

INTRODUCTION

Hyland (2003) states that second language writing is when individuals or a group of people write something in L2. Writing is considered one of the most essential skills in L2 (second language) learning since this skill is utilized as a medium of communication and a means of learning, considering, and organizing information or concepts (Fithriani, 2018). As for the L2 learners themselves, writing can be twice as hard as other skills since they need to shift their L1 knowledge into a brand-new target language and reorganize this knowledge into a new language concept (Fithriani, 2018).

There are numerous approaches, methods, and strategies for teaching writing. Authentic materials in teaching English have been popular since many years ago (Gilmore, 2007). Examples of authentic materials in teaching writing are advertisement letters, academic essays, magazines, pamphlets, newspapers, songs, cooking recipes, short stories, and feature articles. The benefits of utilizing authentic materials are that they should help students produce better language (Chamba et al., 2019) and also help students experience the use of language in a real-world context (Richard, 2006, as cited in Huda, 2017). One particular authentic text for teaching L2 writing discussed in this study is feature articles. According to Masood (2013), authentic materials are materials from real-world and real-life contexts that must be addressed in academic language teaching. Harahap (2020) stated that feature article text can be found in diverse media, magazines, and audiovisual sources. Considering the feature article as one of the authentic materials, it can be assumed that this type of article has the same advantages as the other authentic materials. A feature article can bridge students' knowledge with the natural world (Morgan, 2010; Setyowati & Sukmawan, 2019). Not only that, as Morgan added, the use of

writing a feature article in the EFL context also helps learners prepare themselves to do research and compose a non-fiction text. Writing a feature can be beneficial for equipping students with research skills for their future academic papers and essays. Last, Setyowati and Sukmawan (2019) stated that using feature articles in EFL can increase students' motivation to participate in teaching writing activities. It is because they are making a real-world, context-based text that is not about an academic topic.

Despite the many benefits of writing feature articles for learners' L2 learning and writing skills, more should be known about using feature articles in writing classes. Most previous studies focus on the use of general authentic materials, and only a few are talking about a specific kind of authentic texts, specifically about feature articles (e.g., Morgan's study in 2010 with intermediate students and Harahap's study about the development of feature writing teaching materials with a literary, journalistic approach). Therefore, a research gap exists in studying EFL students' experiences writing an English feature article in one specific writing class.

This present study will focus on one writing course in the English Language Education Program of Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana, namely Writing for the Media. In this course, the students are required to write a feature article. Specifically, the students are asked to choose a topic, conduct research, process data, and collaborate data they have earned with the writing skills they already have. From here, this study aims to answer the research question: What experiences do Indonesian EFL students have in writing a feature article in Writing for the Media class? The findings of this study may be used to broaden the research about using authentic materials, specifically feature articles, in teaching writing in the Indonesian EFL context. The

results may also be used by L2 writing teachers to consider writing a feature article as a method of teaching writing to their students.



LITERATURE REVIEW

Second language writing

According to Hyland (2019), second language writing is when a person or group of people write something not in their mother tongue. In the teaching implementation of second language writing, there are four steps to teach this activity. First is the familiarization step, where students are given some vocabulary and grammar functions usually introduced through text. Second is controlled writing, where students need to adapt settled text patterns. Third is guided writing, where students are required to mimic text genres. Finally, the final step is free writing, when students can independently use the patterns they have gained and improved in any writing.

Teaching second Language writing using authentic materials

Teaching second language writing is considered very challenging by L2 writing teachers (Adam et al., 2021). Hence, to mitigate the challenges, the number of methods of teaching writing has also become diverse. One of them is using authentic materials. According to Peacock (1997, as cited in Setyowati, 2022), authentic materials are the source of teaching materials that revolve around daily human life and are not intended or created for educational purposes. Gilmore (2007) states that using authentic materials in teaching English has been widespread for many years. There are many advantages to using authentic materials when teaching second language writing. Setyowati and Sukmawan (2019) added that using authentic materials for students is like bringing the students' knowledge they have gained in class into the real world. Second, using authentic materials, according to Chamba, Reinoso, and Rengifo (2019), helps students produce a higher-quality language. Third, according to Mudra (2014), using authentic materials helps students learn and know the natural English language, which is beneficial for their language use and increases students' motivation to learn English.

