

NEEDS ANALYSIS OF PROJECT-BASED LEARNING MODEL IN WRITING PARAGRAPHS FROM EFL STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

Need analysis is required to take place before developing writing material so that results meet the needs of the students who use the material. This research aims to analyze a model of English Paragraph Writing material based on project-based learning for EFL learners. A quantitative method was applied in this study employing a questionnaire and semi-structured interview to collect the data from 35 students and three instructors of writing in the English department, at Universitas Muhammadiyah Mataram. The data were analyzed quantitatively using frequency and percentage, while the data from the interview were transcribed and analyzed qualitatively. The result showed that students need teaching materials with clear objectives, exercises for individuals and groups, and project-based learning that can be employed in paragraph writing material. Therefore, designing a model of teaching material for paragraph writing based on project-based learning is much needed. The findings of this study are useful for lecturers and stakeholders who want to design English paragraph writing teaching material. This study has the potential to bridge the gap by providing knowledge of the needs of students and recommendations for designing English paragraph writing materials.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the language skills that must be acquired by students of English as a foreign language is writing skills. Writing is considered a productive skill and activity that requires students to produce a message and ideas, feel, describe something, discuss an idea, and present a point of view through written text. Writing is a way of sharing personal meaning and writing courses emphasize the power of the individual to construct his or her views on a topic. It is a multi-aspect communicative skill and teaching writing can be ideally thought of as a certain dynamic process, developing students' skills in spelling, grammar, punctuation, vocabulary use, composition, and style (Abdelmohsen et al., 2020; Terenin, 2015)

Plenty of previous study has shown that writing English paragraph is not easy for EFL students. A common problem found in composing paragraph writing is students are not aware to identify part of the paragraph, identify different types of paragraphs, and are not able to use cohesive devices correctly (Elazeez, 2019). Grammar, clarity of each sentence, and consistency of each sentence are areas where students struggle with writing (Tambunan et al., 2022); (Emilia et al., 2018). The problem was also found in the study conducted by Suntara (2021), Thai students face difficulties in mastering writing occurs to capitalization, punctuation, contraction, fragments, run-ons, subject-verb agreement, spelling, conjunction, tenses, and comma splices (Suntara, 2021). Most students commit mistakes in sentence structure, vocabulary, tenses, subject-verb agreement, articles, and word order (Nasser, 2019). The difficulties in academic writing mainly lay in vocabulary and writing resources (J. Li & Zeng, 2019). Lack of vocabulary, grammar, poor spelling, students' readiness, and lack of exposure to books and

reading materials are also the challenges faced by students in learning writing skills (Moses & Mohamad, 2019).

Teaching material is one of the most important aspects of teaching and learning (Ilham et al., 2020). Good teaching material should be informative (inform the learner about the target language), instructional (guide the learner in practicing the language), experiential (provides the learner with experience of the language in use), eliciting (encourage the learner to use the language, and exploratory (helps the learner to make discoveries about the language) (Tomlinson, 2012). Instructional material generally serves as the basis of much of the language input that learners receive and the language practice in the classroom. The teaching materials should be well developed by considering the context and the needs of the users (Richards & Renandya, 2002).

Need analysis is an important stage in developing English as a foreign language teaching material that is appropriate to learners' characteristics and learners needs (Huhta et al., 2013); (Ilham et al., 2023). Need analysis could be seen as a process to assess students' communicative needs to achieve specific learning objectives. The aim of need analysis is to collect information concerning students in order to define the target needs and learning needs. As the instrument to establish how and what the learning process will be held, need analysis covers many aspects of the teaching and learning process (Padmadewi et al., 2023)ss, including students' current language proficiency, students' purpose in learning English, etc.

