

*Naskah Publikasi*

**The Problems Faced By Students in Writing Skills at English Language  
Education Department of a Private University in Yogyakarta**

Submitted to the Faculty of Language  
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*Sarjana Pendidikan*



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## Approval Sheet

The Problems Faced by Students in Writing Skills at English Language Education  
Department of a Private University in Yogyakarta


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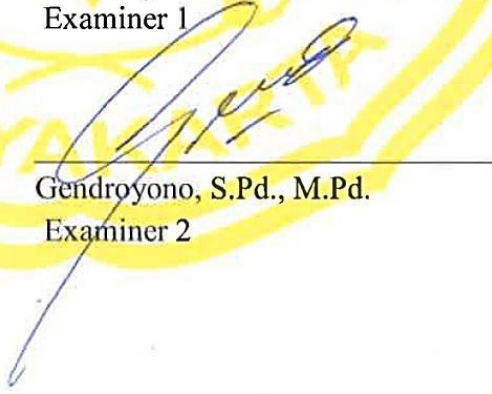
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### **Abstract**

*Writing skill is one of the most important skills in studying English language. Many students face the problems in learning English writing skills. This research aims to explore the problems faced by students in learning English writing skills and to investigate the students' strategies in learning English writing skills. This research is a quantitative research. This research was conducted at English language education department of a private university in Yogyakarta. The population of the students was the entirety of ELED students' batch 2015 and the population number of this research was 118 active students. The samples of this research were 91 students. The sample was taken using convenience sampling. To gather the data, the researcher utilized questionnaires and the data was analyzed in descriptive statistic. The findings show that "lack of motivation and lack of practice" are the top problems by ELED students in writing, followed by organization of idea, grammar difficulties, poor referencing, less of vocabulary and lack of idea. The results also revealed some students' strategies in learning English writing skills: using the dictionary frequently, using computer (Microsoft word), extensive reading and writing, using web 2.0 programs, asking for feedback, brainstorming, and the using audiovisual aids. In short, this study found that almost all of students of ELED batch 2015 encounter the problems in learning English writing skills.*

Keyword: writing skill, problem of writing skill, strategies of writing skill

### **Introduction**

Writing is very important in everyday human life. "It provides a relatively permanent record of information, opinions, beliefs, feelings, arguments, explanations and theories"(Carroll, 1990, p.1). It can be said that writing allows people to share their ideas or communication not only with their friends but also with their future generations.

Writing is an activity that is frequently conducted by the students especially in English Language Education Department. They have many tasks in form of writing such as: writing essays, teaching practicum report, weekly journal, research proposal, summaries, writing annotated bibliographies, textbooks, writing *skripsi*, and others. In learning English, the students have more assignment

in form of writing than reading, speaking and listening. Therefore, the students are expected to understand writing well. Huy (2015) suggest “if the students have good writing ability, they can speak and read the text more effectively” (p.53). It can be concluded that if the students master the writing skill, they also master English language.

Despite of writing skills as one of the four basic skills which have important role in language learning, writing is difficult skills for the students to acquire especially for the second language learners. According to Ahmad (2016), “writing is complicated activity as it requires students comprehensive abilities such as mastering grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation” (p.4). It is harder for the second language learner because they are expected to create written product that demonstrate s the mastery of all the elements language in a new language such as; vocabulary, grammar purpose, sentence, punctuation and spelling.

Some researchers have investigated the cases of writing difficulties in various countries. A study in Jordanian, Ibnian (2017, p.197) stated that the students faced many difficulties in writing such as lack of idea, grammar difficulties, vocabulary restriction, and incorrect use of mechanics of writing (spelling, punctuation, quotation and capitalization). A research conducted in Saudi Arabia revealed that most problems in the students’ writing were on grammatical problems, punctuation problems, and spelling problems (Younes & Albalawi, 2015, p.7). Furthermore, another study also revealed that grammatical weakness, lack of practice, lack of knowledge and understanding of the English language become the difficulty in writing skills by students in Medina (Al-

