

STUDENTS' ACADEMIC WRITING SKILLS OF INDONESIAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE EDUCATION AT BATURAJA UNIVERSITY

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Abstract: The objective of this research was to: (a) describe the mastery of students' academic writing skill of Indonesian Language and Literature Education Study Program at Universitas Baturaja; (b) identify obstacles of the students' academic writing activities; and (c) provide solutions to overcome the students' problems in academic writing. The design of this study was qualitative method by gathering the data from 36 students in their third semester. The data collection was conducted by collecting the results of students' written test and the interview. Data analysis technique used in this research was descriptive statistic, by assessing the results of student writing tests based on the assessment rubric that has been prepared, the assessment results were then grouped in the benchmark assessment and elaborated in accordance with each component of the assessment. The results showed that seven students had the ability to write scientific articles on good category (21%), 4 people as sufficient category (12%), 11 people in the category of less (33%) and 11 people were in the least category (33%).

Keywords: skill, academic writing, students

INTRODUCTION

Having writing skills and competences is a must for ones working in an academic environment (Juniarti, 2019). In writing activities, the writer is required to be active and productive in arranging ideas systematically so that the writing can be understood by the reader. A writer can be said to be productive if he is able to produce writings based on his own thoughts logically so that he is able to create written works that are acceptable to the readers.

Writing skill is a very important aspect to be mastered by a student of Indonesian Language and Literature Education (ILLE) at Baturaja University. Writing activities are divided into several parts, one of which is academic writing activities. Karim & Mursitama (2018) state that writing produces a product that shows the quality of one's learning. In addition, with academic writing skills, one's imagination will be sharper, and language mastery will increase. Even today, it is not uncommon for the results of an article to be used as an assessment aspect in applying for a job.

In higher education, the ability to write is a skill that must be met by every student, including academic writing. Students are required to have writing techniques and procedures as those are substantial to evaluate the quality of the written work. However, chances are there are many errors found in students' writings. It might be due to the students' lack of understanding about the academic writing, both technically and substantively. The ability to write is necessary for students so that they could express ideas and write them down in

academic writing. With the academic writing ability possessed by students, students are to have sharper imagination power, an increased language mastery, and self-confidence.

Wikanengsih (2013) explained that writing is not only an ordinary thinking activity but requires logical and critical thinking. Therefore, the activity of writing scientific papers has become a tradition that is learned by students in higher education, but it cannot be denied that the ability to write scientific papers is still relatively low. All of this happens because when doing writing activities, students often encounter difficulties, as has been found in research conducted by Rofiqo (2018) that there are several causes of writing difficulties for students, namely the fear of starting the writing process, the difficulty of determining or developing a topic, organizing an essay, developing a paragraph, organizing language effectively, especially when constructing sentences, choosing the appropriate vocabulary, and using writing mechanisms.

Academic writing is an inseparable part of students. Karim & Mursitama (2015) stated that academic writing is one of the main pillars in teaching and learning activities at the university level. Swales & John (in Lele et al., 2010) stated that academic writing is a type of writing activity utilizing rules need to be accepted in the academic community. Academic writing is the product of many considerations, such as readership, purpose, organization, style, flow, and presentation. In addition, academic writing must have an argument as the spirit that inspires the writing coherence.

Based on the initial reflection, it is known that ILLE students still have difficulties in their academic writing. Several studies on the measurement of academic writing skills, especially among students, have been carried out, but previous research has only been limited to examining the extent to which students' academic writing skills are improved. Previous research has not explored in depth what causes the students' low academic writing skills. Thus, this study was conducted to explore what problems of ILLE students have in producing good academic writing. After knowing the cause, the author proposed solutions that might be used for consideration for other lecturers in designing the learning process so that the learning process in the future can be more effective.

Based on the above background, the importance of research on academic writing skills of ILLE students must be done immediately to answer any difficulties faced in academic writing and produce solutions. The author hopes that after this research is conducted, in the next period the process of learning writing skills will be much more effective so that the objectives of learning writing skills can be achieved. The author believes that focused and in-depth research will produce a collection of accurate conclusions to improve the quality of teaching writing skills.

In the learning process every semester, not many lecturers give assignments to write articles. Therefore, the ability to write scientific articles is absolutely owned by students. Many definitions have evolved to describe scientific articles. However, there is one understanding that scientific articles consist of three parts, namely introduction, body or content, and closing or conclusion. Scientific article is one part of scientific work. According to Dalman (2013), scientific work has the characteristics of being objective, neutral, systematic, logical, factual, not pleonastic, and the variety of language used of formal languages. According to Nurgiyantoro (2001), several things that become aspects of assessment in academic writing are as follows: (1) the quality and scope of the content, (2) the organization and presentation of the content, (3) the style and the form of language, and (4) mechanics and grammar.

