

Fresh Graduate Students' Difficulties in Writing Research Articles

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Writing research article is one of requirement for a student's university to be fulfilled before graduate. However, writing research article is not easy for the student. This research aimed to find out the difficulties in writing research article, the cause of the difficulties in writing research article and the way to overcome the difficulties in writing research article. The respondents of this research were 4 fresh graduate students who graduated in 2020 and the data were obtained through interview. This research used descriptive qualitative method by using the procedures from Miles and Huberman (1994). The result of this study shows that the difficulties in writing research article were in finding references and struggle in using correct grammar, the worry about feedback from the readers was the cause of the difficulties and the fresh graduate had their own solution to overcome the difficulties in writing research article. In conclusion, the fresh graduate of the English Education Study Program of Bengkulu University faced various difficulties in writing research article and had cause of the difficulties in writing research article, but they had solution to deal with such difficulties.

Key words: Writing Difficulties, Research Article, Fresh graduate

ABSTRAK

Menulis artikel adalah salah satu syarat yang harus dipenuhi oleh mahasiswa sebelum kelulusan. Akan tetapi, menulis artikel tidaklah mudah bagi mahasiswa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui kesulitan dalam menulis artikel penelitian, penyebab dari kesulitan dalam menulis artikel penelitian dan cara mengatasi kesulitan dalam menulis artikel penelitian. Responden dalam penelitian ini yaitu 4 lulusan terbaru yang lulus pada tahun 2020 dan data diambil menggunakan sesi wawancara. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kualitatif deskriptif, menggunakan prosedur dari Miles dan Huberman (1994). Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa kesulitan dalam menulis artikel penelitian adalah kesalahan dalam tata bahasa dan referensi, penyebab kesulitan dalam menulis artikel penelitian adalah khawatir tentang ulasan dari pembaca dan mahasiswa lulusan terbaru mempunyai cara mereka sendiri untuk menemukan solusi pada kesulitan dalam menulis artikel penelitian. Kesimpulannya, lulusan terbaru dari Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Bengkulu menghadapi berbagai kesulitan dalam menulis artikel penelitian dan penyebab dari kesulitan dalam menulis artikel penelitian, tetapi mereka mempunyai solusi dari kesulitan tersebut.

Kata Kunci: Kesulitan dalam menulis, Artikel Penelitian, lulusan terbaru

INTRODUCTION

Writing is how to produce a written product. It is a process of transforming ideas coherently and cohesively into written text. Nunan (2003, p.88) states that writing is an intellectual activity of finding ideas and thinking about the way to express and arrange them into a statement and paragraph that is clear to be understood by the people. Therefore, writing is a skill that is required in written communication. Good writing is not always easy and maybe it is challenging if the students followed each element of writing. Weigle (2002, p.116) states that writing consisted of several elements such as contents, organization, vocabulary language use, and mechanics as well. Mastering vocabularies and tenses become the main key to producing good writing work.

Writing skill is a difficult process faced by Indonesian learners who learn English as Foreign Language (EFL), as Richard and Renandya (2002, p.303) state that writing is the most difficult skill for the second language and foreign-language learners. The main reason for this current study is to explore the common academic challenges faced by fresh graduate students in the early stages of writing research projects in English. Students face various challenges in writing research in EFL. In universities, English is also studied as a general subject. English majors must use English to complete assignments and exams. Of course, the final project or student thesis is made in English. In the final project, students must write a thesis and then write a research article.

The research article has a particular format similarity with a thesis. Sheakh (2012) states that "Research articles follow a particular format; there are title, abstract, introduction, review of the literature, method, result, discussion, and the last is a conclusion." All the eight most important parts have their respective difficulties in the process of writing research articles. In writing a research article, the students find some difficulties. Several studies have been conducted to investigate students' difficulties in writing a research article. The first study was conducted by Shahsavar and Kourepaz (2019) This study set out to identify postgraduates' problems in writing their theses literature review section. The results from the study showed that most students, even proficient ones were not able to synthesize, critique, or explain the literature in their writing.

Another study was conducted by Qasem and Zayid (2019) The results of their study showed that around 70% of the participants are writing a research or conducting research projects, English is one of the predominant challenges for them. Around 50% prefer to conduct their research in L1.

