

**EXPLORING STUDENTS' CHALLENGES IN WRITING ENGLISH ACADEMIC
PAPER: A CASE STUDY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
OF UINSA**

THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment for the degree of Sarjana Pendidikan (S.Pd) in Teaching
English



**UIN SUNAN AMPEL
S U R A B A Y A**

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This thesis by Yulita Ekasari entitled “*Exploring Students’ Challenges in Writing English Academic Paper: A Case Study in English Language Education Department of UINSA*” has been approved by the thesis supervisors for further approval by the Boards of Examiners.

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Table 4. 1 The Kinds of English Academic Papers Written by Students

Students	The Kinds of English Academic Papers				
	Essay	Research Paper	Article	Journal	Thesis
4 th semester	√	√	-	-	-
6 th semester	√	√	√	√	-
8 th semester	√	√	√	√	√
8 th semester	√	√	√	√	√

The table 4.1 above shows that the higher the semester of the students, the more kinds of English academic papers they have written during the study. It was proven that the student from 4th semester stated that the kinds of English academic papers he has written were only essay and research Paper. Student A stated that *“I have written Essays such as Argumentative essay, Descriptive essay, and Narrative essay and the Research Paper I wrote it in Qualitative Research subject in this semester.”* While the 6th semester students almost have written all the kinds of English academic papers except thesis and the 2 students from 8th semester answered that they have written all the kinds of English academic papers. Just like the statement of student C *“Along the way of my study in this department, I have written journal, article in the 6th semester, and not forget to mention essay. I write a lot of essays in the 3rd semester, while now I am writing my thesis and in the previous semesters I also have written several research papers. From the table 4.1 based on the interview, it can be seen that the kinds of English academic papers that have been written by the students during their study were ordered from essay to thesis. The students started to write Essay in the earlier semester, and then they started to write Research paper, next was Journal and Article and the last one was Thesis.*

From the interview with the students, it also investigated the kinds of English academic papers the students found it most difficult to write. There are various answers

The researcher asked the respondents to rate each of the English academic paper from the scale 1-5 with 1 for the easiest until 5 for the hardest. Therefore it can be explained that the kinds of English academic papers students think as the easiest by rating it with “1” are Essay with 8 students, followed with Article with 5 students choose it, while for other English academic Papers, there are no students claim it as the easiest to write.

Next, students who give rate “2” for the kinds of English academic papers that categorized as the second easiest, students still choose Essay with the highest total reaches 32 students, followed with Article, with 12 students, Research Paper and Journal 4 students and 0 students or still no one thinks Thesis is Easy. And then the higher level of difficulty with the scale “3” are Article with 27 students, Essay with 23 students, Research Paper 19 students, Journal 16 students and again, Thesis is the lowest with 5 students.

Followed with the scale “4” defined as the second most difficult English academic papers, students choose Research paper as the highest total reaches 36 students, the next is Journal with 34 students, Article 24 students, Thesis 23 students and the lowest is Essay with only 8 students. The last category that the students rate it “5” where they think it is the most difficult to write is Thesis with the highest total reaches 44 students, followed with Journal 18 students, Research Paper 13 students, article 4 students and the lowest is Essay with only 1 student chooses it as the most difficult English academic papers. From the explanation above, it can be categorized that the kinds of English academic papers student find it most difficult to write is Thesis, followed with Research Paper and Journal, and then Article, and the easiest one is Essay.

Besides conducting interviews and distributing online questionnaires, the researcher also collected students' English academic papers documents from 4 students who were being interviewed to check and categorize the kinds of English academic papers written by the students. From the collected documents, compared with the result of the interviews and questionnaire, it is proven that the kinds of English academic papers written by the students are Essay, Research Paper, Journal, Article and Thesis.

For example, the student has written an Argumentative essay entitled "Children Should not Come to Class Courses". It is categorized as Argumentative essay because the student writes his opinion that convinces or persuades the reader about his perspectives. For the Research Paper, the research usually in a form of a mini qualitative or quantitative study that researched about cases happened around them. One example is a research about Students' Writing Level Proficiency at 3rd Semester of ELED UINSA. While Journal, Article and Thesis are same with Research Paper where they researched cases that mostly related with English literature where the cases are things happen around them or those that they have studied in the semesters. One of the students' Journals and Article studied about Teacher's Perspectives about Critical Thinking in Academic Essay, and for the Thesis, the students from 8th semester usually research about their interests in English education topic.

2. The Students' Challenges in Writing English Academic Papers

The data collected about students' challenges in writing English academic papers was gained from interviews with students and lectures, also from distributed online questionnaire, same with the previous data of the first research question. To investigate the challenges faced by the students in writing English academic papers, there are several questions both in the interviews and questionnaires ask about the students' challenges in writing English academic papers, constructed based on theories

Figure 4. 3 Students' Challenges in Constructing Idea

Based on the various responses above, it can be concluded that many students have difficulties in constructing their idea. Most of them find it difficult to write their idea in their mind into their writings, some of them have difficulties in finding an interesting idea and the other one has no idea what to write.

