspects of writing: organization and mechanics. Such workshops could equip teachers with the necessary tools and strategies to address these components more effectively in their classrooms (Alamri & Yaseen, 2021; Jashari & Fojkar, 2019). Structured feedback rubrics, for example, can be used to help teachers provide more detailed feedback on students' organizational coherence and mechanics, ensuring that these critical areas receive the attention they need for well-rounded writing proficiency (Bisriyah, 2022; Cheng et al., 2021).

Another effective strategy includes utilizing collaborative learning and peer feedback systems. Peer feedback can improve students' writing abilities by giving them the opportunity to see their own writing from various viewpoints (Cui et al., 2021). Including peer reviews can motivate students to interact with both the structural and technical elements of writing, as they practice critiquing their peers' work and evaluating their own. Collaborative learning settings can encourage better writing practices as students assist one another in improving their skills (Chen & Preston, 2021).

Ultimately, technology can be used to help teachers provide accurate feedback and monitor the progress of writing skills (Adelita et al., 2023; Mathew et al., 2017). Incorporating the TPACK framework into teacher training programs can assist teachers in effectively integrating digital tools into their feedback processes (Sari et al., 2021). These tools can make it simpler for teachers to keep track of student progress over time and offer necessary interventions, thanks to real-time feedback (Alamri & Yaseen, 2021).

In general, these practical interventions, professional development focused on organization and mechanics, peer feedback, and technology integration, can significantly improve EFL instruction and help bridge the gap between teacher expectations and student performance.

### **Limitations of the Study**

While this research provides important information about the consistency between how EFL teachers view things and how students perform in writing, it is necessary to recognize some restrictions. Initially, the number of participants was quite limited, with 28 students and five

teachers being included from just one school in Palangka Raya. This small sample size might not completely represent the range of student skills and teaching approaches found in various schools, regions, or cultural settings. Consequently, the results might not apply widely to other EFL settings, particularly those with varying educational systems or student populations.

Moreover, the study's emphasis on junior high school students restricts the generalizability of the findings to other educational settings such as primary or tertiary education. Various age groups and levels of proficiency could pose unique writing obstacles, potentially affecting the relationship between how teachers view students' abilities and their actual performance.

Future research could expand on these findings by exploring teacher-student alignment in different educational contexts or among students of varying proficiency levels. Moreover, examining alignment in other aspects of writing, such as creativity or rhetorical strategies, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how EFL teachers perceive and address student writing difficulties across multiple dimensions.

## CONCLUSION

This research examined how EFL teachers' perceptions of their students' writing challenges corresponded with the students' actual performance in vocabulary, grammar, organization, and mechanics. The results showed a clear match in vocabulary and grammar, as teachers correctly pinpointed the language hurdles their students encountered. Nevertheless, there were notable discrepancies in structure and technicalities, as teachers often overestimated their students' capabilities. These findings are important as they highlight the strengths and weaknesses in teachers' assessment abilities, impacting the effectiveness of EFL writing teaching.

The findings have important implications for the practice of teaching EFL. Precise understanding by teachers of vocabulary and grammar enables them to implement specific interventions to effectively meet students' language requirements. Nevertheless, the inconsistencies in structure and operation underscore the importance of more thorough teacher education. It is crucial to have professional development workshops that prioritize teaching writing as a well-rounded skill, rather than just focusing on grammar and vocabulary. In EFL teaching, it is important for teachers to have the necessary tools to evaluate and give feedback on all aspects of writing, with a focus on organization and mechanics, which are commonly neglected.

In practice, integrating structured feedback rubrics and collaborative learning environments that include peer feedback mechanisms can help improve student writing across all areas. Additionally, leveraging technology through frameworks like TPACK can further support teachers in delivering precise, real-time feedback and tracking student progress more effectively.

In general, this research adds to the current knowledge on teaching EFL writing by exploring where teacher beliefs match and differ from student achievements. The results emphasize how crucial it is to have a well-rounded writing instruction that focuses on vocabulary, grammar, organization, and mechanics. Enhancing educator preparation and

teaching approaches in these fields can enhance overall writing growth in EFL curricula and ultimately enhance student skill level. Future studies need to investigate alignment in various writing domains and broaden the scope to encompass diverse educational settings in order to deepen our knowledge of successful EFL teaching.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to the participants of this study, both the teachers and students, whose time and insights made this research possible. Special thanks are also extended to peers who provided valuable support during the data analysis phase through peer debriefing. Their feedback and perspectives were instrumental in ensuring the accuracy and depth of the thematic and content analyses.