Thus, this article will discuss the students' difficulties in writing a research article, the cause of the difficulties, and the way to overcome the difficulties in writing a research article in a university context.

METHODOLOGY

This study used the descriptive qualitative method of research. The descriptive method means "any research that describes a setting or events in numerical terms" (Brown and Rodgers, 2002: 118). Hence, the researcher used this type of research to seek the students' difficulties in writing research articles on the fresh graduate English Department students of the University of Bengkulu 2020. The researcher used two steps to obtain the participants. Firstly, the researcher identified participants through a purposeful sampling strategy. Purposeful sampling is the selection sample based on characteristics of the population that the researcher need for the research from the larger group (Miles and Huberman, 1994 and Marshall and Rossman, 2006). Secondly, the researcher asked permission from the participants to conduct this research. However, due to several private reasons of the participants, there were only 4 of them available to be interviewed.

In collecting the data, the researcher used interview as an instrument to obtain the data. The researcher used the semi-structured interview to collect the data. It was to figure out participants' difficulties in writing a research article. The researcher collected the data by recording the audio-visual to make sure there were no data missed when the researcher analyzed it. In the process of obtaining the difficulties in participants, the researcher used field notes to write specifically the students' difficulties in writing research articles. The data were analyzed by using the procedures from Miles and Huberman (1994): first, data reduction in this step the researcher gained the data from audio-visual recording. Second, displaying data in this step, the researcher displayed the notes from the audio recording, and the last conclusion, the conclusion is the last procedure of analyzing the data of the research.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The data of this research was gained through interviews. There were three aspects of the result: (1) The difficulties faced by fresh graduate students in writing research article (2) The cause of the difficulties faced by fresh graduate students in writing research article (3) the way to overcome the difficulties faced by fresh graduate students in writing a research article.

First, the result of the difficulties faced by the fresh graduate students in writing the title of the research article based on the interview section was all respondents did not have any difficulties in writing the title of the research article because they just copied the title of the research article based on the title in their thesis, It is based on the result of the interview from respondent 3, as follow:

"I don't have any problem in writing the title of a research article, because for the title in research article I just copy from my title in skripsi"

The result of the difficulties faced by the fresh graduate students in writing the abstract, introduction, literature review, method, result, discussion, the conclusion of a research article based on the interview section was some respondents had a problem with grammar and had a problem with coherence and cohesion of the paragraph. It is based on the result of the interview from respondent 2

"I have difficulty in writing an idea and difficult to write paragraph coherence and cohesion".

Meanwhile the interview section, all respondents did not have any problem while writing the reference. It is based on the result of the interview from respondent 1 below:

"It's not quite difficult because I use APA pattern, we only copy-paste the title, the writer, and the publisher. And we got the correct reference in Google scholar. I prefer to this pattern because this is more practice".

Second, the result of the cause of the difficulties faced by the fresh graduate students in writing title, abstract, introduction, literature review, method, result, discussion, the conclusion of a research article based on the interview section was some of the respondents worry about feedback from the readers. It is based on the result of the interview from respondent 3.

"I worry about what feedback from readers, whether or not people can understand what I wrote, because is not easy to produce the text coherently. So, that's why we need someone to check our text. I also

worry about my perspective could be accepted by my supervisor and the readers”

Concerning the interview section was all respondents did not have any problem in writing references. It is based on the result of interview from respondent 1.

“It’s not quite difficult because I use APA pattern, we only copy paste the title, the writer, and the publisher. And we got the correct reference in Google Scholar. I prefer to this pattern because this is more practice”.

Third, the result of the way of the fresh graduate students to overcome the difficulties in writing title, abstract, introduction, literature review, method, result, discussion, and conclusion of a research article based on the interview section is various in every student. Some respondents chose to motivate themselves by reading a lot and some respondents chose to discuss with their supervisors and friends. It is based on the result of the interview from respondent 1

“Our family, our environment, and our siblings give more support for me. They give me my favorite food. That gives me more power. It is also about my friend. I have very kind friends, go to the library every day and have a discussion. I am grateful to have them”.

The result of the way of the fresh graduate students to overcome the difficulties in writing reference of a research article based on the interview section was all respondents used the alternative way by using Google scholar. It is based on the result of the interview from respondent 1.

“I use APA pattern, we only copy-paste the title, the writer, and the publisher. And we got the correct reference in Google scholar. I prefer to this pattern because this is more practice”.