Meanwhile, Mudra also adds that authentic materials have downsides in second language teaching writing. The challenge of using authentic materials is that digital and printed resources are the only way to obtain them. The culture of native speakers found in authentic material can influence the material's content, so students experience culture shock due to cultural differences and the difficulty level of the language, and authentic materials used might not be suitable for students' proficiency level.

Feature Article

According to Harahap (2020), a feature article is a lighter article with a humanistic appeal or written from a factual occurrence still happening. He added that feature article text could be found in diverse media, magazines, and audiovisual sources. Some examples of feature articles are human interest, historical features, biography features, travelogue features, and scientific features. Meanwhile, Garrison and Burn (2010) define a feature article as a non-fiction writing work that usually appears in news media. Garrison and Burn also added that the goal of a feature article is to be an entertainment medium that attracts readers' emotions so the readers may feel happy, sad, touched, or even amused.

The generic structure of a feature article is the introduction with a hook; the body of the article needs to keep any promises or answer any questions raised in the introduction, and the conclusion should be written to help the reader remember the story. The feature article can be seen as a bridge that allows students to link the knowledge they have acquired in class and the natural world when they can implement what they have learned into reality (Morgan, 2010). Feature articles also help them prepare to conduct research and compose an academic text in the future because they need to compile data, assess the data, and process the data to become a product (Morgan, 2010; Setyowati & Sukmawan, 2019). Morgan argued that students must have

diverse writing experiences and that the product of their writing should be original and meaningful.

Writing for the media class

Writing for the Media class is a writing course offered by the English Education Program (ELEP) at Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana, Indonesia, for sophomore students. This course produces texts that usually appear in the media that are not academic-based, such as opinion editorials, content writing, and feature articles. This course aims to help students understand the principles of writing paragraphs and essays, acquire information and contemplate it, and share their writings with others on online platforms. This course is a prerequisite for ELEP students to take in academic writing the following semester.

Previous studies

There are some studies investigating the use of feature articles in teaching writing. Harahap (2020) investigated undergraduate students at FKIP Universitas Negeri Jambi. This study used a mixed methodology of quantitative and qualitative research. The data collection instrument used a questionnaire to collect students' percentage of effectiveness, efficiency, and attractiveness of the content in the test activities field trials. The study showed promising results on content and language use development. It is said that 30% of the students who joined the course had been sending their works to local newspapers, and they all got published. Harahap argued that there are two reasons why students should experience writing a feature article. First, students are interested in writing but need more basic skills; they have a good amount of interest and good writing skills but need help finding an actual topic. Second, students already have an interest in and good skills in writing, and they also have the will to send their works to local media, but they have yet to do it very rarely. From Harahap's study, it should be highlighted that

a feature article helps students to broaden their writing skills and connect their knowledge to the real world since the product of a feature article can be published and based on reality in the process of making it, they must have done observation, investigation, and making the report.

Morgan (2010) also studied using feature articles in a writing class. The research participants were 23 fourth-grade students in a suburban area of the Midwest. The methodology used in this teaching was qualitative, and interviews and close-ended questions were used as the data collection instruments. Meanwhile, tabulated data was used as the data analysis instrument. Surprisingly, the students had a favorable position regarding the use of feature articles. The students said that while writing their feature articles, they could not just pick a random topic for their writing assignment, but they needed one that they cared about and liked. Some students also added that in the writing process, they never thought that the fact(s) they were using in the paper could be expressed in various ways. According to Morgan, there are several reasons why students need to be taught feature articles in their writing classes. She said that students must experience diverse types of writing, and their writing products should be original and meaningful.

