

# Developing Digital-Based English Text Writing Skills Test for Freshmen in the Department of English Language And Literature

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**Abstract.** The purpose of this research is to develop a digital English text writing skill test using Quiziz application for new students in the second semester of the 2021/2022 Academic Year. This writing skill test is to determine the initial ability of new students in writing text skills such as the ability to make simple outlines and write them in simple paragraphs with the main idea and topic that has been determined by the research team. The development of this test is useful for all students in the English Language and Literature Department and will be developed as a pretest for mapping new students' writing competence. This study will use an R and D (Research and Development) design. The data is the result of needs analysis and interviews with students and lecturers. The data source of this research will use random sampling with 60 second semester students of the 2021/2022 Academic Year of the Department of English Language and Literature and 4 lecturers who are in charge of the Writing course.

**Keywords:** Test, Writing English Text, Digital, Quizziz

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Writing is an activity of expressing ideas, ideas, thoughts, or feelings in linguistic symbols in linguistic symbols. Structuring sentences, developing paragraphs, processing ideas, and developing essay models are aspects of using punctuation and spelling, using diction and vocabulary, structuring sentences, developing paragraphs, processing ideas, and describing writing is a process of discovering and extracting ideas owned by a person. writer, and this process is strongly influenced by the basic knowledge possessed by a writer.

The ability to assemble sentences and words in writing is a language skill that involves aspects of language and content processing. Basic knowledge of writing performance or ability is a growing problem in connection with writing activities.

In addition, writing on language knowledge is a form of embodiment of language skills that are most recently mastered by language learners with the ability to listen, speak, and read. When comparing writing skills with other skills, writing skills require other knowledge

outside of writing itself such as cultural knowledge, written content and writing format so that the results of writing can be accepted and understood by others. (Sukirman, 2020).

A measuring tool is needed to find out how far the writing ability of students in the Department of English Language and Literature can support the Writing course. Especially for new students in the first and second semesters so that lecturers can map their initial abilities in writing and adjust them to the Achievement of Subject Acquisition (CPMK) for the Writing Course. In addition, the measuring tool for writing skills can also help the MBKM Program to train students more extensively if they choose study programs and subjects outside the study program.

The Department of English Language and Literature has held a Proficiency Test to determine the competence of students. This test is intended to obtain information or a map of the initial English proficiency that is reflected in the scores they get. The current test is IELTS-Like, which is a standardized test that resembles the actual test from the form of the question to the way it is done.

IELTS (International English Language Testing System) is the world's most popular international English language testing system for study, work and immigration. The standard IELTS test content has been developed by an international team of experts and is an extensive study to ensure that all participants, regardless of nationality, background, gender, lifestyle or location, keep the test fair and impartial. However, in the observation of the research team, the existing IELTS-Like test has not supported students' English skills, especially new students. In 2021, students' IELTS scores in the Writing Test show a score range of 60, which means that students' writing skills are still low, but when in class and lecturers assign them to write simple paragraphs, out of 30 students, 80 percent of new students are able to write well. This means that the IELTS test results do not significantly affect students' writing skills. Seeing the phenomenon of the importance of writing skills tests for new students and seeing good interactions in this pandemic period through online, the research team will design a digital-based writing skills test.

According to Simarmata, J, et al (2018), this digital competency test application program is used to obtain a competency map of students' abilities for certain criteria. This mapping helps improve education And to ensure the quality of the learning process and graduates. The results of the evaluation of the learning process using standardized tests.

## **1.2 Research Problems**

1.2.1 How was a digital-based writing skills test developed for new students in the English Language and Literature Department?"

## **1.3 Research Objectives, Outcomes and Contributions**

1.3.1 To develop a digital-based writing skill test item developed for new students in the Department of English Language and Literature

Meanwhile, The research outputs this year are test items, Contextual Written Language Skills Teaching Materials and test guides. As well as articles that are planned to be published in the International LPPM Proceedings.

The contribution of this research to the Merdeka Learning program which will be implemented in the English Education Study Program.2 Review of Literature

### **2.1 Independent Campus Program**

Through the independent learning program, universities are expected to be able to carry out learning that shapes students' hard and soft skills. This can be realized by designing and implementing learning that provides challenges and opportunities for the development of innovation, creativity, capacity, personality, and student needs, as well as developing independence in seeking and finding knowledge through realities and field dynamics such as ability requirements, real problems, social interaction, collaboration, self-management, performance demands, targets and achievements. Independent campuses are expected to be able to provide field contextual experiences that will improve student competence as a whole, be ready to work, or create new job opportunities.