Discussion

The difficulties were in lack of references in finding the topic that related to the topic of research article and struggle in using correct grammar. Such errors in writing research article might be a result from the students' lack of knowledge about grammar and linguistic. Another possible source of the students' error might be because they were relying on their mother tongue as the strategy when they composed their research article in English. Brown (2007) mentions some sources of the students' errors, namely: interlingua errors due to the influence of the native language); intralingua errors due to the difficulty of the target language itself; and false concept from the learning in which the students make an error because of a misleading explanation from the teacher, faulty presentation of a structure of word in a textbook, or even because of a pattern that rotely memorized in a drill but improperly contextualized.

In terms of psychological factors, the research results show that the cause of the difficulties faced by the fresh graduate was in worry about feedback from the readers because they did not have confidence in writing a good research article. This could happen because they did not believe in their own capabilities in writing a good research article. According to Brown (2007), in learning a second or foreign language the learners are potentially so overwhelming that they can-and often do-lose momentum in the face of a number of forms of self-doubt because the learners do not believe in themselves. It shows that the fresh graduate had evaluated themselves negatively. In addition to that, some fresh graduates said that it was difficult for them to have confidence in writing a good research article because they had a lack of background knowledge about the research article that led them having lack of

confidence in writing a research article. The students who are not confident will experience other problems affected by psychological factors such as experiencing anxiety, having fear of taking a risk, having lack of motivation, and so on as the result of this research also showed that the students were difficulty in overcoming the inhibition and anxiety, taking the initiative by trying to write a good research article and having intrinsic motivation. Brown (2007) states self-efficacy is a key to other affective variables, such as anxiety, risk-taking, inhibition, and motivation.

The first solution is consultation. All respondents asked and consulted their research articles to their supervisors, other lecturers besides their supervisors, and friends when they got difficulties affected by psychological and linguistic factors. As they did not believe in their own capability, they need someone else who they believe was more competent than them. The inputs, advice, and suggestions built their confidence and overcome their anxiety.

The second solution was reading a lot of references. This solution was done by the fresh graduate to solve their difficulties affected by psychological factors, linguistic factors, and sociocultural factors. It shows that gaining information through a lot of references helped the fresh graduate to build their confidence in writing a research article. The references also became the cornerstones of students' work in writing a thesis.

The third solution is doing self-motivation to solve the students' psychological problems, such as self-doubt, anxiety, and fear of taking risks in writing their thesis. To move forward, they had to control their negative thoughts. They set their goal and worked to achieve it. Thus, instead of worrying about what they did not know, they asserted about what they wanted to do. Brown (2007) states that anyone who has learned a foreign language is acutely aware that in learning a second language, making mistakes is necessitated. By having positive thoughts the student will be able to perform the given task successfully.

The last solution is using google scholar, which is used to solve the difficulties in writing references. The purpose of using Google Scholar, in this case, is that fresh graduates use features on Google Scholar to make it easier to write references in writing research articles. They preferred to use google scholar to write references because it is more simple than manual.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The purpose of conducting this research was to identify the difficulties in writing a research article, the cause of the difficulties in writing research articles, and how to overcome the difficulties in writing a research article. From the research, some conclusion can be drawn as follow: first, the fresh graduate faced two major difficulties in writing a research article, they are in finding good references and minimizing grammatical errors. Such errors in writing research articles might be a result of the students' lack of knowledge about English grammar and linguistic factors of the English language. Another possible source of the students' error might be because they were relying on their mother tongue as the strategy when they composed their research article in English.

The cause of the difficulties in writing research articles of the fresh graduate was in confidence in writing a good research article. The cause of the difficulties faced by the fresh graduate was in worry about feedback from the readers because they did not have confidence in writing a good research article. This could happen because they did not believe in their own capabilities in writing a good research article.

In terms of the solutions, the respondents overcame their difficulties by consultation with supervisors, friends, and other lecturers besides supervisors; reading references, such as journals, previous study theses, and books; doing self-motivation; getting feedback on writing

from supervisors, friends, and lecturers; using Google scholar to find more sources.

In short, it can be concluded that all of the fresh graduate students who graduated in 2020 in the English Education Study Program of Bengkulu University faced various challenges in writing research articles, but they had solutions to overcome the difficulties.

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