Additionally, she added that feature articles help students connect their writing product with the real world. They also allow students to experience authors' experiences when involved in the topic-choosing process of conducting research and composing non-fiction work. The study's author wants to highlight Morgan's analysis that the feature article helps students fabricate better language and equip them with the skills they require in the future for their academic purposes.

THE STUDY

This study is conducted to answer the following research question: What experiences do Indonesian EFL students have in writing an English feature article in the Writing for the Media class? Moreover, this qualitative study explores Indonesian EFL students' experience while writing an English feature article in the Writing for the Media Class. The methods to collect the data are questionnaires and interviews.

Context of the study

This study was conducted in the English Language Education Program (ELEP) in the Faculty of Language and Arts at Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana. This study involved two students per class of the three classes of the Writing for the Media course in the 2022/2023 academic year. The course is offered to sophomore students of the English Language Education Program of the Faculty Language and Arts Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana. The Writing for the Media course offers students experience in producing non-academic texts, such as opinion editorials, content writing, and a feature article. This course aims to help students understand the concept of paragraph writing, collecting and processing information, and publishing their written products online. While working on their feature article writing, the lecturers put the students in a group of three or in pairs to work together. After completing this course, they could take Academic Writing the following semester/year.

Participants

The subject of this study must fulfill the two criteria that are (A) the participants of this study were students of the 2021 batch, and (B) the students who had been taking the Writing for the Media (WFM) course in the 2022/2023 academic year or older. Before participating in this study, they should have been experienced in writing a human interest story in their WFM class,

and (C) They were willing to be the study participants. They were chosen because they had experience writing an example of a feature article that is of human interest and that was a focus of the study itself. For the interview phase, two students per class were targeted as the representation from all three classes.

Methodology

In the study, the researcher decided to use the qualitative research design. Since the study focused on exploring students' experiences, the researcher thinks this method would help find the best findings or results. The researcher believed this research would ease the process of achieving the aim and keep the study focused on exploring students' experiences. As for the instrument, the researcher used semi-structured interviews to collect the data. According to Zacharias (2013), semi-structured interviews have the advantage of facilitating data analysis. They provide a degree of structure, allowing for comparing responses across participants while accommodating individual diversity and flexibility. As a result, semi-structured interviews yield richer data compared to structured interviews.

Data collection instrument

Because the study explores Indonesian students' experiences writing a feature article in the Writing the Media Class, a semi-structured interview is used as the data collection instrument in this study. This instrument will be used for the six students from all three classes. The questions provided by the researcher will be used to find out students' experiences while writing an English feature article, especially when writing a human interest story. The interview questions were constructed based on students' experiences explored in Morgan's study in 2010 as discussed in the previous studies from the literature review section. Additionally, the sections

would be semi-structured interviews recorded with the interviewees' consent. The expected duration per individual took about 20 minutes.

Data collection procedures

The data collection procedures of collecting the student participants' experiences would be as follows: The piloting research was conducted in the third semester of the 2022/2023 academic year, with a student from the 2021 batch taking the Writing for the Media course in the 2021/2022 academic year. The pilot study result was used to check how the research instrument collects the data if the data results are the same as the author wants, and how the data can be processed as the authors expected. The data collection occurred around the Semester Antara of the 2022/2023 academic year or until the second semester of the same academic year. Before looking for the participants, the researcher contacted the 2021 batch's leader through WhatsApp Group and students' email to inform them about the importance of their involvement in the researcher's study. Moreover, the data collection phase was started after all six participants had been fulfilled.

Data analysis procedures

The data analysis procedures were analyzed using thematic analysis. The author took his time to read and re-read the interview transcripts to better understand the interview results. Second, the researcher compared the data to jot down the overall impressions and emerging themes. Lastly, the researcher interpreted the data to formulate the conclusion and result of the study itself.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

This segment of the present study delves into the outcomes and analysis of exploring Indonesian students' experience while writing an English feature article in the *Writing for the Media* (WFM) class. To give a brief context of the writing class, the student participants worked and wrote their feature articles in groups of three to four with a predetermined topic chosen by the WFM teacher team. The data utilized in this study were gathered through interviews of 6 students from 3 different WFM classes. The section of the paper will be divided into three significant findings: the activities, advantages, and disadvantages of writing feature articles as experienced by the students.