C. Challenges in Constructing the Writing.

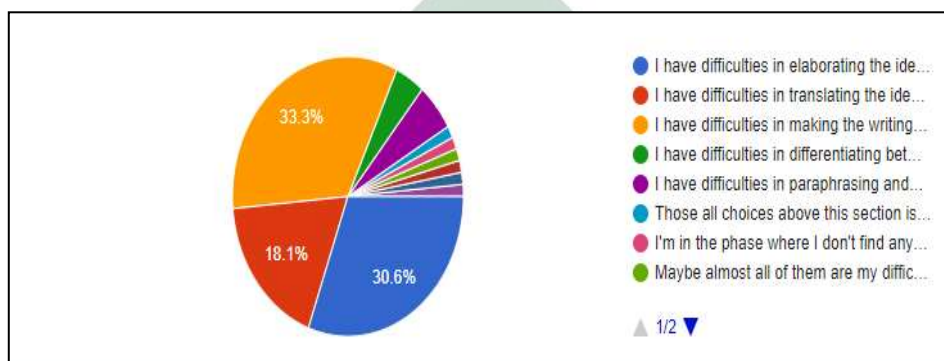


Figure 4. 4 Students Challenges in Constructing the Writing

From the figure 4.4 above, the responses collected from the questionnaire regarding to the challenges in constructing the writing, majority have problems in making the writing coherence and cohesion with the total percentage reaches to 33.3% or 24 students, followed with 22 students (30.6%) who have difficulties in elaborating their idea before writing. It is also found that another problem usually faced by the students is translating the idea into their writing, chosen by 13 students (18.1%). A student confirmed about it in the interview that *“The problem is when I know what to write but I don’t know how to write it.”*

While another student revealed that his problem is where he often finds himself difficult in paraphrasing the sentences. It was agreed by 4 students (5.6%) from the questionnaire. Another problem related with the problems in constructing the writing is the difficulties in choosing vocabulary. Two students from the interview stated that they

problem in writing that often happens to me is that I find it difficult to explore idea and then translate it into my writing. This usually leads to a state where I can hardly construct my writing.”

Another problem mentioned by 1 student from the interview is that he lacks in finding interesting topic to write. This is also found in the result of the questionnaire. Many students mentioned that they often find it difficult to find an interesting topic. Besides, this is also caused by the problems in finding good writing resources and references. Some students mentioned that they can hardly find proper articles, journals, or other writing resources that can support their writing. Other problems based on the result of the questionnaire and interview where some students agreed that laziness, finding a good mood to write are also problems that are commonly faced by the students. One student from the interview explained that laziness often becomes her problems in writing and if she does not have a good mood to write, it often makes her stuck and difficult to write her idea.

Those are the data collected from the students, compared with the teachers' responses from the interview, 2 lecturers mentioned the same related problems that faced by the students in writing, one of the problem is finding the idea. Both of the lecturers agreed that the difficulties in finding and constructing idea frequently happen to the students. Lecturer B stated that *“Actually, the main problem that students or most of us can relate is, it is difficult to write our idea into the text.”* Another problem agreed by both lecturers is that students lack the understanding of the writing theories and techniques. Lecturer A explained that *“Most of times the students do not understand the theories of writing, for example if they want to write Argumentative essay, they don't understand the generic structure of Argumentative essay. Therefore it makes the students difficult to write.”* While for the lack of the writing techniques, lecturer B stated that *“It's so obvious*

were being interviewed confirmed the same. Just like the statement of lecturer A “*A lot of students don’t like reading, so that they don’t have much insights or knowledge to be written on their papers.*” Another problem mentioned by 1 student that frequently causes the difficulties in writing is their less interest in writing so that they don’t like writing where it leads to the difficulties of writing.

Compared with the result from the questionnaire, other major factors of students’ difficulties are students’ low language level of proficiency, this happens to 17 students (23.6%) and another factor is because students often feel shy and unconfident to ask the lecturers for explanation, chosen by 11 students (15.3%). These two factors are not mentioned by the students from the interview, this may be because less motivation to read becomes the major cause of difficulties in writing for the students from the interview. From the result explained above, it can be concluded that many factors cause the students’ challenges in writing, some of the big factors come from the students’ lack of previous experiences and knowledge in writing, their less motivation in reading and also their low language level of proficiency. These factors are agreed by both the students and the lecturers regarding to the causes of the students’ difficulties in writing.

1. The Students’ Strategies in Solving Challenges in Writing English Academic Papers.

The data to answer this third research question about the students’ challenges in writing English academic papers was collected from the students and lecturers’ interviews and the distributed online questionnaire, same with the previous data of the first and second research questions. In collecting the information regarding to the strategies used by the students to cope the challenges in writing English academic papers, there is one question in both the interview and questionnaire ask about what

Compared with the result of the lecturers and the students' interviews, both lecturers and students mention other various strategies. Two lecturers believed that one of students' strategies in solving the writing problems is by writing based on feedbacks given by the lecturers. Just like what lecturer A said, "*After the students accept the feedbacks from the lecturer it will be good if they want to correct it and improve their writing based on the feedbacks.*" Besides, keep writing practices are also believed by the lecturers as a good strategy that can help the students in improving their writing skill.

Based on the interview, the researcher also finds another strategy that is not mentioned by the lecturers and students from the questionnaire. This strategy is making a writing target and schedule. Student C and D in the interview said that this strategy helps them in writing. Student D explained that "*Because I often feel lazy, I have to make a writing target and schedule so that I can finish the writing on time.*" Besides that, there is still one strategy revealed by 1 student from the interview, it is having a good mood when writing. She stated that if we don't write in a good mood, it will be hard for us to write and finish our writing. From all the responses above, it can be concluded that there are so many strategies that can be used to help the students solve their challenges and difficulties in writing English academic papers, and different students may have different strategies based on their suit and difficulties.

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