A number of research studies show that need analysis helps teachers prepare materials appropriately (Albashir Jamoom, 2021; Ilham et al., 2020; Ma'rufah et al., 2021; Padmadewi et al., 2023; Sakkir et al., 2021). Sakkir (2021), for example, the study found that need analysis is the basis of developing a module for Facebook-based writing instructional courses, in order to make the material related to students' needs. In line with Sakkir, Jamoon (2021) revealed that students needed to improve most of their writing skills and extend their knowledge about the writing aspects including content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, mechanics, and others. In addition, Padmadewi (2021), the study found that the students required types of assessment instrument, pedagogical task-based literacy activities, and real-life based literacy activities, the assessment take the form of pedagogically intended procedures, and the setting of assessment is flexible and depends on the mode of learning implemented. Furthermore, Ilham (2020) revealed that students need to learn types of text, vocabulary and construct sentences into paragraphs, and improve the aspect of teaching writing. However, despite the increasing body of research, there is still relatively limited research on need analysis in paragraph writing. This research focuses on bridging the gap by investigating students' need analysis of paragraph writing. By analyzing the outcomes of this study, valuable insight into the potential benefits and challenges associated with need analysis in paragraph writing can be obtained. As a result, these findings contribute to designing a model of paragraph writing materials.

This research aims to describe the students' need to learn paragraph writing through project-based learning methods as the base for designing the learning material. It is concerned with the need for the objective of paragraph teaching material, the topics of paragraph writing teaching material, paragraph writing tasks, learning evaluation, and project-based learning. Therefore, the research question of this study is formulated as follows: (1) What needs do students have in terms of paragraph writing skills as assessed using the Project-Based Learning (PBL) model?

RESEARCH METHOD

This study belonged to qualitative research to address the research problem at hand. This study is done through a survey in which a survey is done to describe, compare, and evaluate the data of the study (Creswell, 2012; Fraenkel et al., 2012). Surveys were utilized to gather quantitative data, especially targeting students' needs in project-based model paragraph writing

material. The data collection instrument consisted of a questionnaire distributed to the students, followed by interviews conducted with the students. This data collection enabled the researchers to triangulate the data, comparing and contrasting the data from questionnaire responses with the insight data gathered from the interviews. The questionnaire was given to the subject of the study through an online survey. After being collected, the data were coded and analyzed. The data analysis was done quantitatively and qualitatively.

Research Design

The design of this research is a descriptive study. There are two instruments utilized in conducting the study, namely a questionnaire and an interview. The questionnaire is the main source of data collection. It consisted of twenty-five multiple-choice questions. The questionnaire is distributed to gain data about the objective of paragraph teaching material, the topics of paragraph writing teaching material, paragraph writing tasks, learning evaluation, and project-based learning needs of students who are taking Paragraph Writing courses. The questionnaire for the study is divided into five parts: Part one covered the objective of paragraph teaching material which consists of five questions. Part 2 dealt with the needs of students in terms of the topics of teaching material. It consisted of eleven questions with five options. Part 3 dealt with the needs of students in terms of paragraph writing exercises. It consisted of five questions. Part 4 covered the needs of students in learning evaluation. It consisted of three questions. Part 5 dealt with the needs of students in terms of project-based learning. It consisted of six questions with five options.

The subject of the Study

The subjects of this study were 35 English department students who were chosen by purposive sampling technique from the third-semester students of the English education department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Mataram. The sample size of 35 students was determined based on the total number of students who took the paragraph writing subject. All students are presently enrolled in the paragraph writing subject. This sample was representative of the intended student population for English department students. There was no exception for the students due to the limited number of the target subjects.

Instruments

In collecting data the researcher used two kinds of instruments, namely questionnaire and interview. The questionnaire was used as the main instrument to get the data of need analysis while the interview was used to clarify the information gotten from the questionnaire. All of the subjects were given to fill out the needs analysis questionnaire but only some subjects were invited to take part in the interview. The respondents were asked to fill out the questionnaire through Google Forms. To control the respondents' responses, the researcher accompanied the respondents during their activity in giving feedback on the questionnaire. This was also to control the respondents in giving feedback based on their real experience

Data Analysis

The data from the questionnaire was analyzed by using descriptive statistics while the data from the interview was transcribed and subsequently categorized and interpreted in a condensed body of information (Alwasilah, 2002). Furthermore, interviews were arranged to serve as supplementary sources and help correlate the data collected. Thematic analysis was conducted on the qualitative data gathered from the opinion survey in order to find common themes and patterns in the student's responses to questions about their needs. A method that is frequently used in qualitative research to find and examine patterns in the data is thematic analysis. This method made it easier to fully comprehend how students viewed their learning needs. Identifying themes and interpreting the findings in regard to the needs of the students are phases in the analysis process.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

The Purpose of Paragraph Writing Material

One research question guided the researcher to gain the research findings. This question was posited to identify the students' need to learn paragraph writing skills based on a project-based learning model. The close-ended questionnaire was analyzed and presented through the Likert scale. The researcher categorizes the questionnaire responses into five categories. Those were not needed, less needed, fairly needed, needed, and very needed. It was analyzed using a percentage formula, and the result was presented using descriptive interpretation.