Activities in writing a feature article

This section of my study will cover the activities done by the students. The activities covered and experienced by the students are Introduction, choosing a topic, finding resources, collecting and analyzing data, and finalizing drafting essays, which will later be discussed in the following passage.

Introduction to Feature Article

Before drafting the feature article, it is imperative to acknowledge that all participants involved in the study needed more prior awareness regarding feature articles upon their enrollment in the Writing for The Media (WFM) course. These findings arose after the question, “Have you ever known about feature articles as a type of text before this class? If yes, how did you know (when), and what did you know?” was asked of the participants. In response, all six participants unanimously indicated a complete absence of familiarity with feature articles.

Subsequently, the lecturer guided them while they learned the concept of a feature article and its functionalities, reading the examples of feature articles and engaging in assessment activities. Through this approach, the participants were introduced to the concept of feature articles and obtained a better understanding of what feature articles are.

After I took the WFM class and understood the feature article, I realized that it is more of a type of article that expresses opinions and facts on a chosen topic (Participant E, 2023, translated by the researcher).

In Morgan (2010), the text analysis was conducted using criteria established by Nia (2004) and Reduce (1999), in which students were directed to focus on elements such as facts, storytelling, intense expression, and opinion to learn more about Feature Articles. From another perspective, the WFM classes offer top-down learning that seems more systematic and guided while learning the theoretical concept and practical examples of feature articles. At the same time, Morgan's study emphasized the use of the linguistic aspects of the feature article. The approach from WFM classes may promote active learning and critical thinking skills, as students are directly involved in analyzing and interpreting feature articles.

Choosing the topic

The student participants had several tasks to finish before completing their feature article. First, they started by selecting the predetermined topic, "TEACHER." The so-called "TEACHER" in the topic encompassed individuals engaged in formal or informal teaching across various backgrounds and fields of instruction. At this stage, students were already divided into several groups consisting of three to four people. Later, the students conducted a discussion to determine their final source person, who was meant to show some kind of guided freedom for the students.

The topic selection was not difficult since the lecturer had already given us the topic “TEACHER,” and our only task was to find a unique teacher, which not all teachers have. (Participant F, 2023, translated by the researcher)

In Writing for Media (WFM) classes, the students encountered no objections or difficulties when selecting their topics. These reactions occurred because the WFM lecturers determined the topic to be “TEACHER.” This decision suggests that the lecturers want to guide (control) the students’ direction while allowing them enough room to choose the teacher's subject as the source. Thus, the students may have more time and effort to focus on the process of writing the feature article itself.

Meanwhile, according to Morgan (2010), allowing students complete control of their topic will make them interested in the writing process. Morgan did this to achieve the aim that if students are already interested in the subject they like, it will be much easier for them to acquire information and already have some familiarity with the information to do the research. Unfortunately, in her study, Morgan mentions that allowing students to choose their topics freely has a downside: it confuses them when deciding on a topic to pick.

Combining the present study’s findings and Morgan’s study, it can be concluded that while student interest is essential, providing pre-determined topics can help mitigate confusion and streamline the writing process. Therefore, it would benefit L2 writing teachers to utilize pre-determined topics. This approach allows students to focus and explore a source subject for their feature article without being overwhelmed by diverse topic choices.

Finding resources

In WFM classes, students find the resources for their feature article after they are divided into groups. Because the central theme is “TEACHER,” they must find a person currently

teaching in a formal or informal format; the teacher could be from a different background and teaching field. Participant D, for example, chose a chef as the subject of the topic “teacher” for her feature article.

I was influenced by other friends who decided to take (offer) their high school teachers, so because I came from a vocational school, I felt I had something to offer. I come from culinary arts; my teacher is a chef. So it would be interesting (Participant D, 2023, translated by the researcher).

