

Abstract

Writing is one of the important skills in academic performance. Good writing skill can help students to communicate their ideas in the form of written. From experience, the researcher identifies that there are some challenges in writing essay. This study wanted to see students' challenges in writing essay of new students in university. There are two research questions of this study "what are the challenges in writing essay faced by ELED students" and "what are the strategies to overcome the challenges in writing essay faced by ELED students".

The study was conducted at one private university in Yogyakarta, with four participants which were from students of English Language Education Department batch 2017. This research was elaborated using descriptive qualitative research design. The data were gathered with interview. Based on data collection, this study revealed various findings about students' challenges in writing essay and strategies how to overcome the challenges. The results showed what are challenges faced by students are inadequacy of grammar mastery, vocabulary mastery, formal language also be challenges for students in writing essay. Reading more and discussing with friends are how students to overcome the problem in writing essay.

Key words: writing essay, challenges in writing essay, overcome problem in writing essay

Background of the Study

Writing is one of the important skills in academic performance. Good writing skill can help students to communicate their ideas in the form of written. Pineteh (2014) stated that students' intellectual may be accomplished not only by interacting with people but also by

encountering the writing of others. From the statement mentioned, it is proved that the students do not only need to have a good interaction with others but also they have to transform ideas in the form of writing.

In addition, writing is a must on academic performance because on academic field, the students should make a lot of writing text which requires the writing skill. According to Fadda(2012), writing is an absolute process of determining and managing opinions, putting them on paper, and revising them. From that statement, the researcher can obtain the writing in the complex process because it involves some processes started from organizing someone' ideas, putting them on the paper, and revising them.

. Norris (2016) stated that the students who have good grammatical knowledge, they can easily arrange the words to write on the paper well. That way, writing is not an easy skill which the students can do especially for beginner students. For the reasons, when students write something on the paper, they should have good grammatical knowledge, and they also should set their ideas on their writing properly.

There are many types in academic writing such as essay writing, reflective writing, and reporting writing. In essay writing, it is usually written in a discursive style while bringing together ideas, evidence, and arguments to address a specific problem or question (Fadda, 2012). In reflective writing, Norris (2016) stated that reflective writing is one of the most common methods used to assess work-based learning. The sstudents may be asked to write a reflective essay, and they learn log or portfolio to reflect upon your experiences and assess what they have learned in learning process. Besides, reporting writing is concise and has a formal structure. Fadda (2012) asserted that reporting writing uses clear and concise language which can differ considerably from essay writing, and it is often used to communicate the results or findings of a project. Hence, this research focuses on essay writing.

An essay is a kind of writing which must meet certain standard in terms of structure and formal language use. According to Fadda (2012), the academic essay consists of an introductory paragraph, body paragraphs, and concluding paragraph. In the introductory paragraph, the writers introduce the topic which they are going to write in their essay and introduce the content of the essay. For the important aspect in writing the essay, the writers should pay attention to provide clear topic sentence, so the readers will understand on what essay is going to discuss.

Methodology

This chapter discusses the methodology used by the researcher in this study. Besides, this chapter explores how to conduct and collect the research data. There are six sections of methodology namely research design, research setting, research participants, research instrument, data collection method, and data analysis. Several theories are also included in this chapter to support the methodology in this study.

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach as research design which aimed to find out the challenges faced by ELED students and the strategies to overcome the challenges in writing essay. Besides, by choosing the right and suitable methodology, it could help the researcher to deliver and answer the problems of the research. The relevant method to present research is qualitative approach.

Creswell (2012) stated that qualitative research is the method used to understand in depth toward certain phenomena such as feelings, though processes, and ideas, which are difficult to understand through other research methods. According to Patton and Cochran (2002), “qualitative research is characterized by its aims which relate to understand some aspects of social life, and its methods generate words, rather than numbers, as data for analysis” (p.20).

This research implemented an approach related to practical phenomena at ELED specifically in writing essay.

Research Setting

The researcher chose this department place because the researcher interviewed the participants who directly involved and had experiences in doing task of writing essay which could get rich and truthful information and because all the participants and the researcher took a study at ELED. Thereby the research had accessibility for doing the research around a private university building. Also, it could make the researcher collect the data at ease. Therefore, choosing ELED of a private university as the research setting was an effective place to conduct this research. For the time setting, this data were collected in April 2019, starting from 11 April 2019 –19 April 2019.

In this research setting, the researcher provides the explanation about the place where the research was carried the reasons to conduct a study in the chosen place. This research was conducted at ELED of one private university in Yogyakarta.

Research Participant

The participants of this study were four students at ELED of a private university in Yogyakarta. The researcher asked for the teacher's recommendation who taught in writing essay which students are goods to be interviewed. From the statement mentioned, the teacher's recommendation for the participants were those who were available and proper to be interviewed to get rich data. Then, the participants were consisted two students who had good writing essay, and those two participants were not good at writing essay by seeing their grades. The participants were the students of batch 2017 who once enrolled and had experiences in writing essay in Academic Reading and Writing course at the department.