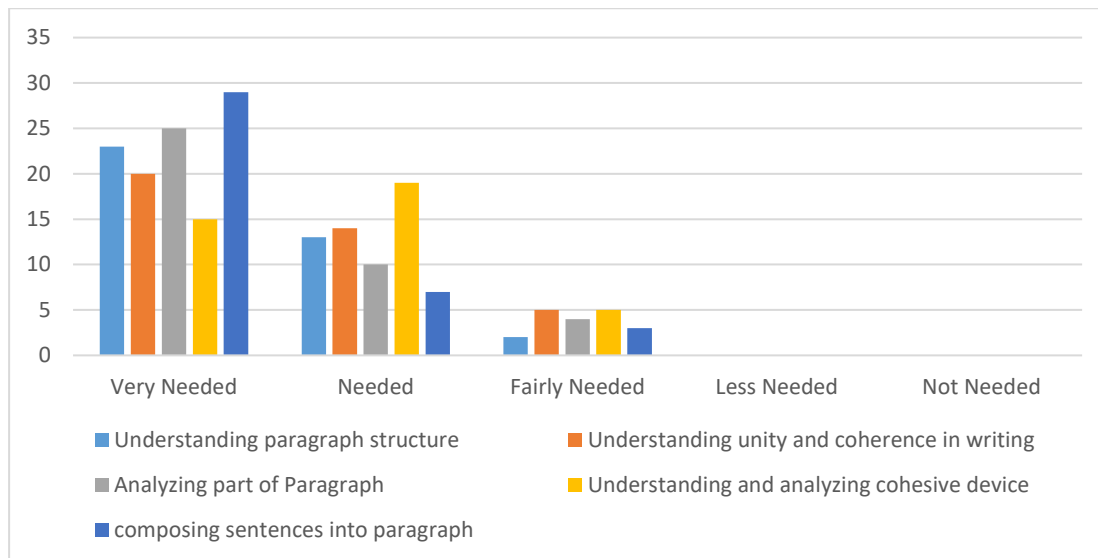


Figure 1 The purposes of paragraph writing material

The study attempts to investigate the students' need for project-based paragraph writing material in terms of the students' needs objective of paragraph teaching material, the topics of paragraph writing teaching material, paragraph writing task, learning evaluation, and project-based learning the need of students who are taking Paragraph Writing course. The data from Figure 1 showed that most of the students answered that they prefer the aim of learning paragraph writing material related to composing sentences into paragraphs (74%). Some students answered that they prefer analyzing part of a paragraph (64%) and understanding paragraph structure (61%). They also answered understanding unity and coherence in writing (51%). Furthermore, fifteen of them (38%) said that they preferred understanding and analyzing cohesive devices for the aim of learning paragraph writing.

Consistent with the result of the data from a questionnaire, interviews revealed that students agreed the objectives of paragraph writing are understanding paragraph structure, analyzing part of a paragraph, and composing sentences into paragraphs. The students' comments regarding input are shown as follows:

I think the learning objectives that have been achieved are understanding paragraph structure, analyzing part of the paragraph, and composing sentences into paragraphs. What I don't really understand is understanding unity and coherence in paragraphs and analyzing and understanding cohesive devices (S1).

the learning objective that I have understood is understanding paragraph structure. then what I have understood is analyzing parts of paragraphs, analyzing and understanding cohesive devices. only what I have not understood is understanding unity and coherence and composing sentences into paragraphs (S2).

I think what I have understood is understanding paragraph structure, then analyzing part of the paragraph and composing sentences into paragraphs. What I haven't understood is understanding and analyzing cohesive devices (S3).

From the excerpts above, it can be asserted that most of the students preferred the purpose of paragraph writing material on understanding paragraph structure, analyzing part of paragraph, and composing sentences into paragraphs. They also argued that they do not understand unity and coherence in writing analyzing and understanding cohesive devices and composing sentences into paragraphs. This finding was in line with other studies conducted by (Al-Busaidi & Al-Seyabi, 2021; Duke et al., 2020) claimed that the course design project helped students achieve the outcome of the course.

