

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the background, research question, objectives, significance, scope, limitation, hypothesis, and definition of key terms. It explains the reasons for conducting the study, particularly the importance of investigating the relationship between self-efficacy and students' creative writing performance. The chapter also outlines the main issues that motivate the study and describes the direction of the study based on the identified problem.

A. Background of the Study

Creative Writing is one of the writing courses taught to EFL students in higher education, providing learners with the opportunity to express ideas creatively in written form. In contrast to other academic writing that tends to be bound by fixed rules and standardized evaluation criteria, creative writing rarely imposes fixed guidelines or opinions that direct the writing process. Fiction, as one form of creative writing, is built from imaginative events, in contrast to non-fiction, which is grounded in real events. In other words, the primary purpose of creative writing is not to convey facts in a strict manner, but rather to guide and develop the writer's ability to create original literary works.¹ This indicates that creative writing requires learners to explore ideas and transform them into various forms of meaningful literary texts.

¹ Dwi Astuti Wahyu Nurhayati, *CREATIVE WRITING*, 1st edn (Tulungagung: Akademia Pustaka, 2020).

Producing such literary texts is not a straightforward task, as it is rooted in writing itself, one of the four primary language competencies that is widely regarded as the most intricate skill to develop. According to Nunan, writing operates as a cognitive process in which a writer produces, structures, and shapes ideas into a unified and readable piece of text.² In creative writing, this cognitive process becomes more demanding, as students are required to structure and shape not merely factual information, but imaginative ideas into a coherent literary form. Harmer also emphasizes that writing includes several stages such as planning, drafting, revising, and editing, which require not only language mastery but also higher-order thinking skills and attention to linguistic details.³ These stages remain fundamental in creative writing, although students must additionally attend to literary elements such as plot, characterization, and imaginative expression throughout the writing process. Within creative writing specifically, these demands are even greater, as learners must combine linguistic accuracy with imagination, originality, and literary sensitivity, ultimately contributing not only to language development but also to the growth of creative reasoning and individual expression among EFL students.

One of the psychological factors that has been widely acknowledged to be associated with writing performance, particularly in creative writing, is self-efficacy. Bandura defines self-efficacy as the extent to which a person

² David Nunan, *Practical English Language Teaching* (McGraw-Hill Education, 2003).

³ Jeremy. Harmer, *How to Teach English* (Longman Pub., 2004).

believes in their ability to accomplish particular tasks through their own actions and efforts.⁴ In the context of creative writing, self-efficacy determines how students manage the challenges associated with composing literary texts, including how they deal with difficulties, how persistent they are in completing assignments, and how much effort they are willing to invest. Higher self-efficacy is often associated with greater motivation and better performance, particularly when students are required to generate original ideas and express them coherently in literary form.

Self-efficacy is theorized to operate through several dimensions, namely level, strength, and generality, which respectively refer to the degree of task difficulty a person believes they can handle, the degree of certainty in accomplishing that task, and the extent to which such belief extends across different situations.⁵ These dimensions are particularly relevant to creative writing, as producing literary texts requires students not only to master linguistic mechanics but also to generate original ideas, take creative risks, and tolerate ambiguity throughout the writing process. Students with high self-efficacy tend to be more willing to experiment with unconventional ideas, persist through revision, and manage the uncertainty inherent in creative expression. In contrast, students with low self-efficacy are more likely to avoid creative risks and rely on safer, more conventional forms of expression. In this sense, self-efficacy does not merely influence students'

⁴ Albert. Bandura, *Self-Efficacy : The Exercise of Control* (W.H. Freeman and Company, 1997).

⁵ Bandura.

motivation to write, but also shapes the depth of creativity and originality reflected in their written work. In this study, self-efficacy is specifically examined in the context of creative writing, referred to as writing self-efficacy, which refers to students' beliefs in their own ability to perform creative writing tasks, rather than self-efficacy in a general or broader academic sense.

In higher education, creative writing plays an important role in developing students' ability to express ideas creatively, think critically, and use language meaningfully. Through creative writing, students are encouraged to explore imagination, originality, and personal experience in written form. At UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung, creative writing is implemented as one of the writing courses provided to English Education students. Based on a preliminary interview conducted on November 5, 2025, through discussions via WhatsApp with several English Education students from Classes A to E regarding the number of students in each class and the types of creative writing assignments, it was found that students were assigned to produce original literary works such as poems, memoirs, and short stories. In this learning process, students are encouraged to use imagination, creativity, and linguistic resources to express ideas in written form. Therefore, creative writing at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung does not focus on presenting factual information, but emphasizes originality, creativity, and imaginative expression in producing literary texts.