So far, learning tends to be limited to face-to-face learning in a formal classroom. Now it can be done in a hybrid way using digital and face-to-face applications.

### **2.2 Writing and Reading Skills**

In everyday life, language skills are needed to obtain information and to convey information. These language skills consist of four skills, namely; listening skills, speaking skills, reading skills, and writing skills.

Reading skills are one of the skills that are needed to obtain information and meaning conveyed by the author in a written medium. According to Somadayo (2011: 10) reading is an activity that includes a process to obtain the meaning contained in the reading. This activity involves the knowledge and experience of the reader which is linked to the content of the reading to obtain a complete understanding. In learning in higher education, reading skills are very important because various developments in science and knowledge can be obtained through written media.

In addition to reading skills, other skills that are also very much needed and interrelated are writing skills. Writing skill is the skill of expressing an idea or idea through written language. Writing skill is one of the highest level language skills. Saleh Abbas (2006: 125), defines writing skills as the ability to express ideas, opinions, and feelings to other parties through written language. The accuracy of expressing this idea must be supported by the accuracy of the language used, vocabulary and grammar and the use of spelling.

Writing skill is a very important skill for students, this is related to the routine assignments of lectures and final assignments, namely writing a thesis that they will face as one of the requirements to be able to graduate at the tertiary level. Writing skills are closely related to reading skills. To be able to write well, reading is very necessary to be able to enrich words and writing materials. The more and more diverse literature is read, the richer the insights and terms that can be used in writing will be. Therefore, by improving the reading quality of students, their writing skills are also expected to increase.

### **2.3 Test Device**

To respond to the Merdeka Campus program which aims to form students' hard and soft skills, various learning activities can be carried out within the Study Program and outside the Study Program. One of these activities is a humanitarian project. This humanitarian project

is expected to help improve students' soft skills to be more socially empathetic to the problems that occur around them.

The implementation of human values into the learning process can be achieved by integrating them into learning tools. Learning tools are the components used for the smooth teaching and learning process. In Rusman (2012: 126), learning tools are things that must be monitored so that the implementation of learning is more directed to achieve the expected competencies. So that to be able to achieve the objectives of a learning, the components needed for the management and implementation of learning activities must be prepared properly. The development of teaching materials includes a systematic approach as outlined in the design, evaluation, utilization, and the connection of facts, concepts, principles, or theories in the subject or subject matter with reference to the objectives (Mbulu and Suhartono, 2004:5). This learning device can be in the form of syllabus, semester learning plans (RPS), activity sheets, and learning media.

The integration of these values in the presentation of teaching materials is necessary so that the teaching materials used in the teaching and learning process can contain values that are useful for the formation of student character. Humanity project-based learning tools in reading and writing courses are expected to form soft skills in students. In the opinion of Mahsun (2013: 3-4), text is a social process oriented towards a social goal where the social goals to be achieved have domains of emergence called the context of the situation. So, the opportunity to insert humanist values can be inserted in text-based learning.

In reading and writing learning tools based on humanitarian projects will enrich students' knowledge and insight about what a humanitarian project is, related institutions and will eventually involve students in actual humanitarian projects.

#### **2.4 Digital Application**

Quizizz has a colorful display with animations on its interface, making the Quizizz application one of the applications that can be used to do online tests without getting bored. Quizizz application to add background music and also provides a question bank that users can use directly.

### **3 Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Flow**

The study of developing humanitarian project-based learning tools for Contextual Written Language Skills in the English Education Study Program has stages such as the preliminary stage, development stage, and evaluation stage.

#### **3.2 Data and Data Sources**

This research was conducted at the Department of English Language and Literature, English-Unimed Education Study Program, Jalan Willem Iskandar Pasar V Medan.

Meanwhile, The data sources in this study were second semester students with a sample of 90 second semester students in the 2021/2022 Academic Year in the Contextual Written Language Skills Regular class of English Language and Literature Education.

## 4 Discussion

The research began by distributing a needs analysis questionnaire to students majoring in English language and literature. Then, the results of the analysis of student needs were developed into a digital-based writing skills test, namely Quizziz for students majoring in English language and literature.

### 4.1 Data Analysis

#### 4.1.1 Respondent Description

Respondents for the needs analysis of this study were students majoring in English in the English Education Study Program, Stambuk 2021, State University of Medan. There were 90 students who completed the questionnaire from the contextual written language skills course.

#### 4.1.2 Stidents' Opinion toward Writing

As many as 71.1% of students stated that writing was very important, and 23.3% of students stated that writing was important. Then 5.6% of students stated that writing was considered sufficient but there were no students who stated that writing was not important. This means that students have realized the importance of writing.