Topics of paragraph Writing Material

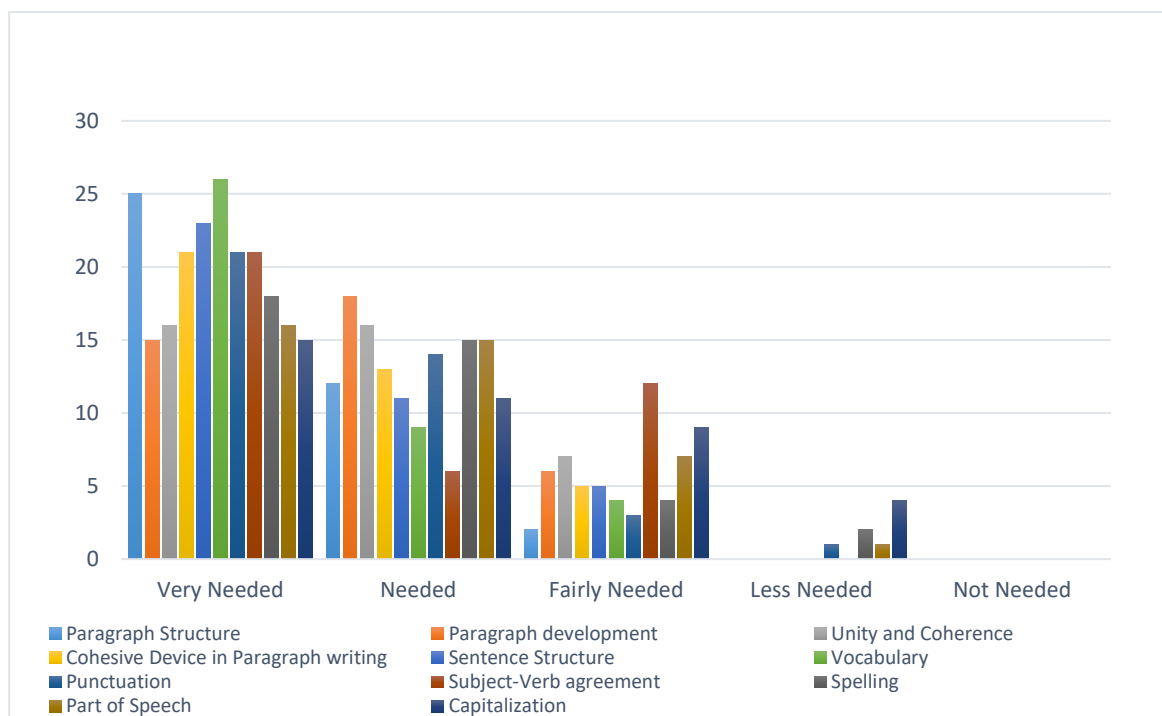


Figure 2. Topics of paragraph Writing Material

Dealing with the needs on topics of paragraph writing material, the finding revealed that the learners preferred to have a topic of paragraph writing on vocabulary (67%), and they preferred to learn paragraph structure in the paragraph writing (64%) sentence structure (58%), punctuation (54%), cohesive device in paragraph writing (54%), and subject-verb agreement (54%). Notably, none of the students preferred not needed. This study supports evidence from interviews that topics of paragraph writing material play an important role in paragraph writing class. It can be observed from the excerpt below:

The topics of paragraph writing materials that I need are punctuation, subject-verb agreement, sentence structure, unity and coherence, paragraph development, and vocabulary. Besides grammar and tenses and more vocabulary in anonym and antonym (S1).

The first is definitely to make a sentence that requires vocabulary, the second is sentence structure, subject-verb agreement, and part of speech to be able to distinguish types of words such as nouns and adjectives, capitalization, unity and coherence, and tenses (S3).

I think what is important in the topic of paragraph writing material is paragraph structure, paragraph development, sentence structure, and unity and coherence after that it is important to learn tenses, grammar, and punctuation (S6).

From the interviewee's comments above, it can be stated that students expected topics of paragraph writing on punctuation, subject-verb agreement, sentence structure, unity and coherence, paragraph development, paragraph structure, vocabulary, and part of speech. Grammar and tenses are also needed by the students. This result is in agreement with the findings (Ampa & Quraisy, 2018; Fitriani et al., 2020; Ilham et al., 2020; Sabarun, 2019; Sakkir et al., 2021; Sundari & Leonard, 2020; Sutaryo et al., 2023).