However, in reality, many students still face challenges in writing creatively. Many students struggle to develop ideas, expand content into coherent plot structures, select appropriate vocabulary, and maintain accuracy in grammar and mechanics. Creative writing performance is also linked to psychological factors that shape how students approach and complete writing tasks. When students have low belief in their creative writing ability, they may experience difficulty initiating ideas or completing longer creative writing assignments. This indicates that psychological factors such as self-efficacy can affect students' performance in creative writing tasks. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform tasks successfully and is associated with students' effort, persistence, and ability to cope with difficulties during the writing process.⁶

Several previous studies have examined the relationship between self-efficacy and writing performance. Wulandari found a low to moderate positive correlation between self-efficacy and students' descriptive writing ability.⁷ Dewanti reported a strong correlation among university students, suggesting that writing proficiency can be significantly correlated with students' belief in their own capabilities.⁸ Conversely, Setyowati et al. found

⁶ Bandura.

⁷ Sri Wulandari, 'The Correlation between Students' Self-Efficacy and Their Writing Ability at State Vocational High School 1 Tandun' (STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF SULTAN SYARIF KASIM RIAU, 2019).

⁸ Riska Dewanti, 'The Influence of Self-Efficacy on Students' Writing Performance at the Fifth Semester of English Education Department State Islamic University of Alauddin Makassar' (Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin, 2019) <<https://repository.uin-alauddin.ac.id/16296/1/RiskaDewanti.pdf>> [accessed 6 December 2025].

no significant correlation between the two variables.⁹ In addition, Nurhakiky et al. reported a weak positive correlation between self-efficacy and writing skill,¹⁰ while Binnendyk et al. also found a weak but statistically significant relationship between the same variables.¹¹ Li explained that self-efficacy not only affects writing performance but also influences emotional aspects that indirectly impact writing outcomes.¹²

Previous studies on the relationship between self-efficacy and writing performance have shown varied results, with some studies finding strong positive correlations, while others reporting weak or insignificant relationships. This inconsistency indicates that the issue has not been fully clarified, particularly in the context of advanced university students. Most studies were conducted at the secondary school level or among early-semester university students, while studies focusing on advanced students who have completed higher-level writing courses remains limited.

Several specific aspects have been identified as insufficiently addressed in the existing literature. Limited studies have specifically examined self-efficacy in the context of a Creative Writing course, as most studies focused

⁹ Lestari Setyowati and others, 'The Correlation Between Students' Writing Self-Efficacy and Essay Writing Performance', *Journal of Languages and Language Teaching*, 12.1 (2024), 72 <<https://doi.org/10.33394/jollt.v12i1.9140>>.

¹⁰ Nur Hakikiy, Siminto, and Zaitun Qamariah, 'The Effect of Self-Efficacy on the Writing Ability of English Study Program Students at IAIN Palangka Raya', *Journal of English Language and Education*, 10.1 (2025), 157–127 <<https://doi.org/10.31004/jele.v10i1.610>>.

¹¹ Sophia Binnendyk, Jusak Patty, and Asmi Jamil, 'Self-Efficacy as a Predictor of Writing Performance: A Correlational Study of Indonesian Secondary School Students', *J-Shelves of Indragiri (JSI)*, 6.2 (2024), 129–48 <<https://doi.org/10.61672/jsi.v6i2.2853>>.

¹² Dan Li, 'A Review of EFL Students' English Writing Self-Efficacy', *IRA International Journal of Education and Multidisciplinary Studies*, 18.3 (2022), 94 <<https://doi.org/10.21013/jems.v18.n3.p4>>.

on general academic writing, essay writing, or descriptive text. Moreover, few studies have been conducted involving sixth-semester English Education students at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung, making this institutional and academic context largely unexplored. In addition, limited studies appear to have employed Newman's short story rubric from Earnshaw's *The Handbook of Creative Writing* as the assessment instrument for measuring students' creative writing performance, as most studies relied on general writing rubrics that do not capture the literary dimensions of creative writing. Furthermore, limited studies appear to have combined Bandura's self-efficacy framework with Creative Writing assessment using a literary rubric, leaving a significant theoretical space in understanding how psychological beliefs relate specifically to students' creative literary performance.