Based on the questionnaire, the targets for writing attitudes were divided into three categories: writing challenges, importance of writing, and writing frequency. The following table contains a description of the student's point of view.

Table 4.1 Student Opinion Against Writing

Questions	Opinions	Percentage (%)
In my opinion, writing texts in English is an activity that...	Very easy to do	2.2
	Easy to do	51.1
	Hard to do	45.6
	Very hard to do	1.1
In my opinion, writing activities...in English lessons (choose one)	Very important	71.1
	Important	23.3
	Quite important	5.6
	Not important	0
I.....write the text in English	Always (every day)	2.2
	Often	43.3
	Sometimes	54.5
	Never	0

Table 4.1 shows that students' opinions about writing are divided into three categories. First, the difficulty of writing. 51.1% of students stated that writing was easy to do and another 45.6% stated that writing was difficult. From these percentages it can be seen that the statements of half the students and the other half are very contradictory. Then 2.2% of students stated that writing was very easy to do and another 1.1% stated that writing was very difficult to do.

Second, the importance of writing. As many as 71.1% of students stated that writing was very important, and 23.3% of students stated that writing was important. Then 5.6% of students stated that writing was considered sufficient but there were no students who stated that writing was not important. This means that students have realized the importance of writing.

Third, the frequency of students writing. The analysis provides information that half of the students as much as 54.5% sometimes practice their writing activities. There are 43.3% of students who often practice writing, and 2.2% of students who always practice writing.

From the description above, it is clear that students majoring in English are aware of the importance of writing.

### 1) Target Needs

Hutchinson and Waters state that the target need is what the learner must do in the target state (1987). Target needs are divided into three categories:

#### a) Needs

Needs, according to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), are what the learner needs to know in order to function effectively in the target situation. The following table contains a description of student needs.

Table 4.2 Student Needs

Questions	Opinions	(%)
The skills I need in writing English text are (may choose more than one)	Use appropriate sentence structure and word choice.	17.8
	Express ideas in writing into several different forms of sentences	15.6
	Arrange sentences correctly according to the function of each text	13.3
	Arrange the text with the correct text structure	10
	Use proper and appropriate grammar	33.3
	Others	10

For needs, 17.8% of students choose the skills they need in writing texts by using the appropriate structure and word selection. The second skill was chosen by 33.3% of students. Using proper and appropriate grammar. There are 15.6% of students who choose to pour their thoughts into different sentences. then 13.3% of students choose to arrange sentences correctly according to the function of each text, 10% of students choose to arrange texts with the correct text structure and the remaining 10% choose others.

**b) Deficiency**

Hutchinson and Waters (1987:55) state that students' problems with topics include less. It deals with the contrast between what learners already have and the situation in which they must succeed. The description of the students' problems is shown in the table below.

Table 4.3 Student Difficulties

Questions	Opinions	(%)
So far, the difficulties I have faced in writing English texts are (may choose more than one)	Difficulty in composing proper and appropriate sentence structures	10
	Difficulty in choosing appropriate and appropriate word choices for writing	13.3
	Difficulty in expressing story ideas	11.1
	Difficulty in arranging sentences correctly according to the function of each text	10
	Difficulty in arranging text with the correct text structure	6.7
	Difficulty in using proper and appropriate grammar	40
	Others	8.9

The table shows the difficulties faced by 40% of students are difficulties in using proper and appropriate grammar. The second difficulty is that 13.3% of students have difficulty in choosing appropriate and appropriate word choices for writing. The third difficulty is expressing story ideas faced by 11.1% of students. then there are 10% of students have difficulty in arranging sentences correctly according to the function of each text and in compiling the right and appropriate sentence structure. Difficulty in arranging the text with the correct text structure is difficult for 6.7% of students. And for 8.9% of students chose other difficulties. Due to the student deficiencies mentioned above, this material provides a variety of problem solving exercises, which will be of benefit to students.

### c) Desire

The term “desire” refers to the desire of the student. The following table displays a description of the student's wishes.

Table 4.4 Student Desire

Questions	Opinions	(%)
I hope that the material given in writing activities in English lessons can make me (may choose more than one)	Improve my ability to write in English	37.8
	Makes me master the learned English vocabulary	6.7
I hope that the material given in writing activities in English lessons can make me (may choose more than one)	Makes me able to write with correct grammar	12.2
	Makes me able to arrange sentences correctly according to the function of each text	4.4
	Makes me able to arrange the text with the correct text structure	7.8
	Makes me able to use proper and appropriate grammar	23.3
	Others	7.8

The table shows 37.8% of students want to improve their English writing skills. There are 23.3% of students who want to be able to use proper and appropriate grammar. then 12.2% Students want to be able to write with correct grammar. 7.8% of students who want to be able to compose texts with the correct text structure, as well as students who want to master the English vocabulary that has been studied are 6.7%, 4.4% of students want to be able to arrange sentences correctly according to the function of each text and 7.8% of students chose other wishes. To fulfill students' wishes, they will be given several assignments that will improve their English writing skills.