## REFERENCES

- Adelita, D., Kurniati, E. Y., & Daulay, S. H. (2023). Difficulties and Strategies in Producing English Writing Text: What do EFL Students' Perceive? *Education and Human Development Journal*, 8(1), 93–108. <https://doi.org/10.33086/ehdj.v8i1.3698>
- Al-Ahdal, A. A. M. H., & Abduh, M. Y. M. (2021). English writing proficiency and apprehensions among Saudi College students: Facts and remedies. *TESOL International Journal*, 16(1), 34–56. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1329867>
- Alamri, H. R., & Yaseen, H. A. S. (2021). Exploring EFL teachers' perspectives on sources of challenges in writing classroom. *Studies in English Language Teaching*, 9(5), p73. <https://doi.org/10.22158/selt.v9n5p73>
- Alfalagg, A. R. (2020). Impact of teacher-student writing conferences on frequency and accuracy of using cohesive devices in EFL students' writing. *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*, 5(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-020-00104-z>
- Alhujaylan, H. (2020). Evaluating the Effectiveness of Integrating Reading and Writing Pedagogy in EFL Setting and Teachers' Perceptions. *English Language Teaching*, 13(5), 177. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v13n5p177>
- Bailey, C. A. (2018). *A guide to Qualitative Field Research* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications, Incorporated.
- Birt, L., Scott, S., Cavers, D., Campbell, C., & Walter, F. (2016). Member Checking: A Tool to Enhance Trustworthiness or Merely a Nod to Validation? *Qualitative Health Research*, 26(13), 1802–1811. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732316654870>
- Bisriyah, M. (2022). EFL university students' difficulties in the essay writing process. *Scope Journal of English Language Teaching*, 7(1), 66. <https://doi.org/10.30998/scope.v7i1.13793>
- Borg, S. (2018). Teachers' beliefs and classroom practices. In *The Handbook of Language Awareness* (Vol. 1, pp. 75–91). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315676494-5>
- Chen, Y., & Preston, J. C. (2021). Improving EFL Students' Critical Thinking Skills through Organization Development Intervention Strategies at Zhejiang Yuexiu University in China. *ABAC ODI Journal Vision*, 9(1), 181–203. <https://doi.org/10.14456/abacodijournal.2021.25>

- Cheng, X., Zhang, L. J., & Yan, Q. (2021). Exploring teacher written feedback in EFL writing classrooms: Beliefs and practices in interaction. *Language Teaching Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688211057665>
- Cui, Y., Schunn, C. D., Gai, X., Jiang, Y., & Wang, Z. (2021). Effects of Trained Peer vs. Teacher Feedback on EFL Students' Writing Performance, Self-Efficacy, and Internalization of Motivation. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.788474>
- Jashari, L. T., & Fojkar, M. D. (2019). Teachers' perceptions of developing writing skills in the EFL classroom. *ELOPE English Language Overseas Perspectives and Enquiries*, 16(2), 77–90. <https://doi.org/10.4312/elope.16.2.77-90>
- Mathew, P., Al-Mahrooqi, R., & Denman, C. (2017). Electronic intervention strategies in dynamic assessment in an Omani EFL classroom. In *Revisiting EFL assessment: Critical perspectives* (pp. 321–338). [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-32601-6\\_18](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-32601-6_18)
- Moussaoui, O., & Moubtassime, M. (2022). The Effects of the Flipped Classroom Model on University Students' Writing Proficiency. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 4(2). <https://doi.org/10.32996/jeltal.2022.4.2.5>
- Namaziandost, E., Homayouni, M., & Rahmani, P. (2020). The impact of cooperative learning approach on the development of EFL learners' speaking fluency. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 7(1), 1780811. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2020.1780811>
- Pojsova, B. (2021). The effect of two feedback strategies on EFL writing quality from the perspective of syntactic complexity. *CASALC Review*, 11(1), 69. <https://doi.org/10.5817/casalc2021-1-7>
- Reyes, V. C., Reading, C., Doyle, H., & Gregory, S. (2017). Integrating ICT into teacher education programs from a TPACK perspective: Exploring perceptions of university lecturers. *Computers & Education*, 115, 1. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2017.07.009>
- Rotjanawongchai, S. (2019). *Teacher Cognition of Corrective Feedback in the EFL Speaking Classroom: A Case Study of Thai University Teachers* [University of York]. <https://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/24630/>
- Sari, Y. R., Drajadi, N. A., So, H.-J., & Sumardi, S. (2021). Enhancing EFL Teachers' Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) Competence Through Reflective Practice. *TEFLIN Journal*, 32(1), 117. <https://doi.org/10.15639/teflinjournal.v32i1/117-133>
- Sasmita, Y. V., & Setyowati, L. (2021). Problems faced by EFL students in learning to write. *Linguista Jurnal Ilmiah Bahasa Sastra Dan Pembelajarannya*, 5(1), 11. <https://doi.org/10.25273/linguista.v5i1.9404>
- Suthipiyapathra, S. (2021). Effects of Teacher-Student Conference on Paragraph Writing of EFL Students in Thailand. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 9(7). <https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2021.090705>
- Trabelsi, S. (2021). (Mis)alignment in Relation to Written Corrective Feedback: the Teachers' Beliefs and Practices vs the Students' Preferences in an EFL Context. *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*, 9(1), 6. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijll.20210901.12>

Tu, P. H. T., & Phung, V. D. (2023). The effects of teacher interactive feedback on EFL students' paragraph writing performance. *European Journal of English Language Teaching*, 8(4). <https://doi.org/10.46827/ejel.v8i4.5014>