Based on these considerations, it is necessary to conduct further study on the relationship between self-efficacy and creative writing performance among sixth-semester English Education students who have completed the Creative Writing course. Students at this level have already taken higher-level writing courses and produced various literary works such as short stories, poems, and memoirs, which require creativity, linguistic accuracy, and strong self-belief. Because of these academic demands, examining the correlation between self-efficacy and creative writing performance in this context is essential to understand how psychological factors contribute to students' Creative Writing achievement. Therefore, the present study, entitled "The

Correlation between Self-Efficacy and Creative Writing Performance of Sixth-Semester English Education Students at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung” focuses specifically on sixth-semester students and is expected to contribute to the improvement of writing instruction in higher education as well as enrich studies on affective factors in English language learning for advanced-level learners.

B. Research Question

Based on the background of the study, the research question of this study is formulated as follows:

Is there any significant correlation between self-efficacy and students’ creative writing performance of English Education students at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung?

C. Research Objectives

In line with the research question, this study is conducted with the following objective:

To find out whether there is a significant correlation between self-efficacy and students’ creative writing performance of English Education students at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung.

D. Significance of the Study

This study is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to the field of English Language Teaching, particularly in the area of creative writing and the psychological aspects that relate to students’ performance. Theoretically, this study aims to deepen the understanding of

how self-efficacy, as an individual's belief in their capability to complete academic tasks, relates specifically to students' creative writing performance. High levels of self-efficacy may enhance students' confidence, persistence, and willingness to engage in complex writing tasks, which are essential components of Creative Writing at the university level. By focusing on sixth-semester English Education students who have completed the Creative Writing course, this study provides insights into how psychological readiness is associated with students' performance in producing creative literary texts.

Practically, the findings of this study are expected to assist English language educators, such as lecturers, curriculum designers, and teacher trainers, in developing learning strategies that support both skill development and students' self-belief. A better understanding of the role of self-efficacy can help educators create instructional approaches that not only emphasize technical writing proficiency but also strengthen students' confidence during the creative process. Since creative writing requires imagination, originality, and sustained effort, fostering strong self-efficacy is essential to enhance student engagement and writing outcomes. Therefore, the results of this study can be used to improve the effectiveness of creative writing instruction in higher education, particularly within the English Education Department.

E. Scope and Limitation

This study focuses on the correlation between self-efficacy (X) as the predictor variable and students' creative writing performance (Y) as the criterion variable of English Education students at UIN Sayyid Ali

Rahmatullah Tulungagung. The creative writing performance were obtained by assessing students' short story assignments collected from the course lecturer, using a scoring rubric adapted from Newman in Earnshaw's *The Handbook of Creative Writing*. Although students completed several types of creative writing assignments during the semester, including poems, memoirs, and short stories, this study specifically uses the short story assignment as the measure of creative writing performance. This decision is based on the nature of short story writing, which encompasses the key dimensions of creative writing ability assessed in this study, namely Voice and Originality, Structure and Narrative Coherence, Language and Style, Tone, and Mechanics. The scope of this study is limited to sixth-semester students who have completed the creative writing course.

The self-efficacy examined in this study is specifically writing self-efficacy, referring to students' beliefs about their own ability to perform writing-related tasks, rather than self-efficacy in a general or academic sense. This study does not examine other psychological or linguistic variables, such as motivation, anxiety, grammar mastery, or reading comprehension. It also does not measure students' general writing proficiency, but specifically their creative writing performance obtained from short story assignments during one semester. Therefore, the findings are limited to the specific population and context of this study and cannot be generalized to students from other semesters, institutions, or academic backgrounds.

F. Hypothesis

1. **Null Hypothesis (H_0):** There is no significant correlation between self-efficacy and students' creative writing performance of sixth-semester English Education students at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung.
2. **Alternative Hypothesis (H_1):** There is a significant correlation between self-efficacy and students' creative writing performance of sixth-semester English Education students at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung.

G. Definition of Key Terms

1. Creative Writing:

Creative writing in this study refers to an academic course in the English Education Department that focuses on the development of students' creative expression through writing. In this course, students are required to compose original literary works. The course emphasizes creativity, imagination, and the ability to communicate ideas effectively through written language.

2. Creative Writing Performance:

Creative writing performance refers to the quantitative results obtained from assessing students' short story assignments using a scoring rubric adapted from Newman in Earnshaw's *The Handbook of Creative Writing*. The rubric evaluates five dimensions: Voice and Originality,

Structure and Narrative Coherence, Language and Style, Tone, and Mechanics.

3. Self-Efficacy:

Self-efficacy refers to the extent to which a person believes in their ability to accomplish particular tasks through their own actions and efforts. In the context of Creative Writing, self-efficacy plays an important role as it is associated with students' motivation, effort, and persistence in completing creative writing tasks such as producing a short story.