Khasawneh & Huwari, 2013, p.1). In Vietnam, Huy (2015, p.65) found the most serious problem that students often have are the lack of vocabularies, grammar difficulties and lack of ideas. Further a study in Indonesia by Maysuroh, Maryadi and Supiani (2017, p.1) clarified “the students have various problems in their writing; mostly grammatical problems, mechanical problems (likes spelling, capitalization, punctuation), lack of practice and low of motivation”. Another research in Malaysia, Al-Khasawneh (2010) revealed that the students faced problems in writing likes: vocabulary register, organization of ideas, grammar, spelling, and referencing (p.1). In addition, Keong and Mussa (2015) found “the students writing had both language and organization problems. The former was a lack of vocabulary, grammatical mistakes and poor referencing, weak organization and weak expression of ideas”. From those researches there many problems that students faced in writing skills. Therefore, this situation can happen to English language education students in anywhere and in any semester.

The researcher also found early theories related with the strategies in improving writing skills. For instance according to Al- Mansour and Al-Shorman (2014, p.258) and Mermelstein (2015, p. 182) extensive reading can enhance and improving students writing. King and Herder’s (2012, p.128) findings stated that extensive writing can be used to improve students writing. Al-khairi (2013, p.1) also mention the strategies in improving students writing likes: “using audio-visual aids, introduces group/pair work, peer correction and use dictionaries frequently”. Some other strategies are also presented by Abdulkareem (2013) namely brainstorming and asking for feedback in order to overcome students’

problems in writing. Further, Akdağ and Özkan (2017) propose “students can use blog to enhance the writing skills. It was supported by Thaha (2013) who said that web 2.0 technologies such as “Facebook, Blogs and Wikis will develop students writing skills” (p.1). Marsden and Piggot-Irvine (2012) also presented that the students can use blogs and computer to increase their writing skills (p.30). Moreover, AbuSeileek and Abualsha’r (2014, p.76) agree that using computer-mediated corrective feedback (Microsoft Word) to can improve student writing ability.

As explained previously, there are difficulties encountered by students in writing skills that have been proposed from the existing theories and how their learning strategies in improving writing skills are. At this point, the researcher is interested to find the biggest problems that students faced in writing English and also what are the strategies in increasing their writing at English language education department of a private university in Yogyakarta

### **Research Methodology**

To identify the problems and the strategies used by the students in English writing, the researcher used quantitative research to get the students’ opinion or experiences. Furthermore, this study used survey as a data collecting method. This research was conducted in July 2018 at the English language Education Department of a private university in Yogyakarta. The populations of this research were the active students of English Language Education Department at a private university in Yogyakarta from batch 2015. The reason the researcher

chose students of ELED batch 2015 as the population is because they have been learning academic writing for six semesters. Another reason is because the researcher assumed that they might encounter many problems in writing skills. Further, the students also have found the best solutions and strategies to handle their problems in writing.

In this study, the researcher used questionnaires to collect the data. The questionnaire has been developed based on the theory of literature review. After making the questionnaire, the researcher asked to the expert for their judgment and using SPSS program to measure the validity of the questionnaires.

Furthermore, the researcher used social media to distribute the questionnaires to the participants. The questionnaires were made using Google Form and can be viewed through the link: <https://bit.ly/2FiODQV>. The researcher used WhatsApp mobile application to share the questionnaire to students of English language education in batch 2015 at a private university in Yogyakarta. The researcher joined the WhatsApp of batch 2015 students then shared the link. Besides, the researcher also shared the link using personal chat to the respondents. Regarding the reasons why the application was employed: First, the participants are familiar with this application, so the research did not need to give any training on how to use the application. Second, all of the participants have the application in their mobile phones and had no difficulties accessing the internet, so there was no connectivity problem when the researcher distributed the questionnaire. The participants answered the questionnaire test one by one based on instruction in the form. It took three days for the researcher to gather the data from the respondents.