Participant D's choice to interview a chef as the subject of her feature article exemplifies this approach, demonstrating the value of incorporating multiple perspectives to enhance understanding and add depth to the student's writing. According to Talmy (2010), engaging with diverse voices and narratives through interviews enriches our comprehension of the subject matter. Incorporating multiple perspectives before choosing a topic would benefit students, as the participants expected to gain a deeper understanding of the nuances and complexities of the topic.

Collecting and analyzing interview data

After selecting their topic, the students embarked on the research phase. They began by formulating questions aimed at gathering essential information through interviews. In this part, the students were encouraged to utilize interviews as the instrument to gather the necessary information to start their feature articles. Using interviews makes the students' writings more authentic and original while controlling for plagiarism and any cheating that may lead to inauthenticity.

After choosing our team's topic, we later discussed formulating the question we wanted to ask our source, and after that, we just arranged a meeting to interview the source person. (Participant E, 2023, translated by the researcher)

After conducting the interview, we created an outline to determine how we could integrate our interview findings into our feature article. If we discover that the interview results need to be

improved, we will conduct additional interviews to gather more information and enhance our article. (Participant C, 2023, translated by the researcher)

After the WFM students found the source of their expectations, they arranged a session with the interviewee and conducted the interview. The students analyzed the collected data by constructing an outline for their feature article draft to determine which information to incorporate. The outline was to identify which interview findings could be integrated into their feature article drafts, ensuring they considered all elements essential for a well-constructed piece. The interview excerpts would be used as direct quotations, functioning as the supporting details, in their feature article draft later.

Meanwhile, utilizing the interview as the only way to gather information has its reasons. According to Heitman and Litewka (2011), EFL students are prone to plagiarism because they need more proficiency in English. When EFL students encounter difficulties in writing, they might “borrow good English” to express complex ideas that they cannot produce at their current level of proficiency without proper acknowledgment of the source. Hence, to overcome the challenges of plagiarism in WFM class, the lecturers encouraged the participants to conduct interviews. In short, letting students conduct interviews allows them to develop original content while improving their language skills by practicing producing their English sentences.

Drafting essay

The WFM students in the present study continued collaborative work in teams when drafting their essays. Before they incorporated the findings, they needed to create an outline to determine the information that would be included in their feature article.

After doing the interview, we divided the paragraphs into several parts, whether an introduction, body, or closing (Participant E, 2023, translated by the researcher)

To write the feature article, we must match our schedule to arrange meetings via Zoom, Google Meet, or Just Meet in the college. (Participant A, 2023, translated by the researcher)

Some students preferred to divide the text into several parts before composing their paragraphs. Hence, everyone in the group was responsible for the feature article, and then they combined their paragraphs into one. Some other student participants said they arranged online meetings to brainstorm and write paragraphs. Some students also utilized Google Documents, so they did not have to arrange meetings through Zoom or Google Meet.

Initially, we went straight to outlining, starting from the headline, intro, thesis statement, and other sections. Then, I continued by interviewing, quoting, and drafting it to my lecturer to get feedback before incorporating the interview results. "So you were drafting your essay and then did the interview?" Yes, at that time, we made a mistake. Why did we draft first and then interview? However, in the end, we had to start from the beginning because we had to draft our essay based on the interview. (Participant B, 2023, translated by the researcher)

Meanwhile, as the students worked on their drafts, the lecturers provided consultation sessions to assist and supervise their progress and ensure they were on the right track. The lecturers also provided feedback on students' linguistic, content, reorganization, and quotation incorporation in their works.

The lecturer gave us feedback when we did the consultation session. I remember that he (the lecturer) told us to incorporate more of the findings in quotations and pay attention to our feature article's structure. (Participant C, 2023, translated by the researcher)

The role of the lecturers here is crucial since this was the first time the students wrote a feature article, especially in English. Even though the students seemed to understand the theoretical concept of a good feature article, it would be different from their practical experience since they all stated that they needed to be made aware of what Feature Articles were.

While writing their feature article, the students needed to incorporate their findings from the previous interviews. In this part of the process, the students must re-examine and re-match which facts they wanted to show from the interview as supporting evidence while developing their writing into something enjoyable for the audience.