Learning Exercise

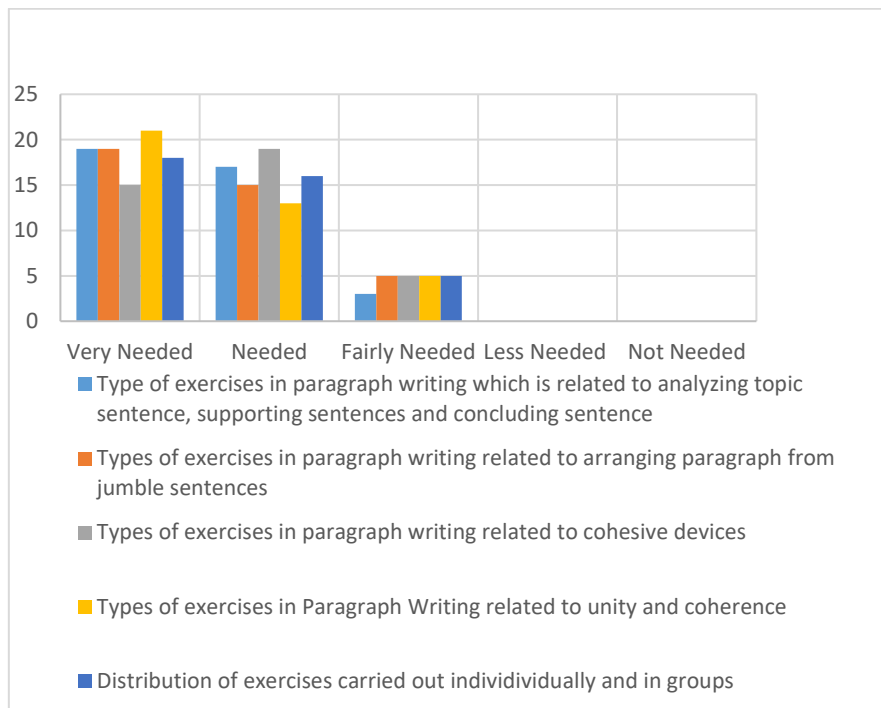


Figure 3. Learning Exercise

From the students' responses above, it can be seen that the highest needs from the student's point of view are types of exercise in paragraph writing related to unity and coherence (54%), types of exercise in paragraph writing which is related to analyzing a topic sentence, supporting sentences and concluding sentence (49%), types of exercises in paragraph writing related to arranging paragraph from jumble sentence (49%), distribution of exercise are individually and in groups. However, the lowest one is the types of exercise in paragraph writing related to cohesive devices (38%). This result shows that the students are in favor of being taught paragraph writing regarding unity and coherence, paragraph structure, jumble sentences, and writing exercises are best in individual work and group work. This shares a similar result with the interview, in which the students point out that they need exercise related to analyzing part of a paragraph and developing a paragraph. The students' comments regarding the learning exercise are shown as follows.

For me what is needed in practice on paragraph writing subject is related to analyzing topic sentences, supporting sentences, and concluding sentences, how to arrange paragraphs from jumbled sentences, how to write paragraphs, and working individually instead of in groups (S1).

Exercise of making sentences, more like simple paragraphs and from simple titles, how to develop paragraphs, give the example of a good paragraph and ask them to develop paragraph (S3)

For me, I prefer to have exercises of topic sentence, supporting sentence, and concluding sentence, and then unity and coherence, maybe exercise individually because it makes us independent, and writing paragraphs based on the paragraph structure that has been taught (S6)

It could be inferred from the above excerpt that the students preferred to have learning exercises on paragraph writing related to analyzing topic sentences, supporting sentences, and concluding sentences, arranging paragraphs from jumble sentences, and work exercises individually and in groups. One student, though, said she needs how to make good sentences in simple paragraphs, and how to develop paragraphs. It then shares similar results with the previous studies conducted (Husain & Nggawu, 2022) that students need attractive learning exercises such as organizing paragraphs in logical order.