METHOD

In this study the author uses a qualitative method by describing the students' writing skills. In addition, this article will explain the obstacles that are often faced when they carry out academic writing activities and how to solve them. In detail, the procedure for conducting the research can be described as follows:

1. Doing an Initial identification of ILLE students' mastery of academic writing skills at Baturaja University
2. Making research instruments for writing skills for ILLE students, Baturaja University.
3. Carrying out an article writing skill test for ILLE students, Baturaja University.
4. Conducting an assessment of articles written by ILLE students at Baturaja University based on predetermined assessment guidelines.
5. Finding solutions to problems based on research that has been done
6. Presenting all research findings in which there is an explanation of validity, reliability, and credibility of the research results.

This research was conducted at Baturaja University for second semester students of ILLE students at Baturaja University. The time of the research was carried out in the even semester of the 2019/2020 academic year in March 2019. The participants of the students were 36 second semester students who had taken Writing Course I.

Data collection techniques in this study are through interview and test techniques. In accordance with the purpose of this study, there were two instruments designed and used to collect data from the research sample. The two instruments are writing test of academic writing articles and interviews. The article test is intended to collect data on academic writings written by students who are the research sample. Articles written by students are assessed according to the following instruments:

Table 1. The Rubric of Academic Writing Assessment

Assessed Elements	Score
Content of ideas	
a. The writer's originality in terms of ideas and arguments and how interesting the title and topic are. The writer's ability to formulate problems according to the theme and written material provided	10
b. The writer's ability to describe the factors that influence the emergence of the problem or the background of the problem.	10
c. The suitability of the problem idea of the article with the formulation of the problem accompanied by scientific arguments (references).	10
d. Appropriateness of the scope of theme exploration	5
Content of organization	
a. Paper size, typography, neatness of type, layout, and number of pages.	5
b. The writing is divided into three parts, namely the introduction, the main part/discussion, and the closing part.	5
c. The accuracy of the writing format so that it is interesting to read.	5
Grammar	
a. Using good and correct Indonesian.	5
b. Using a good sentence structure so that it is easy for the reader to understand	5
c. Including the correct citation, when quoting writings from other people.	5

Assessed Elements	Score
d. Using foreign terms correctly	5

Spelling	
The writing is adjusted to the PUEBI (Pedoman Umum Ejaan Bahasa Indonesia) rules	10
Data and information sources	
a. Suitability of the information with the reference used	10
b. Accuracy of data and information	10
Total	100

From the table above, it can be explained that the total score for each component is different because each component is believed to have its own level of difficulty. The content component has the highest score because this component involves a number of sub-categories which are difficult to fulfill in the writing process. Interviews will be conducted to explore the extent of students' understanding of academic writing activities and what obstacles are often faced in academic writing activities.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted in the March 2019 to 36 undergraduate students in the second semester of the ILLE study program at Baturaja University. From the results of the research, it is known that the ability of students to write popular scientific articles varies widely. The results of academic writing research for ILLE students are shown in the following table:

Table 2. Results of the Assessment of Writing Scientific Articles for Undergraduate Students in the ILLE Study Program, Baturaja University

No	Assessed Elements				Total
	Content of Ideas	Content of Organization	Grammar	Spelling	
1	20	10	20	5	75
2	10	5	5	5	35
3	15	10	15	5	65
4	10	5	5	5	45
5	20	10	10	5	60
6	20	5	20	5	70
7	15	5	10	5	50
8	15	5	5	5	50
9	20	5	10	5	55
10	20	5	20	5	70
11	15	10	10	5	60
12	15	5	5	5	40
13	20	5	10	5	60
14	10	5	5	5	45

No	Assessed Elements				Total
	Content of Ideas	Content of Organization	Grammar	Spelling	
15	20	5	15	5	65
16	20	5	15	5	60
17	10	10	10	5	55
18	15	10	10	5	60
19	20	5	20	5	70
20	15	5	10	5	45
21	15	5	15	5	55
22	20	10	15	5	70
23	15	5	15	5	60
24	25	5	20	5	70
25	15	10	10	5	60
26	20	5	20	5	70
27	10	5	15	5	55
28	10	5	5	5	40
29	20	5	15	5	65
30	10	5	5	5	45
31	20	5	15	5	65
32	20	5	20	5	65
33	20	5	10	5	60
34	20	10	20	5	75
35	20	5	10	5	55
36	25	10	15	5	70
Average	16	6	12	5	

From the table above, it is known that there are no students who have the qualifications to write scientific articles in the very good category. 7 students have the ability to write scientific articles in the good category (20%), 4 people in the moderate category (12%), 13 people in the poor category (36%), and 12 others in the very poor category (33%).