As the student participants progressed in writing their feature articles, they would continuously integrate the information obtained from the interviews. This phase required carefully selecting supporting evidence and crafting narratives to appeal to the audience's emotions. Thus, the goal of incorporating the supporting evidence was not to see how advanced the students conducted their research but how they integrated the pieces of information and incorporated the factual data into an intentional self-made product (David & Hill, 2003, as cited in Morgan, 2010). In short, the WFM students underwent the interview result integration process, collaborative works, and consultation sessions in drafting their feature articles.

Advantages of practicing writing a feature article

The following section will cover some of the benefits that the student participants experienced while writing the feature article in the Writing for the Media (WFM) class, including research skills, expressing ideas in a written form, and communication skills when working in a group.

Research skills

The first advantage of practicing writing a feature article in the WFM class is that it is related to the student participants' experience in collecting and analyzing the interview data stage. This subtopic will present how the process of writing a feature article served as an instrument to equip students with experience and skills beneficial for their future academic journey.

In other classes, I could write essays by paying attention to the correct structure, which I could use in Academic Writing Class until later in my thesis, especially as quotations were helpful in academic writing. (Participant A, 2023, translated by the researcher)

The approach to incorporating research, meaning the whole process of collecting and analyzing data, in writing feature articles is not only expected to enrich the students' writing. It also equips them with the necessary skills for more advanced academic experiences. Following Basu (2020), students need to learn how to research because research in education helps to understand subjects better, identify research and learning gaps, bridge existing gaps, and improve teaching methods. In the current research site, these skills would be needed by the WFM students when they are taking the next writing class, i.e., the Academic Writing class and other research-based courses. As Participant A found, using the correct structure and quotations (the statements from the interviewee) enhanced their essay and would benefit their thesis writing; the ability to conduct thorough research would similarly enhance their academic writing and critical thinking skills.

Meanwhile, analyzing qualitative data in research, such as the interview results for feature articles, offers other benefits. According to Renner and Taylor (2003), researchers identify patterns and connections by organizing narrative data, aiding in paper structure. This methodical approach helps interpret findings and ensures meaningful conclusions. Focused analysis addresses vital points and meets audience needs, similar to how using quotations effectively can support an argument in an essay. Systematic analysis enhances paper credibility and reduces bias. Thus, in writing a feature article, the research process, combined with the thoughtful integration of interview findings and analysis, mirrors the structured approach to writing essays and using quotations, ultimately benefiting the students' writing process and engraving valuable research skills for their academic and professional journeys.

Expressing ideas in a written form

Second, writing a feature article in its entirety has allowed the students to express their ideas, points of view, and writing style. The data collected shows that the participants perceived that writing feature articles assisted them in transferring their thoughts into writing.

I am not writing, but when I started writing our feature article, this task was easier than the other texts I have experienced. It was caused by the fact that I was allowed to use my language, so I should not worry about the degree of formality and word choices. (Participant C, 2023, translated by the Author)

Allowing the students to write in their own style has allowed them to express their ideas more easily because they could better use the vocabulary, grammar, and subtleties with which they are comfortable. Participant C's experience supports this statement. The opportunity to write in their style decreased the cognitive demand needed to convert thoughts into words, enabling students to concentrate more on the substance and clarity of their writing (Ma'ruf, 2020). Ma'ruf's study supports this by showing that students can write more effectively using their style, as revealed by the WFM students when constructing their feature articles. Consequently, the students had more freedom to develop and present their perspectives without the added burden of conforming to rigid linguistic standards.

Feature articles help me to realize that as a writer, I should write something while considering the audience. Because back again, it is for people to read, not me to read. (Participant E, 2023, translated by the author)

Participant E's experience, derived from her encounter with feature articles, highlights a crucial aspect of writing: the audience-centric approach. Participant E's realization emphasizes the importance of considering the audience's perspective when crafting content. It underscores the idea that writing is ultimately a form of communication that engages and resonates with readers. The findings from Participant E align seamlessly with the goal of feature articles, which prioritize compelling storytelling and impactful messaging over mere linguistic precision

(Garrison & Burn, 2010). By embracing this audience-focused mindset, writers can create content that effectively communicates ideas and fosters genuine connections with their readers.

