

A SURVEY OF PROBLEMS IN WRITING EXPERIENCED BY THE THIRD YEAR STUDENTS OF ENGLISH STUDY PROGRAM FKIP UNIVERSITAS RIAU

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Abstract: *This reserach aimed at finding out the most common problems in writing experienced by the third year students of English Study Program FKIP Universitas Riau. This research is a descriptive quantitative with survey and the population of the survey is 110 third year students of English Study Program FKIP Universitas Riau. A questionnaire was used to collect the data to find out most common problems in writing of the students. The questionnaire contained 21 statements and divided into 2 groups: internal problems (Organization, Spelling, Grammar and Capitalization) and external problems (Learners' motivation, teachers feedback and inadequate time) with 9 items. The questionnaire was accessed online via google forms. Every statement in questionnaire used 5 point Likert-Scale start from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The result showed the most problem in writing experienced in internal problem is spelling problem with 229.3 average points. The other problems are: organization problem with 217.3 average points, grammar problem with 213.6 average points and the last is capitalization 195 average points . The most problems in external problem is inadequate time with 246 average points. The other problems learners' motivation with 243.3 average points and teachers' feedback with 218 average points.*

Key Words: *Survey, Writing, Writing problems.*

SURVEI MASALAH DALAM PENULISAN YANG DIALAMI MAHASISWA PROGRAM STUDI BAHASA INGGRIS TAHUN KETIGA FKIP UNIVERSITAS RIAU

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui permasalahan yang paling umum dalam menulis yang dialami oleh mahasiswa tahun ketiga Program Studi Bahasa Inggris FKIP Universitas Riau. Penelitian ini berupa kuantitatif deskriptif dengan menggunakan survei dan populasi dalam survey berjumlah 110 mahasiswa tahun ketiga Program Studi Bahasa Inggris FKIP Universitas Riau. Sebuah Kuesioner digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data untuk menemukan masalah yang paling umum dalam menulis mahasiswa. Kuesioner tersebut berisi 21 pernyataan dan dibagi menjadi 2 kelompok: masalah internal (Organisasi, Ejaan, Tata Bahasa dan Kapitalisasi) dengan 12 nomor dan masalah eksternal (Motivasi peserta didik, tanggapan guru dan waktu yang tidak memadai) dengan 9 nomor. Kuesioner tersebut diakses online melalui *google forms*. Setiap pernyataan di kuesioner menggunakan skala likert yang dimulai dari sangat setuju sampai sangat tidak setuju. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa masalah menulis yang paling banyak dialami dalam masalah internal adalah masalah ejaan dengan rata-rata 229,3 poin. Masalah lainnya adalah: masalah organisasi dengan 217,3 poin rata-rata, masalah tata bahasa dengan 213,6 poin rata-rata dan yang terakhir adalah kapitalisasi 195 poin rata-rata. Masalah yang paling banyak pada masalah eksternal adalah waktu yang tidak mencukupi dengan rata-rata 246 poin. Masalah lainnya adalah motivasi peserta didik dengan rata-rata 243,3 poin dan tanggapan guru dengan rata-rata 218 poin.

Kata Kunci: Survei, Menulis, masalah dalam menulis.

INTRODUCTION

English is one of the International languages in the world. English plays a major role in expressing ideas, thoughts, opinions and attitudes Alfaki (2015). In the era of globalization, English makes things from all around the world understandable because written in English fills the space between those languages. To make it happens, English is used as one of the subjects taught in schools in various countries. Moreover, English has been adopted as the language of instruction in some private universities since English has become the "medium of the world's most knowledgeable world" Afrin (2016).

Basically learning English consists of four skills, they are speaking, reading, listening, and writing. Each of those abilities is related and equally important in learning English. English is increasingly used and has an increasingly impact on life as an era develops. This is evidenced by the increasing number of people who use English, more precisely, in a word in their daily lives. In Indonesia, English has become one of the important languages for the life of its people. Al-Khasawneh (2010) claimed that English as the means of instruction, makes a strong contribution to education and students' efficiencies in communication of institutional demands. That is also what makes students need to master the English language. To realize this step, the government makes the English language is learned from elementary school level to the university level. This is in order to improve the knowledge and quality of Indonesian people in English language.