## Research Findings

### 1. The problem faced by students in learning English writing skills.

No	Questionnaires Items	Mean	Categories
Q1	Lack of Idea	2.71	moderate
Q2	Grammar Difficulties	2.78	moderate
Q3	Less of Vocabulary	2.73	moderate
Q4	Spelling Problem	2,48	moderate
Q5	Punctuation Problem	2,04	moderate
Q6	Quotation Problem	2.35	moderate
Q7	Capitalization Problem	1,64	low
Q8	Lack of Practice	3.10	High
Q9	Low Motivation	3.16	High
Q10	Organization of Idea	2.81	moderate
Q11	Poor Referencing	2.76	moderate

Based on the findings of the research, this study revealed that most students of ELED of a private university in Yogyakarta batch 2015 have problems in learning English writing skills.

The researcher found that low of motivation and lack of practice was the biggest problems encountered by the students. It could be seen that the highest means of the students' response was 3.16 and 3.10 (see table 4.1). The majority of the students felt a lack of motivation in English writing skills. This finding is in line with what Maysuroh, Maryadi and Supiani (2017) found in their research that the factor which causes a problem in writing is the lack of motivation, because the



students think that writing is very difficult to do, which leads to lack of interest and willingness in writing. In addition, the other highest problems in students ELED batch 2015 is lack of practice (mean score: 310). Similar result was found in the research of Al-Khasawneh and Huwari (2013) that if the students just write in classroom, they generally lack practice in writing in English when they are writing. (p5). It seems that lack of practice is a serious problem in English writing skills.

Another problem is related to organization of idea. The result showed the mean score of the problem in organization of idea is 2.81 which belong to moderate category. It was supported by the argument of Al-Khasawneh (2012) who explained that the students appear to have many problems when writing in English, for example: not knowing how to organize their ideas (p.3). Furthermore, the next problem is grammar difficulties. Grammar difficulties were one problem in English writing. The result showed that the mean of grammar difficulties score is 2.78 (moderate level). This was supported by the study from Maysuroh, Maryadi and Supiani (2017) who found that the students have problems mostly related to grammar. Moreover, poor referencing is also moderate category with mean 2.76. Poor referencing also can affect the students' problems in learning English writing. The opinions expressed by the participants were in line with the argument from Keong and Musa (2015) who stated that poor referencing is one of the problems in learning English writing skills (p.25). Lack of vocabulary felt by the students is shown by the mean score 2.73 which belongs to the moderate level. Lack of vocabulary is a factor that causes the problems in English learning

writing. These arguments also in line with the arguments from Huy (2015) who said that lack of vocabulary is the biggest problem that most students usually have when they study writing skill.

Additionally, lack of idea is a moderate problem in writing. The average of mean value is 2.71. This shows that the students felt moderate lack of idea when doing writing. This argument was in line with the arguments from Ibnian (2017) who revealed that lack of idea is faced by the students in writing class. Besides, spelling problem is a common problem encountered by students in English writing especially for ESL. The argument from the research participant was in lines with the opinion from Abdulkareem (2013) who argued that one of the problems faced by ELS is spelling problem. Then the next problem based on moderate score is quotation problems. The mean score of quotation problem is 2.35. Therefore, many students moderately faced quotation problems in English learning writing. This finding is in line with what Ibnian (2015) found in their research that the quotation is among the writing difficulties encountered by EFL learners.

The last of moderate category is punctuation problems which belongs to the mean score 2.04. The students in ELED batch 2015 moderately felt punctuation is their problems in English Writing skills. The finding is in line with Younes and Albalawi (2015) who stated that the students suffered serious deficiency in applying the punctuation system correctly in their writing. The last problem of the students in writing English is capitalization. The result viewed that the mean score of capitalization is 1, 64, it included of low category. It means that

ELED students in batch 2015 did not felt that capitalization is their problems in learning English writing.