Communication skills

Last, introducing a new text genre, specifically Feature Articles, not only gave students theoretical knowledge but also allowed the student participants to experience connecting their academic knowledge to the real world and obtaining skill(s) that might be useful for them in their future and present lives and studies.

I could communicate better when I talked to a stranger after I conducted the interview. (Participant E, 2023, Translated by the Author)

Interestingly enough, Participant E said that part of the research helped her communicate better with strangers because she had the experience of interviewing the source person, who was a total stranger to her. This finding shows that writing feature articles aims to aid students with academic skills they might use in the future and also equips them with skills they could use throughout their post-academic life.

At that time, the topic had already been determined by the "teacher" from the lecturer; I interviewed the teacher, then the results were discussed with the lecturer, and then the lecturer gave feedback on how this could be made into an exciting topic. (Participant C, 2023, translated by the researcher)

The whole process of drafting feature articles involves multiple interactions through peer discussions, teacher-student discussions, and interviews with source persons, giving students opportunities to communicate effectively and convey their ideas. As Sumaiya, Srivastava, and Prakash (2022) argue, effective communication can help students grow in their careers by enabling them to deal with problems, gather information, engage with people, and develop strong interpersonal skills, all of which are essential for exchanging ideas and aiding future success.

Therefore, the skills acquired from writing feature articles benefit students academically, professionally, and personally in the long term.

Challenges of writing a feature article

The process of writing a feature article by the student participants not only led them to experience advantages but also several challenges; these challenges mainly took place in the context of this present study, where the student participants were working together in a group. The interview results revealed two themes regarding the challenges. The researcher will discuss each challenge the WFM students encounter in more detail.

Personal-related difficulties in collaborative writing

Even though the approach of incorporating collaborative writing when the students made their feature articles was expected to help them write their essays, the student participants perceived the approach as challenging.

My friends had terrible time management in our work, and both chose their jobs over the feature article, so I wrote the essay. (Participant B, 2023, translated by the researcher)

Participant B described how he took charge of his feature article team; his experience highlighted a significant time management issue caused by the collaborative writing work. Some students prioritize their engagement over the group work because they cannot manage their time well. In this case, the students' matters have disturbed the writing process. Participant B's experience aligns with Murtiningsih's (2016) findings that students may struggle to manage their time effectively when they spend more time on distractions than on the assigned task. When the students could not manage their time between personal and group matters, it resulted in insufficient time for the collaborative writing portion. Thus, Participant B's situation underscores

that unsupervised collaboration in writing may lead to a commitment issue in group work. To prevent such problems, lecturers could monitor their students' commitment and collaboration to the task more closely.

Another problem that arose from working in a group in the feature article writing process is an unequal distribution of work.

When we started to write our feature article, I had credits for over 70% of the essay. (Participant B, 2023, translated by the researcher)

When I was making it, the difficult part was how we equalized the contribution of each person in my group to work on the feature article. (Participant A, 2023, translated by the researcher)

The statements by Participant A and Participant B showed that collaborative writing caused unfair work distribution among the members. The issue of inadequate involvement in collaborative work also occurred in the study conducted by Fitria, Trisnawati, and Mulyani (2023). Their study found that one of the main reasons for the unequal workload among group members was that groups that had members who were challenging to reach out caused the rest of the group to finish the essays without them. These findings highlight the necessity for better supervision and structured guidelines in collaborative writing projects to ensure equal participation and effective time management from each member.

Difficulties in the linguistic aspect of collaborative writing

Lastly, while the student participants collaboratively wrote their feature article, the WFM students encountered difficulty caused by each group member's writing style differences.