The students who had good score in writing were chosen to get more information which could produce rich data for this research both the challenges and the strategies to solve the challenges in writing essay at ELED. Besides, the students who had experiences could give rich information about problem in writing essay for this research. The participants will be assigned pseudonyms to keep their identities such as Belle is female, Aladin is male, Jasmin is female and Elsa is female. Belle and Aladin were the participants who had good ability in writing essay by seeing their grade, and Jasmin and Elsa were low ability in writing essay by seeing their grade. A pseudonym is used in this research because the researcher intends to keep personal information of the participants. According to Allen and Wiles (2016), a pseudonym is unreal name which is often used by the researcher or writer to personally keep participants' privacy.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher made the schedule of meeting appointments with the participants to do the interview. From the statement mentioned, it ensured that the researcher had asked for the availability of the interviewee about the schedule of meeting appointments. Then, the researcher made the agreement by phone or direct-communication about when and where the interview would be held.

Besides, the researcher used interview to collect the data. The research interview is a conversation between two people which is started by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining relevant information towards the research and focuses on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or explanation (Creswell, 2012). Researcher also believed that interview is the suitable technique to collect the information related to participants' experience, opinion, perception, and feeling. Patton as cited in Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) said "the participants answer the same questions which

increase the comparability of responses, and the data are complete for each person on the topic addressed in the interview”(p.413).

The interview used Indonesian language as native language of those participants and the researcher, so by using Indonesian language in collecting the data, this research could avoid misunderstanding. In addition, the interview done around fifteen minutes until twenty minutes for the participants answer the questions. To record the data, this study used voice recorder in a mobile phone which had good quality. Moreover, to transcript the data, this study used Indonesian Language to avoid misunderstanding. That way, this study developed the questions guideline of this study related to research questions.

Finding and Discussion

In this chapter, the researcher reports the findings and the discussions. The findings are taken from the data analysis on the interview based on the participants’ perception followed by the discussions and supported by some literatures. The findings were based on the interview with four participants whose names were pseudonym. There are two main findings of this research such as the ELED students’ challenges in writing essay and the ELED students’ strategies to overcome the challenges in writing essay.

The ELED Students’ Challenges in Writing Essay

The first research question is about the ELED students’ challenges in writing essay. The researcher found some students’ challenges in writing an essay. These findings were obtained from the answers of the interview with the participants. The researcher collected the data from four students of ELED at a private university in Yogyakarta. The challenges of ELED students faced in writing essay were lack of grammar mastery, lack of vocabularies, difficult to find the ideas, too fast explanation from the lecturer, and formal language use.

Inadequacy of grammar mastery. Most of new students at university were confused about how to use grammar correctly. All participants said that they felt lack of grammatical

mastery and were still confused about using grammar. The first statement was mentioned by Belle who said that “sometimes I find so many difficulties to write the essay with good grammar” and she was afraid of making mistake in writing the essay with correct grammar. For the second statement, it was mentioned by Aladin said that “I’m not too good at grammar yet” so he still felt afraid of writing an essay. For the third statement Jasmine said “ I feel so confuse to use grammar correctly in writing context” and the statement was also mentioned by Elsa, she said “I don’t understand about grammar because I feel that grammar was the difficult lesson”

From the statements mentioned, Weisi (2012) argued that the lack of knowledge of English grammar and unfamiliar words are assumed to be a deficiency of students to grasp the overall message conveyed in the sentence forms. Most of new students in university are unfamiliar with grammar, so that students feel grammar is a difficult and becomes challenges for students in writing essay. According to Ahmed (2012), in doing writing essay, the students who have good grammar can write an essay rather than the students who have lack of grammatical mastery do. Besides, the technical of error writing and grammar mistake also become the common problems which are faced by students in writing essay. Additionally, the learners not only have a grammatical problem but also have a problem with structured sentences in writing essay. Therefore, most of new ELED students in university had less ability in structure and grammar mastery it was seen made the mistake in the content and comprehension in writing the paragraph. Inadequacy of grammar mastery has answered the first research question.

Inadequacy of vocabulary mastery. Mostly, new students at university found a lot of new words and they did not understand the vocabularies in the sentences. Furthermore, vocabulary is the most important aspect to understand the text because it can be the points of the text in difficult words towards the sentences. The first statement was mentioned by Elsa,

she said “I found many difficulties to use vocabulary in writing the text because I had not mastered a lot of vocabularies” Besides, in writing the essays, it should be written with a formal vocabulary. In addition, Aladin conveyed the same statement with Elsa who said that he had not mastered many vocabularies, so he felt difficult to write the formal English essay in every assignment or final assessment. Norris (2016) argued that vocabulary mastery can help students to achieve both reading and writing skills. By mastering vocabulary, the students could look at the sample of structured sentences, and perhaps it can help them to improve their sentence knowledge to write an essay. A lot of reading journal, other essay, novel or dictionary also can help them in mastery vocabulary. Inadequacy of vocabulary mastery has answered the first research question.