Learning Evaluation

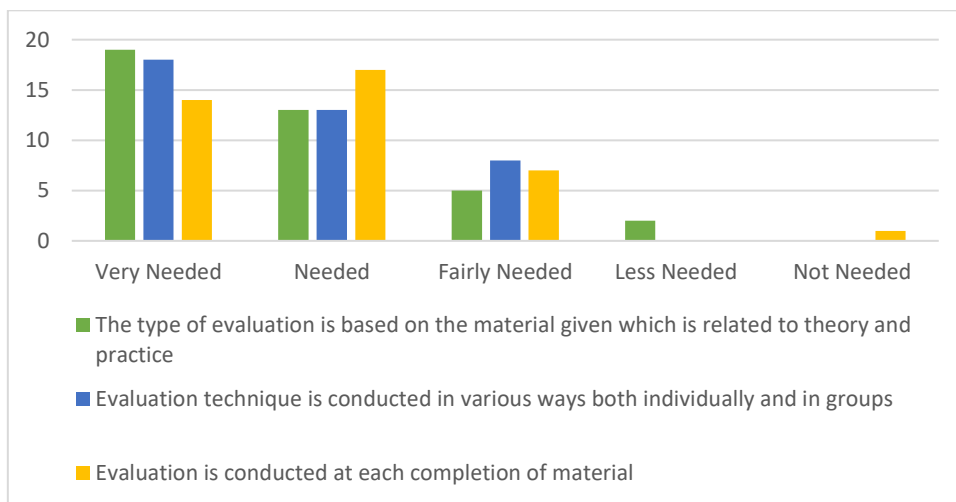


Figure 4. Learning Evaluation

The chart above shows that the highest percentage of responses from the students are; the type of evaluation is based on the material given which is related to theory and practice (49%), evaluation technique is conducted in various ways both individually and in groups(46%), and evaluation is conducted at each completion of material (36%). Furthermore, it shares a similar result with the interview that students preferred to have a learning evaluation based on the material given which is related to theory and practice and the learning evaluation technique conducted individually, as can be seen from the excerpt below.

The evaluation technique is conducted individually and evaluation is based on the theory given, we prefer individual work, like the final exam, as we need more daily learning and more assignments, the individual evaluation technique is better than in group (S1)

Evaluation based on the material given, which is related to theory and practice, we prefer the evaluation technique individually, it is more effective because we can better understand where the mistake is, and more frequent evaluation is better, not only at the end of the semester, in the middle of the semester can also be more effective learning (S3).

The excerpt above showed that all participants need the type of evaluation based on theory and evaluation, evaluation technique conducted individually which is more effective, and evaluation is not conducted at the end of learning material. This is relevant to the study conducted by Tomlinson (2013) that in designing evaluation, it is necessary to evaluate for the improvement of the teaching material and subsequent learning process.