As we have our own writing styles, it is obvious which parts were written by one author and which were written by another, and the biggest problem is how we should make our writing styles look like a single work by one author. (Participant E, 2023, translated by the author)

The approach of applying collaborative writing brings another issue, namely, the issue of incorporating different writing styles. This difficulty in incorporating the student participants' writing styles could have occurred because Participant E's group divided their feature article into several parts, and each student would be in charge of certain parts. This experience from Participant E aligns with what Coffin (2020) found in her study. Coffin's study showed that incorporating writing style issues happens due to using different collaborative writing strategies where multiple team members contribute to different sections of the written work—resulting in a disjointed final product. This incorporation of writing styles might be a challenge because when multiple writers contribute to a single piece, their distinct writing styles can lead to inconsistencies in voice and tone, making the text less cohesive and less effective in conveying a unified message. Indeed, having several students write a feature article together could result in an inconsistent final product.

A different challenge arose from the collaborative writing applied when the students worked in groups: diverse proficiency levels.

Of course, I prefer to choose [working by] myself because I want to write something already inside my mind without considering other people's performances. (Participant E, 2023, translated by the researcher)

Participant E's statement emphasized her strong will to work individually without considering the rest of the team members' performance. The excerpt indicated that Participant E's group members had a diverse level of English proficiency; thus, she thought she could perform better in writing the feature article individually rather than working with the rest of the members.

According to Hz, Laiya, and Sarumaha (2023), the criteria for students' writing performance assessment include grammar, vocabulary, and logical concept organization criteria. The issue caused by the varying proficiency level experienced by Participant E may lead to the overall group work result's dynamic, as stated by Alkhalaf (2020). Consequently, diverse proficiency

levels within a group can significantly impact the quality and cohesiveness of collaborative writing projects.



CONCLUSION

This study aims to explore Indonesian students' experiences while writing an English feature article for the Writing for the Media course while answering the research question: What experiences do Indonesian EFL students have in writing a feature article in Writing for the Media class? This study implemented the qualitative research method by interviewing six 2021 batch students from three different writing for the Media classes in the English Language Education program of the Faculty of Language and Arts, Satya Wacana Christian University.

Based on the research results, the student participants stated that their journey in writing feature articles started with the introduction of feature articles. Later, after the participants understood the text's theory, they began to team up into several groups consisting of three to four people and discussed choosing a source person as the subject of their essays. As for the topic, the WFM teacher team had already predetermined it so that the students could spend more time on the production of the essay. Moreover, they began constructing questions to collect the data needed to write their feature article after choosing a source person. After arranging a meeting and conducting the interview with the source person, they later analyzed the data they obtained. The WFM students later brought up the chosen data they obtained to be integrated into an outline as the supporting details for the essay before drafting. In the drafting stage, the lecturers provided a session where students could consult their feature articles to receive teacher feedback. The final product of the feature article resulted from the group members' collaborative work.

From the participants' experiences, it could be concluded that the students experienced three advantages while constructing a feature article. The students could obtain research and communication skills that benefit their academic journey and future careers. Another benefit is that they could express ideas in written form more efficiently.

While experiencing benefits from their journey while writing a feature article, the students also encountered two challenges. The first challenge was the personal-related difficulties in collaborative writing, which included time management issues and inadequate workload. Secondly, the challenge was related to their linguistic difficulties while working on collaborative writing, which consisted of differences in writing styles and proficiency among the students working at a group level.

Thus, this study concludes that WFM teachers should first evaluate the approach of collaborative writing for their students. Second, L2 writing teachers might consider using predetermined topics for second-language writing instruction while still providing enough room for EFL students to explore the topics to write on. Also, L2 writing teachers should provide EFL students with a well-structured writing guide and firm, adequate supervision to achieve successful writing on a specific text type, such as feature articles.

Finally, in the present study, the researcher utilized a qualitative study by relying only on one instrument to obtain the data, i.e., a semi-structured interview. For further research on similar subjects, researchers can consider different methodologies, such as the phenomenological method, to explore students' experiences and investigate the effect of writing for the media on EFL students in their academic or non-academic life more elaboratively.