Difficulty in finding out ideas. Most of the new students at university found many difficulties in writing essay. At the beginning of writing, the students should have an idea to write in their paper. The difficulty to find out the ideas came up as the problem faced by the students in writing essay. Aladin had difficulty in finding out the ideas in writing because at the beginning of the lecture, there were not many aspects which had been learned and were still confused about what to write in writing the essay. Aladin’ mentioned was similar to Jasmine who said that” I feel very confuse about how to find the idea in writing the essay”

Darus and Subramaniam (2019) argued writing is a window what the students can do in the large domain of this course. From that point mentioned, writing is seen as a window for students in the bigger field of intellectual communication which the students can write their ideas in the form of essay. Difficulty in finding ideas has answered the first research question.

Using Formal language. According to Pineteh (2014) asserted that the students often struggle to change from an informal writing style which they often use to be more formal academic style structurally. From that statement mentioned that the use of formal language

sometimes made the problems in writing the essay because some students felt hard to do it. In writing essay, the students had to use formal language rather than informal language.

Besides, the third participant said “keeping on writing essay needed the thoughts or ideas because the used language was formal language” and the fourth participant said so the third participant had “I find so many difficult in writing essay”. According to Pineteh (2014) asserted that the students often struggle to change from an informal writing style which they often use to be more formal academic style structurally.

Also, they are sometimes confused about how to write the essay because they do not know how to change it. Other aspects that make a formal language challenges in writing essay are most of students watching English movie and listening English song as a learning references to gain knowledge before writing essay, whereas most of English movie and English song are not using formal language while writing essays must using formal language. Besides, reading articles and reading journals can be a reference for students to write esaay in formal language. Almost articles and journals are written in formal language, so students can learn from that’s to write essay formally.

ELED Students’ Strategies to Overcome the Challenges in Writing Essay

The first research question is about what the ELED students’strategies to overcome the challenges in writing an essay. The findings were obtained from the answer of the participants in the interview. The researcher collected the data from four ELED students at a private university in Yogyakarta . Hence, the strategies to overcome the challenges students faced in writing essay were a lot of reading, asking friends who understand the lessons, and practicing writing.

A lot of reading. Reading a book can be the strategy to overcome the challenges in lack of grammar and vocabulary mastery and problem in formal language use. Through

reading, the students could overcome their problem in writing essay. Belle said “I read the articles from other writers, and suddenly, I also read the article from other friends article as well”. Aladin also did a lot of reading to overcome his problem in second research question. He usually read his friends’ essay as an illustration for him to make an essay. Jasmine also read many essays from her friends to help her writing. Also, by reading the essays of other people, Jasmin could get an idea to write, and Elsa read many journals and articles to overcome her problems in the second research question writing essay. Ghabol (2012) argued that by reading a lot of books, students can find more topics to write an essay. Besides, the students can look through the textbook, course slide, handout, and current periodicals for possible ideas. Books, journals, and reading other people’s essay become a source for students to get a lot of words so that the students can learn about formal words more. Therefore, the students could choose formal words to write the essay. A lot of reading has answered the second research question.

Discussing with friends. When the teacher explained how to write essay, not all students exactly understood the explanation. Some students needed more detailed explanation. However, sometimes, they were shy to ask about the lessons which had been explained by the teachers, so students chose to ask their friends who understand about the lessons more. Besides, Jasmine and Elsa said that they felt insecure to ask about the lesson which had been explained to their teacher. Pineth (2014) argued that the ability of students in writing essay are different. As we know, not all students has balance ability in writing essay, they are students who have good ability in writing essay and they are students poor ability in writing essay. Most of students are felt comfortable asking to their friends who understand more about the lesson. Discussing with friends has answered the second research question.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This chapter presents two main discussions; those are the conclusion and the recommendation of this study. In conclusion, the researcher summarizes the result of the study that the researcher found from the findings and discussion of the research while the recommendation provides some suggestions for other researchers interested in this topic of study.

Conclusion

This study is aimed to explore ELED students' challenges in writing essay at a private university in Yogyakarta. This study has two purpose, namely to investigate the ELED students' challenges faced in writing essay at a private university in Yogyakarta, and to investigate the ELED students' strategies to overcome the challenges in writing essay. To answer the research question, the researcher employed descriptive qualitative research. The researcher will use one technique is interview. The interviews were done in a one-on-one interview to give privacy for each participant, so every participant shared their opinions and ideas unhampered. The researcher involved four participants of ELED students' at a private university in Yogyakarta.

The researcher found some the challenges students' in writing essay based on interview with four participants of ELED at a private university in Yogyakarta are inaduquacy of grammar, inadequacy of vocabularies, difficult in finding the idea. And students' strategies to overcome the challenges in writing essay are reading more and disscusing to friends about the lessons.

Recommendations

In recommendation, the researcher gives a suggestion based on the results of the research. Recommendations for some people that are related to this study are for students, for teachers, and for other researchers.

For teacher. It can be concluded that the students' challenges and strategies in writing essay is inadequacy of knowledge and improve the ability. The researcher recommend for the teacher to make a good strategy before teaching in writing essay.

For students. The researchers recommend for students to do more exercise in writing essay and learn more how to write a perfect essay.

For other researcher. The other researchers are expected to conduct further studies related to this topic and use this research as the background knowledge. The researcher recommend for the future researcher to use a good method and look a good method if want to teach in essay writing.

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