In English language, writing skill is more difficult skill besides other productive skills in Indonesia. To make it easy, Writing English has been taught since learners in kindergarten. It also trains their communication skill. Knowledge and information are from their minds into their own language through writing that eventually their ideas and thoughts clarified they become real Chow (2007). This exercise makes the longer it is trained, the more passive the student will master it.

Even though it seems difficult, writing has many advantages and it plays an important role in language. Writing is an important way to help students more easily understand a method or idea Chow (2007). Writing can be an effective way to communicate even if someone is not brave or not very good at speaking. Even though it sounds simple, it can't be written in English randomly. But, a writer must be able to master the important elements contained in the writing itself. Those elements are such as Vocabulary, Grammar, tense, and Comprehension. That's why English learners must also have the ability to write and also be sensitive in writing so that they are not only able to communicate well but also be able to provide information and insight well and clearly.

Writing is taught at the university level. This is done to add insight and knowledge in writing after studying in high school. At the university level such as the University of Riau, writing lessons were obtained in several language education majors and one of them was English education. In that department, writing is taught in a number of courses each year and usually ends in year 3

The third year students of English study program at University Riau have been taught about writing since the second semester to the fourth semester. Those are Writing 1, Writing 2, and writing 3. In writing 1, students are taught about the basic of writing such as how to make a correct sentence, the part of speech. In writing 2, lessons are improved from before by making sentences and making main sentence and clauses

in each paragraph. At the writing 3, students are taught to write texts and various kinds of texts such as narrative texts, report texts, descriptive texts and others. There is a lesson such as academic reading and writing to improve writing too. But there are students who still struggle to make a paragraph and an essay properly.

Even though they have gone through some of the lessons above, many English language education students at Universitas Riau still find it difficult in writing skills. There are some problems experienced in learning English class. Start from in terms of lessons, many students study program do not enjoy and like the lesson which use writing skills because they already have the thought that writing in English is difficult. This can be seen from several activities in the form of writing events in English language, students of English study program at Universitas Riau feel inexpert of expressing their comprehensible in writing. Alfaki (2015) stated that students are incapable to show their idea with clear, correct and comprehensible manner in writing. Some of them think that they are not good enough because of their writing skill is bad like have poor grammar, do not know exactly the correct use of tense. Students also think that writing class is boring cause less of interaction. Some students feel that writing is the hardest subject in English department and they do prefer speaking to writing. Raimes says that: “When students complain about how difficult it is to write in a second language, they are talking not only about the difficulty of finding the right words and using the correct grammar but also about the difficulty of finding and expressing ideas in a new language. (p. 13)”.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a descriptive research. The purpose of the research is to gain information about problem in order to describe existed condition in the field. The researcher uses descriptive quantitative with descriptive survey approach in this research. Gay and Airasian (2000) stated that “quantitative approaches are used to describe current conditions, investigate relationship, and study cause-effect phenomena”. This Quantitative description or survey research collected the data to answer some questions about the situation of the topic of study such as preferences, attitudes, practices, concerns or interest of some group of people. This research conducted via Google Forms from January to June 2021.

The participants are the third year students of English Study Program FKIP Universitas Riau. They are 6A, 6B and 6C. The number of population is 110 students. The population specifications for each class could be seen on the table 3.1 below:

Table 1. The Total Population of the Research

No.	Class	Population
1.	6A	36
2.	6B	39
3.	6C	35
Total		110

The sample will be all of third year students of English Study Program FKIP Universitas Riau. There are 110 students. But, there are 81 students give their feedback to researcher.