Project-Based Learning

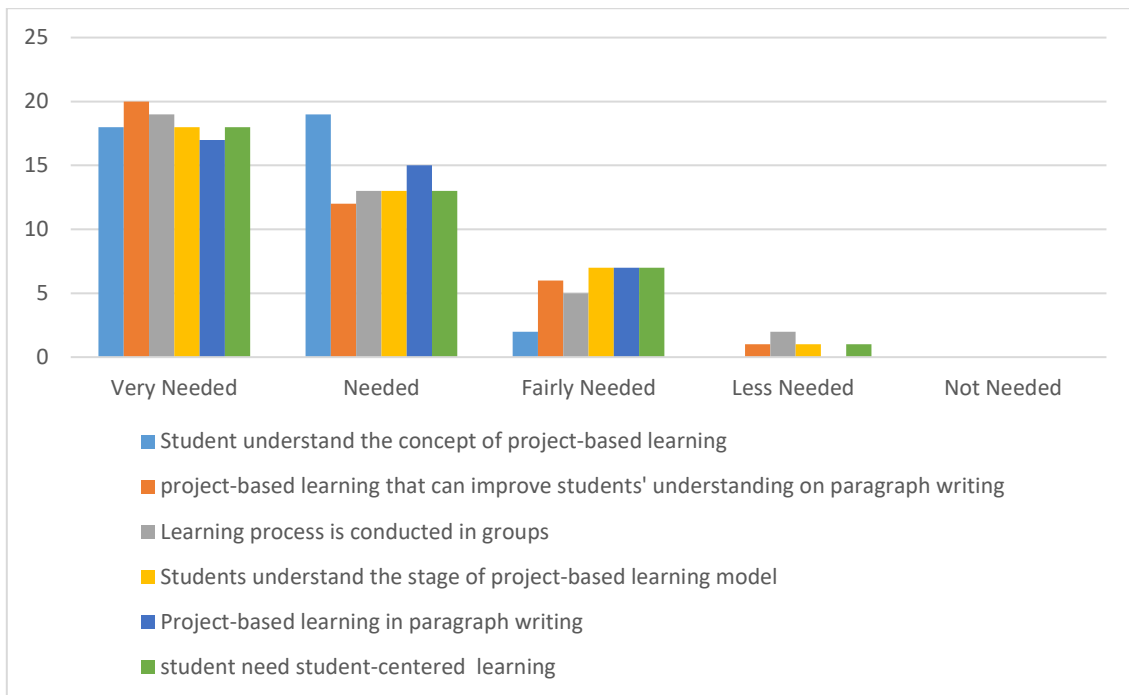


Figure 5. Project-Based Learning

Figure 5 above illustrates that in terms of project-based learning, the highest percentage of responses are given by the students to the project-based learning that can improve students' understanding of paragraph writing (51%), the learning process is conducted in groups (43%), students understand the concept of project-based learning (46%), student understand the stage of project-based learning model (46%), and student need student-centered learning (46%). These results are consistent with data obtained in an interview, which showed that PjBL can improve students' understanding of paragraph writing that can improve their critical thinking, and understand the learning stage of PjBL in paragraph writing. The description of PjBL is elaborated as follows.

PBL can improve students' understanding of paragraph writing, need critical thinking skills, and also student understand the learning stage of PBL on paragraph writing (S1)

We need PBL because it allows us to improve our paragraph writing skills, improve our critical thinking skills, PBL is effective in learning writing because we improve continuously (S3)

I prefer discussion, student learning conducted in groups, and then students understand the learning stage of PBL (S5)

It could be inferred from the above excerpt that students prefer PjBL which can enhance students' understanding of paragraph writing, understanding the learning stage of PjBL, PjBL that can improve students' critical thinking and they need PjBL that focus on student-centered learning. This is relevant to the study conducted by (Affandi & Sukyadi, 2016; Al-Busaidi & Al-Seyabi, 2021)

Discussion

This section explores the result from the five variables in the questionnaires and interview, namely the purposes of paragraph teaching writing material, the topics of paragraph writing material, types of paragraph writing exercises, learning evaluations, and implementation of a project-based learning model. First, regarding the purpose of teaching material of paragraph writing, it consists of five elements that students need to understand namely understanding paragraph structure, analyzing part of the paragraph, composing sentences into paragraphs, understanding unity and coherence in writing, and understanding and analyzing cohesive devices. This result is in agreement with (Al-Busaidi & Al-Seyabi, 2021);(Duke et al., 2020) who showed that students agreed that the course design project helped them achieve the outcome of the course. This study is also in line with the study conducted by (Sundari & Leonard, 2020) who found that academic writing should be designed to enable students to understand and develop various types of well-organized paragraphs.

Second, in terms of topics of paragraph writing teaching material, it consists of eleven topics namely paragraph structure, cohesive device in paragraph writing, punctuation, part of speech, paragraph development, sentence structure, subject-verb agreement, capitalization, paragraph unity and coherence, vocabulary, and spelling. The preference related to topics of paragraph writing showed that students preferred to have a topic of paragraph writing on vocabulary, and they preferred to learn paragraph structure in paragraph writing, sentence structure, punctuation, cohesive device in paragraph writing, and subject-verb agreement. This finding is consistent with some previous researchers (Ampa & Quraisy, 2018; Fitriani et al., 2020; Ilham et al., 2020; Sabarun, 2019; Sakkir et al., 2021; Sundari & Leonard, 2020).