The results of the analysis are more specifically based on five points of assessment consisting of the content of ideas (maximum score of 35 points), content of organization (maximum score of 15 points), grammar (maximum score of 20 points), spelling (maximum score of 10 points), and data and information sources (maximum score of 20 points). Then, some interesting facts were found, they are: a) the content aspect of the idea is an assessment point with the highest maximum score of 35 points. The content of the idea is given the largest portion of the assessment considering that the content is the body of a scientific work. Moreover, the content assessment covers aspects of originality, the ability to describe problems, references and the suitability of the scope of the theme. However, the

results of the study showed that there were no student respondents who scored more than 80% or scored above 28 points (out of 35 points) in the aspect of idea content. This shows that the respondents' insight is still limited as they have not been able to make scientific papers with new and original themes. The inability to describe the problem (although some have original ideas) also contributed to the low scores achieved by respondents in the aspect of content. Some of the scientific papers written are not able to exploit aspects of the problem in more depth.

The next is the organizational aspect of the content with a total score of 15 points which has a significant effect on the level of respondents' scientific writing skills. However, most students tend to ignore this aspect because out of 36 respondents, only 1 respondent got a score above or equal to 10 points (equivalent to a score of 8). Assessment in this aspect includes the minimum completeness that every scientific work must have. The completeness consists of an introductory section (background, formulation, and objectives), theoretical studies, research methods (data collection techniques, problem boundaries), discussion, and closing sections (conclusions and suggestions). The data showed that the other 35 students have not been able to write scientific papers with good and logical structure.

Next is the grammatical aspect. The data showed that there are still many words and sentences in scientific papers written by ignoring the use of good and correct Indonesian. The use of words or terms in spoken language that is not standard is also still widely found. In addition, there are several respondents' scientific articles that have discrepancies between the quotations and the bibliography. As a result, 8 respondents reached the maximum score of 20 points.

The next aspect is the spelling aspect. The data showed that there are still many words and sentences in scientific papers written by ignoring proper Indonesian Spelling Guidelines (PEUBI). The use of words or terms in spoken language that is not standard is still widely found, even though students should understand that the language used in writing scientific papers should be guided by the General Guidelines for Indonesian Spelling (PEUBI).

The results of the study also show that there is still a high level of plagiarism committed by students. Initial indications of plagiarism can be seen from the following points: 1) the field of scientific study contained in the article is not relevant to the field of science they are currently pursuing; 2) there are references that have not been listed in the bibliography; and 3) there are 2 or 3 students who have the exact same article. Plagiarism is a violation of the code of ethics in writing scientific papers. The phenomenon of rampant plagiarism was also stated by Karim & Mursitama (2015) who stated that plagiarism and autoplagiarism are activities that do not stand alone, the ease of technology and communication devices is one of the main causes of problems.

Researchers also conducted interviews with students to explore what obstacles they experienced when writing scientific articles. The most common barriers are obstacles in determining ideas and problems. After conducting more in-depth interviews, it was found that the difficulty in determining ideas and problems also occurred because of the low interest in reading from these students. Most of the students still have very low interest in reading. Therefore, the study program must also improve reading culture, one of which is by providing an obligation to read several books every semester.

Another obstacle faced is the lack of motivation that students have because most of the students feel that various lecture activities have taken up so much of their time that they do not have time to write anymore. Even though with good time management skills and eliminating the habit of students procrastinating, they certainly still have enough time, at least to produce one scientific article each semester. In addition, experience in writing and

understanding of the structure of scientific work itself is also an obstacle faced by students to produce an article that meets the criteria of scientific writing.

Students also admit that the assessment process has not been carried out optimally; lecturers still provide a lot of concessions to students in the assessment aspect, so that students sometimes do not take assignments seriously. Therefore, in the future this can be used as an evaluation for lecturers who teach each subject in providing an objective assessment. This aims to provide a deterrent effect to students not to repeat their mistakes again and to motivate students to write. Lecturers are also expected to return the assignments that have been assessed to students so that students know the mistakes they made in doing the assignments given. Not only that, lecturers must also be able to find the right technique in writing in order to meet the desired indicators.

Researchers also conducted interviews to find out the expectations of students in order to improve their ability to write scientific articles. From the results of the interviews, it is known that their main hope is that the ILLE study program can provide wider facilities in terms of writing activities; for example: consistently holding scientific writing training activities, competitions for scientific writing activities, fostering students in writing scientific papers, conducting workshops and seminars on writing culture for students, and training on language rules. In addition to these activities, students also hope that the study program has the availability of facilities and infrastructure that support writing activities.

Some students also gave suggestions to motivate them to write. They argued that with each student is to produce at least one scientific work each year and receive intensive guidance from one supervisor so that the culture of writing in the ILLE study program can improve.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The results of the study indicate that efforts are still needed by the ILLE study program to improve the skills of writing scientific articles. Research data showed that 36 students have not yet had the qualifications to write scientific articles in the very good category. It is known that seven students can write scientific articles in the good category (20%), 4 people in the moderate category (12%), 13 people in the poor category (36%), and 12 people in the very poor category (33%). Some of the obstacles that cause the low ability to write scientific articles are caused by the low reading culture, so that they have difficulty finding ideas that are used as writings. In addition, low motivation, objectivity of assessment, and limited references are also one of the causes of the low ability to write articles for students of the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Study Program, Baturaja University.

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