The questionnaire consists of 21 items and divided into 2 groups, there are internal problems that consisted of 12 items and external problems that consisted of 9 items. Below is the specification of the questionnaires:

Table 2. The Specification of the Questionnaires

Variable	Indicators	Aspects	Numbers of Items
Problems in writing English	Internal Problems	Organization example: I make an outline before writing to help me exploring the ideas (number 3).	1,2,3
		Spelling example: It takes long time to use new vocabularies (number 5).	4,5,6
		Grammar Example: I am not good at writing because I have poor grammar (number 8).	7,8,9
		Capitalization example: I lack of knowledge about the usage of full stop (number 12).	10,11,12
	External Problems	Learners' motivation Example: I only write English in collage time (number 14).	13,14,15
		Teachers' feedback Example: I am afraid of Writing English because my lecturer will be angry with me if I make mistakes (number 17).	16,17,18
		Inadequate Time Example: I am not comfortable writing when there's a time limit (number 21)	19,20,21
Total Questions			21

This questionnaire is adapted from Afrin (2016) and Alfaki (2015), Huy (2015), Jimenez (2013), Nawaz (2015) and Habibi (2017). It consists of 21 statements (12 internal and 9 external problem of writing skill). Each of every statement has with 5 alternative answers or five Likert scale. The option of the students shows their condition about the problem. Students are given 21 minutes to answer the 21 statements in questionnaire. It means students had 1 minute for 1 statement to gather the responses of the questionnaire and the researcher gave one week to the students for filling the questionnaire.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

In this research, Pearson Product Moment is used to test the validity of the questions. The researcher counted the validity using IBM SPSS Statistics 2.5. The formula for the Pearson Product Moment is:

$$r_{xy} = \frac{n\sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{[n\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2][n\sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2]}}$$

Where:

- r_{xy} is correlation coefficient of item score and total score
- x is item total score
- y is total score
- n is the number of the respondent

After counting the instrument's validity, the researcher compared the r count with the r table, with 5% significance. If the r count value is more significant than the r table, then the instrument is valid. Conversely, if the r count value is smaller than the r table, the instrument is invalid. Based on the validity test result, 21 items were tested on 81 respondents, all valid. The detail of the validity test can be seen as follows:

Table 3. Items Validity

Item Number	r count	r table 5% Significance	
1	0.516	0.413	Valid
2	0.485	0.413	Valid
3	0.426	0.413	Valid
4	0.481	0.413	Valid
5	0.487	0.413	Valid
6	0.435	0.413	Valid
7	0.581	0.413	Valid
8	0.710	0.413	Valid
9	0.421	0.413	Valid
10	0.417	0.413	Valid
11	0.633	0.413	Valid
12	0.554	0.413	Valid
13	0.565	0.413	Valid
14	0.755	0.413	Valid
15	0.657	0.413	Valid
16	0.442	0.413	Valid
17	0.592	0.413	Valid
18	0.565	0.413	Valid
19	0.613	0.413	Valid
20	0.444	0.413	Valid
21	0.417	0.413	Valid

According to Sugiyono (2016), a reliable instrument is an instrument that is repetitively used to measure the same object will give the same result. The researcher used IBM SPSS Statistic 25 with Cronbach's Alpha formula to measure the instrument reliability.

$$r_{11} = \left(\frac{k}{k-1} \right) \left(1 - \frac{\sum a_b^2}{a_1^2} \right)$$

Where:

r_{11} is instrument reliability

k is the key number if item

$\sum a_b^2$ is the number of item variant

a_1^2 is variant total

From the result of the test, the reliability of the instrument is 0.837. According to Sujarweni (2014), an instrument is valid if the Cronbach Alpha >0.60. It means the instrument is reliable.

Table 4. Items Reliability

Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
.742	21

The questionnaire for this research has 21 statements and distributed to 110 students. All of the students have responded the statements completely. The result of the questionnaire is presented below and also shows the problems in writing experienced by the third year students

The table in appendix 2 describes the research question about the problems in writing experienced by the third year students of English Study Program FKIP Universitas Riau are divided into Internal Problems such as organization, spelling, grammar, capitalization and the external problems which include learners' motivation, teacher's feedback and inadequate time. Each aspect has 3 statement items and each has been averaged to get the final result. The score of each problem is also varied.