In the third dimension of our investigation, we delved into the variable of exercise within the realm of paragraph writing materials. This variable encapsulated five distinct types of evaluation, namely the analysis of topic sentences, supporting sentences, and concluding sentences, the arrangement of paragraphs derived from jumbled sentences, an assessment of paragraph unity and coherence, and the distribution of exercises conducted both individually and in group settings. The deliberate inclusion of these diverse exercise types reflects a meticulous effort to comprehensively evaluate and enhance students' proficiency in paragraph writing. The strategic incorporation of exercises holds fundamental significance in the design of teaching materials dedicated to paragraph writing. These exercises play a pivotal role in shaping the overall effectiveness and efficiency of pedagogical delivery. By encompassing a spectrum of evaluative activities, instructors can holistically address various facets of paragraph construction, fostering a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding among students. The careful consideration of individual and group exercises acknowledges the multifaceted nature of learning, catering to diverse learning styles and preferences (Harwood, 2010; Husain & Nggawu, 2022). The selection of specific exercises, ranging from the meticulous analysis of sentence structures to collaborative activities promoting unity and coherence, signifies a deliberate attempt to provide students with a well-rounded and engaging learning experience. This pedagogical approach recognizes the intrinsic connection between the nature of exercises and the depth of comprehension attained by students in the realm of paragraph writing.

Ultimately, the emphasis on exercise as a variable in teaching materials underscores its pivotal role as a catalyst for pedagogical efficacy, aiming to optimize the learning outcomes and experiences of students engaging in the process of acquiring proficiency in paragraph writing (Harwood, 2010; Husain & Nggawu, 2022; Richard, 2001; Tomlinson, 2013).

Fourth, the variable of learning evaluation focused on three aspects; evaluation of students based on material given which is related to theory and practice, evaluation for both individually and in groups, and evaluation is conducted after each completion of the materials. Teaching material must be evaluated to identify the advantages and disadvantages of perfecting the teaching materials. This is in line with Tomlinson (2013) and (Littlejohn, 2011) that in designing an evaluation, it is necessary to evaluate for the improvement of the teaching material and subsequent learning process.

Fifth, the project-based learning model variable focused on six factors that students preferred because students' understanding of PJBL can motivate them in learning. This finding was in line with other studies on project-based learning in which PJBL could increase students' learning motivation and understanding (Duke et al., 2020), PJBL can improve a deep understanding of knowledge, a high level of learning, and promote motivation to learn (Al-Busaidi & Al-Seyabi, 2021; Alotaibi, 2020; Guo et al., 2020; Kemaloglu-er, 2022; Kemaloglu-er & Sahin, 2022; Kimsesiz et al., 2017; Muhammad, 2020; Santhi et al., 2019; Shin, 2018; Wongdaeng & Hajihama, 2018) engages learners in an active process of learning (Chi & Dieu, 2021; Kurniawati et al., 2019; Y. Li & Wang, 2018; Pan et al., 2019; Puspitasari, 2020; Silvani et al., 2023), improve communication skills, critical thinking skills, creativity skills and collaboration skills (Sari & Prasetyo, 2021; Somphol, 2022), improve students' character education (Aghayani & Hajmohammadi, 2019; Ilham, 2022; Syarifah & Emiliasari, 2019); (Haniah et al., 2021) improve writing performance and writing creativity (Rouka, 2020); (Kemaloglu-er & Sahin, 2022), it supports the attitudes needed in the writing process, including active, reflective, collaborative, solutive, predictive, affective, responsible, intellectual, social, and communicative (Ermawati et al., 2022; Padmadewi et al., 2023).

CONCLUSION

This study embarked on a comprehensive investigation aimed at discerning the specific educational requirements of students engaged in learning paragraph writing within the context of the project-based learning model at Universitas Muhammadiyah Mataram. The findings of this investigation illuminate key facets of student needs, revealing a demand for clearly articulated learning outcomes, topics focused on vocabulary within paragraph writing, exercises that address unity and coherence, evaluations incorporating both theoretical understanding and practical application, and an integrated approach involving project-based learning. These identified needs collectively contribute to enhancing students' comprehension of paragraph writing. The significance of this study resonates within the broader domain of English language education, as it furnishes valuable insights into the nuanced requirements of students engaged in paragraph writing instruction.

Notably, the research underscores the critical role of need analysis as a foundational element in making informed decisions regarding the design and implementation of paragraph writing courses. The study's contribution extends beyond the immediate academic context, offering a theoretical and practical framework that can inform pedagogical approaches in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings, particularly in a country like Indonesia. Moreover, the study posits the necessity for further research to expand the scope of need analysis in paragraph writing materials. Specifically, a broader investigation involving a more extensive cohort of students from diverse universities would significantly contribute to refining teaching and learning methodologies in the context of paragraph writing within an EFL framework.

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