

ABSTRACT

Wulandari, Septia. 2025, *EFL Students' Difficulties and Strategies in Developing Thesis Statements in an Argumentative Essay*. Thesis. English Education Study Program. Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Jambi University, Academic Year 2024-2025. The first supervisor is Dra. Radiatan Mardiah, M.Hum. The second supervisor is Melati, S.Pd., M.CC.

The thesis statement is one part of writing an argumentative essay that is considered by EFL students since it needs to clearly and concisely cover the main argument and key points. This study aims to explore the difficulties faced by six fifth-semester EFL students at Jambi University in writing thesis statements for argumentative essays. Using a qualitative case study approach, semi-structured interviews and document analysis were used to gather data with thematic analysis. Three key difficulties are revealed by the findings: conceptual challenges in writing a thesis statement, cognitive and emotional barriers, linguistic and expression-related difficulties. EFL students struggled with balancing specificity, adapting to evolving arguments, writer's block and uncertainty, and language proficiency. To overcome these, EFL students employed strategies such as knowledge-building strategies (identifying relevant sources, making and looking for an outline), bottom-up writing (body-first drafting), technology integration (using applications of natural language processing), evaluation and collaborative reflection (self-assessment, brainstorming with peers, guidance and feedback from lecturers).

Keywords: Argumentative essay, Difficulties, Strategies, Thesis statement.