From the result of the questionnaire in appendix 2, it showed that spelling problem is the highest point from internal problems in the questionnaire which has average 229.3 points. Meanwhile, the highest point form the external problems is inadequate time which has average 246.3 points. Spelling problem is also the highest average points from 7 aspects in the questionnaire.

In order to be able to see clearly all the points, researcher prepares chart that recapitulate the score of the questionnaire of writing problems:

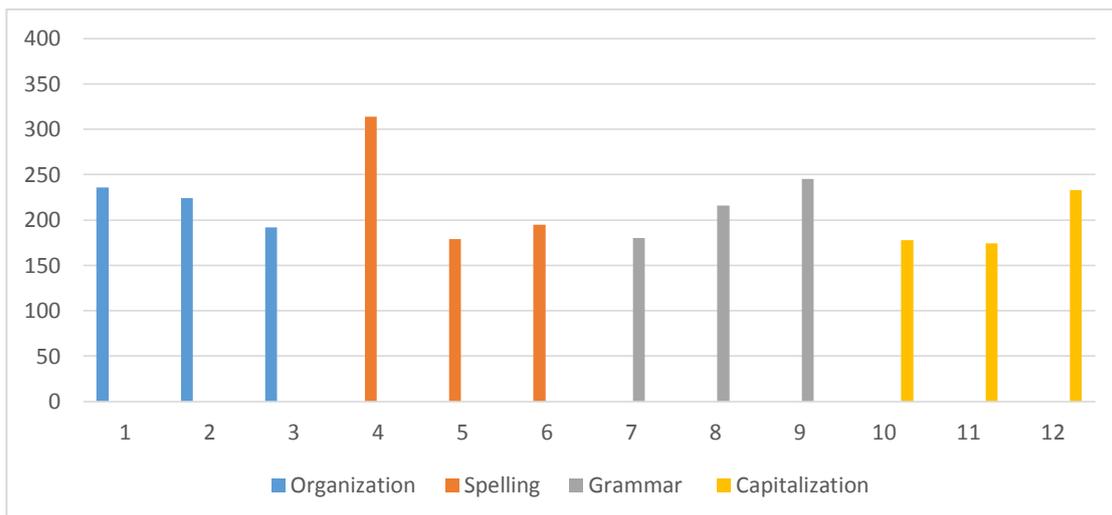


Chart 1. The Score of the Questionnaire in Internal Problems

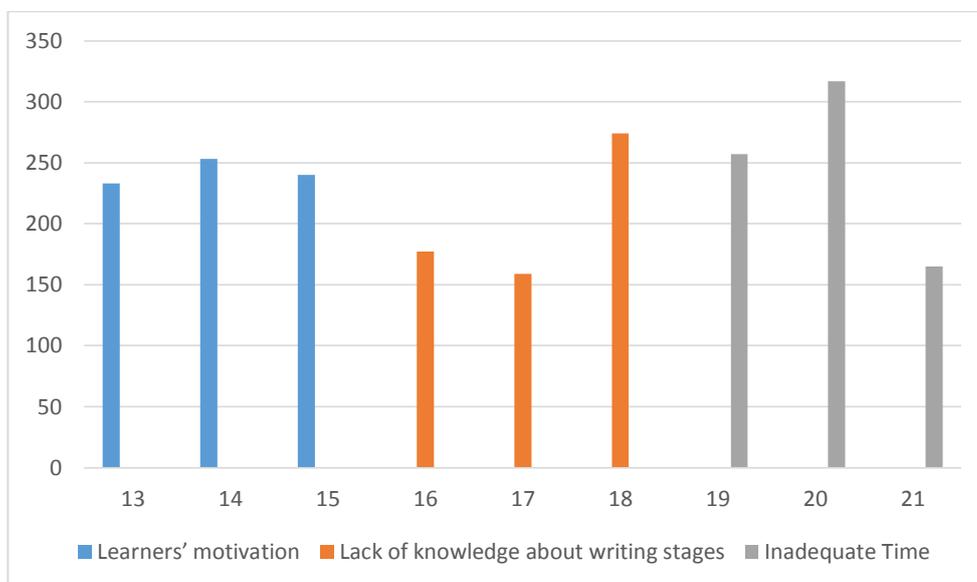


Chart 2. The Score of the Questionnaire in External Problems

From the chart above especially in internal factor, the score of questionnaire started from 195 points at capitalization problem as the lowest average points from all of in internal factor until 229.3 at spelling problem as the highest average points from all of in internal factor. The 195 average points is one of internal factor questions from capitalization problem. It indicated that the students not having low in capitalization to write in English. In the other side, the 229.3 average points got from spelling problem. The students did not confident if they used complicated words. That is the highest problems they faced in internal factor.

Meanwhile, the lowest average points from the external factor is 218 average points at teachers' feedback problem until 246.3 at inadequate time problem as the highest average points in external factors. The 218 average points is from teacher's feedback problem. It means the students had little problem about ask solution or

revision about their writing with their lecturers. The highest average point is inadequate problem which stated the students feel not comfortable to writing with short time limit.

Based on some statements above, it can conclude that the most common writing problems experienced by the third year students of English Study Program Universitas Riau are spelling problem for the internal factor and inadequate time problem for external factor. The students do not feel confident if use complicated word or the word that they not sure exactly what they want. They also get nervous when they have to write with time limit, it makes them feel like being chased and can't be as creative as possible with their writing.

Discussions

There are 21 questions in the questionnaire that asked the common problems in writing. Based on the findings, all of the factors such as organization, spelling, grammar, inadequate time, learners' motivation, teachers' feedback and capitalization perceived in positive response in students' problem. by knowing all the result of all factors, the researcher can decided the final result. By the result and finding above, it is found that the third year students of English study program Universitas Riau do not face a significant problem in writing. Moreover, from the data obtained also shows that each problem also has quantities that are close to each other. There were 2 highest problems for internal and external problems most experienced of the students are spelling problem with average 229.3 points and inadequate time with average 246.3 points.