## 2. Students' strategies in learning English writing skills

No	Questionnaires Items	Mean	Categories
Q12	Extensive Reading	2.99	moderate
Q13	Extensive Writing	2.89	moderate
Q14	Audiovisual Aids (Mp3 And Mp4).	2.17	moderate
Q16	Using Dictionary Frequently	3.10	High
Q17	Brainstorming	2.47	moderate
Q18	Asking for Feedback	2.79	moderate
Q19	Using Web 2.0	2.88	moderate
Q20	Using Computer (Microsoft Word)	3.07	High

The findings of the research also inquired about the students' efforts in order to learn and increase their English writing skills. The strategies were discussed according to the ranking obtained from the SPSS analysis. According to the perceived total number of participants, technical means was the preferred strategy used by students in learning English writing skills. The finding showed that there are two strategies highly used by ELED students. First, they use dictionaries frequently. The result viewed that using dictionaries frequently is 3.10 (high level). So, the students of ELED usually use a dictionary to improve their writing. These result was same found by Al-Khairiy (2013) confirmed that "consequently, the used of dictionary frequently can improve students English writing skills". Second, the student highly used computer (Microsoft Word) to

increase their writing ability. The mean score showed 3.07 which belongs to high score. This was relevant to the reports by Al-Olimat and AbuSeileek (2015, p.27) stated that using computer-mediated corrective feedback (Microsoft Word) improve student writing ability including spelling, content, grammar, punctuation, organization, and vocabulary.

The next strategy is extensive reading. The mean score showed 2.99 (moderate level). Most students do extensive reading to increase their writing. In line with this, Mermelstein (2015) profound stated that through enhancing extensive reading the ELS students writing are improved. Furthermore, extensive writing also included moderate level because the mean score showed 2.89 (moderate level). It can be said that the students often do extensive writing to improve their writing. This result was also supported by King and Herder's (2012, p.128) who found that extensive writing can be used to improve students writing. Moreover, Web 2.0 technology such as Facebook, Instagram, Blogs and Wikis is a strategy used by the student to develop their writing. This finding included moderate level with a mean score of 2.88. This finding confirms what Thaha (2013) believed that web 2.0 technologies such as "Facebook, Blogs and Wikis will develop students writing skills" (p.1). Another strategy is asking for feedback. The mean score of questionnaire items related to asking for feedback is 2.79 (moderate level) meaning that the students moderately used asking for feedback as their strategies in learning English writing. It was proved by Abdulkareem (2013) who in an experimental study found that asking for feedback helps overcome students' problems in writing. Brainstorming is one of the

strategies that ELED students use in learning English writing. The mean score of brainstorming is 2.47, which is included in moderate level. This is in line with what Ibnian (2011) stated that the use of brainstorming technique contributed to improving the students' performance on the writing. The last finding is using audiovisual aids (mp3, mp4) to improve learning English writing. The mean score is 2.17 which belong to moderate level. It means that the audiovisual aid (mp3, mp4) used moderately by the students in enhancing the English writing skills. It is in line with what Al-khairy (2013, p.1) believed that the strategies in improving students writing is using audio-visual aids.

### **Conclusion**

In this part, the researcher presents the summary of the findings in order to answer the research questions. The first research question is what the problems faced by students in learning English writing skills at ELED of a private university in Yogyakarta batch 2015, which is indicated by eleven problems. In the eleven problems, the biggest problems of the students in writing are: low motivation and lack of practice, with mean scores 3.16 and 3.10. Followed by organization of idea (2.81), grammar difficulties (2.78), poor referencing (2.76), less of vocabulary or vocabulary restriction (2.73), lack of idea (2.71), spelling problem (2.48), quotation problem (2.35), punctuation problem (2.04) and the last problem is capitalization problem (1.64).

Research question number two is what the students' strategies in learning English writing skills are. The descriptive analysis result shows that the majority

of the students used some strategies such as using the dictionary frequently with mean score 3.10 and using computer (Microsoft word) with mean score 3.07. These two strategies are most frequently chosen. The next strategies that students of ELED batch 2015 used were by extensive reading (2.99), extensive writing (2.89), using web 2.0 (Facebook, Blogger, Instagram and Wikis) with mean score 2.88, asking for feedback (2.79), using brainstorming (2.47), and using audiovisual aids (mp3 and mp4) with mean score 2.17.

Therefore, the findings of this study clearly indicated that most students of ELED of a private university in Yogyakarta batch 2015 faced several problems in learning English writing skills even though they have been learning writing in an academic level for 4 years.

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