### d) Learning Needs

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) state that learning needs are things that must be met by students to learn.

#### 1. Input

According to Nunan (2004), input is verbal, written, or visual data used by students to complete assignments. The description of the inputs is shown in the table below.



**Table 4.5** Input Material

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Opinions</b>	<b>(%)</b>
What learning input do I like in writing text activities (may choose more than one)	Picture	25.6
	Written Text	35.6
	Videos	24.4
	<i>Audio</i>	7.8
	Others	6.6

The table shows that 35.6% of students want material input in the form of written text, 25.6% of students want pictures, 24.4% of students choose video, 7.8% of students want audio, and the rest choose something else.

**Table 4.6** Importance of Grammar

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Opinions</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
In my opinion, an understanding of grammar (grammar) is needed in writing English texts	Yes	100
	Not	0

All students believe that understanding grammar is necessary in writing texts.

**Table 4.7** Importance of Initial Writing Test

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Opinions</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
In my opinion, the initial test in writing English...	Required	97.8
	Not required	2.2

97.8% of students stated that a preliminary test in English writing was required, and the rest stated that it was not required.

**Table 4.8** Input for the Initial Writing Test

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Opinions</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
In the initial test of writing English, the input I need is in the form of...	Table	6.7
	Picture	51.1
	Videos	27.8
	Figure	11.1
	Others	3.3

The table shows that 51.1% of students need image input, 27.8% of students want video, 11% of students want figures, 6.7% want tables and 3.3% of students choose other inputs as a preliminary test of writing English.

## 2. Procedure

Procedures are what students will do with input that will be the starting point of learning activities (Nunan, 2004). A description of the procedure can be found in the table below.

**Table 4.9** Learning Procedure

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Opinions</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
In the process of learning writing, the activities I want to do are (may choose more than one)	Write text from pictures	5.6
	Write a text with a predetermined topic	30
	Write free text	53.3
	Make mind mapping before writing text	5.6
	Others	5.5

The table above shows that 53.3% of students want free text writing activities and 30% choose to write with a predetermined topic.

## 3. Settings

Nunan (2004) states that the setting relates to the class organization described or concluded in the assignment. The description of the settings is shown in the table below.

**Table 4.10** Application Usage

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Opinions</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
I.....use the App in writing	Once	80
	Never	20

The table above shows that 80% of students have used applications in writing, while the other 20% have never.

**Table 4.11** Applications for Writing

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Opinions</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
I think the ..... application makes it easier for me to write English	Quizizz	37.8
	Kahoot!	15.6
	Edmodo	5.6
	Quizlet	11.1
	Others	29.9

The table above shows that 37.8% of students choose Quizizz as an application that makes it easier for them to write English.

## **5 Conclusions and Suggestions**

### **5.1 Conclusions**

The ability to assemble sentences and words in writing is a language skill that involves aspects of language and content processing. Basic knowledge of writing performance or ability is a growing problem related to writing activities. The Department of English Language and Literature has held a Proficiency Test to determine the competence of new students where the IELTS score of students in the Writing Test shows a score range of 60, which means that students' writing skills are still low.

The purpose of this research is to develop a digital-based writing skills test for new students majoring in English language and literature. To develop the skills test, the researcher distributed a needs analysis questionnaire to students to find out the students' needs and problems in writing English. The subjects of this study were students majoring in English language and literature, State University of Medan. This research was conducted using the theory of R and D where in the theory there are 3 stages, namely; preliminary stage, development stage, evaluation stage.

In the preliminary stage to know the analysis of problems and needs. The development stage is the stage where information collection and product development are carried out, including the writing skills test development stage with the Quizziz digital application and the validation stage. The evaluation stage is a stage that aims to determine whether the development of digital skills tests is feasible to use. The evaluation stage consists of a limited trial, distributing questionnaires, analyzing questionnaire data, knowing the initial conclusions regarding the quality of test items in digital applications.

### **5.2 Sugestions**

The research that has been carried out is research in developing digital-based English writing skills tests for students of English language and literature. Therefore, it is suggested that this digital-based writing skills test can be used by students and lecturers in learning Contextual Written Language Skills courses.

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