The highest average score from internal factor is spelling problem which has 229.3 points. That problem has 3 statements such as "I always use the simple words in writing to make me more confident", "I always use new vocabularies will take long time" and "Lack of vocabulary makes me confused in writing." It means the students always use their easy words in their writing because they are not sure about the use of the new words they are learning or knowing (number 4). Furthermore, that spelling problem also contained by number 5 and 6 which in the same problem. Students agree that they feel difficult in that factor. This happened because it takes a long time for students to use new vocabularies (number 5) and not just use the word but get used to using those words for their writing. In the same situation, they were lack of vocabulary (number 6) in writing because that situation would made limit to students' creativity and comfort zone which in the end makes it difficult to improve writing skills. This finding is in the same condition with previous study of Habibi (2017), which those students were also lack of vocabularies. It made those students also difficult to express their real imagination and meaning because their limited vocabulary they had.

In the second place and next in internal factor of writing problem are organization problem, grammar problem and capitalization problem. The average point of organization aspect is 217.3 points. The problem form organization problem is number 2 which statement "I Have poor writing to organize because sometimes failed to select a topic." But some of them do brainstorming and outline before writing. This study has the similiar findings with Yuen (2015) with that students had higest problem with language and organization problem. Students feel they were inability in paraphrase to poor referencing, weak oragnization and also weak of expressing the idea. The third place is grammar problem is 213.6 points, not too close to the previous point, namely spelling problems. It means that the students also have problem in

Grammar problem but not big as spelling problem and organization have. From the data, number 7 which stated “Grammar makes me take long time to put the correct tenses which appropriate to the event” is the highest chosen in Grammar problem. The students difficult to choose what tenses they should use in their writing, but the rest of another numbers are low points. Many students do not face many difficult in that problem. The last is Capitalization problem. It is the lowest average points of internal factor with 195 average points. The highest point that can be problem form capitalization problem is they get confused to put comma or conjunction to continue the next sentence.

Another factor is external factor is which divided into learners’ motivation, Teachers’ feedback and inadequate time. From the result of the questionnaire, inadequate time is the highest average point which has 246.3 points in the external factor. Number 21 which stated “I am not comfortable writing when there’s a time limit.” This is the highest point for inadequate time problem. It stated that many students do not enjoy their writing because the time given to write they feel inadequate to develop their writing to the maximum extent they could. It doesn’t mean they shouldn’t have deadlines to make their writing quality good, but time should adjust to their type of writing. The problem not only when the time in writing, but they also get problem in time gathering the idea. That statement above get supported by number 20 which stated “I do not need too much time for gathering ideas, organizing their ideas, writing drafts, prove reading and re-writing.” That number got 317 points which meant many students agreed with that situation and became one of the problems cause for number 21 and the inadequate time problem. Writing couldn’t be done in an instant or urgently. Insufficient time with writing assignment make many students felt pressure and triggered to work sub-optimally. It also creates anxiety while writing. In the end, many students are not confident in their own results.

In the second and third place in external factor of writing problem are learners’ motivation and teachers’ feedback. The average point of Learners’ motivation is 243.3 points as the second place for external problem. It means that some third year students in English study program has lack in writing. Form the data of the questionnaire which number 13, 14, and 15. Many students agree that they do not practice writing at home. Besides, some of them only write and practice English when they are in collage time or there is a task. They also agree that writing makes them bored because it needs practice and gained through continuous effort. Even though. In fact, writing in English cannot be done instantly and requires continuous practice to get used to and master it. The third is teachers’ feedback problem. The average of this problem is 218 points. The distance between the average points of this problem is quite far from the second problem. Some third year students of English study program approve that after checking my writing by lecturers, they do not ask for the lectures any kind of clarification or solution. That is the highest point in teacher’s feedback problem. Some of them also think that they fell afraid of Writing English because their lecturers will be angry they make mistakes. This case will make anxiety to students.

From 81 students as sample of this research, it can be said that there are variation of writing problems experienced by the third year students of English study program FKIP Universitas Riau. Through 23 items in the questionnaire, students’ responds are varied from strongly agreed to strongly disagreed (Likert Scaled). From the data, students mostly experienced problems in spelling (314) points as internal problem when they write. On the other sides, the problem form external problem is

inadequate time (317) points. From 23 items in questionnaire in this research, it can be concluded that spelling and inadequate time were the writing problems in that most third year students of English study program FKIP Universitas Riau experienced.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This study gives that students have problems in writing. To make it clearer, the problems in writing is divided into two factors, the first factor is internal problems (organization, spelling, grammar and inadequate time) and the second factor is external problems (learners' motivation, teachers' feedback and inadequate time).

As the result in the previous chapter, the most common writing problem experienced by the third year students of English study program FKIP Universitas Riau are Spelling problem from internal problem with (229.3 average points) and inadequate time from external problem with (246.3 average points). This research finds that students like to use their simple word or vocabulary in their writing because they are feeling anxiety about their new words. The other sides, they feel nervous and cannot give their best writing when the duration and the task in writing are not balanced. Those two problems will make them feel doubts about new vocabulary and the duration of writing which make them not confident in the writing process.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion above, there are some recommendations related to the students' problem in writing:

1. Students are suggested to practice more in writing to make their writing abilities increasing. For example, practice to write something and describe it, when the students get a new vocabulary or word, they should try that word to some sentence, and try to find its similar meaning in English.
2. It would be better for lecturers or teachers to give balanced between time and task in writing classes. That would make students do not feel pressured when writing their writings and will help them to maximize their writing tasks.
3. The researcher also suggest the further researchers to survey their own university students especially the English study program to get their condition about what their problem in writing and try to research more about external problem of problem in writing.

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