STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON THE USE OF 'WRITING 3' MATERIALS TO PREPARE FINAL PROJECT REPORT WRITING

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Abstract

This paper aims to identify the second-year undergraduates' perceptions on their experience in an academic writing course, 'Writing 3'. This is the advanced writing module offered in the fourth semester after they completed 'Writing 1' and 'Writing 2'. The research was conducted at the English Department of State Polytechnic of Malang. The study used a mixed method as the approach. First, it used a survey method towards approximately 42 English-major students from Diploma 3 of English for Translation and Hospitality Industry. Then, it was followed by a written interview with students. The results reveal that the students have good perception in the use of 'Writing 3' materials. The materials are also beneficial for them in preparing their final report writing and meet their need for scientific writing topics. Moreover, the components of each chapter/topic helped the students to write the report precisely since the materials are taken from the trusted resources and the exercises given helped them to explore their writing ability. It also shows that the students understand language features and format in each part in scientific writing.
Keywords: students' perception, 'writing 3', students' final project report.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi persepsi mahasiswa kelas 2 (tahun kedua) tentang pengalaman mereka dalam mata kuliah 'Writing 3'. Ini merupakan mata kuliah lanjutan yang ditawarkan pada semester keempat setelah mereka menyelesaikan mata kuliah 'Writing 1' dan 'Writing 2'. Penelitian dilakukan di Prodi Bahasa Inggris Politeknik Negeri Malang. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode mixed method sebagai pendekatannya. Pertama, menggunakan metode survei terhadap 42 mahasiswa dari program studi Diploma 3 Bahasa Inggris untuk Industri Penerjemahan dan Perhotelan. Kemudian, dilanjutkan dengan wawancara tertulis dengan mahasiswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa memiliki persepsi yang baik dalam penggunaan materi 'Writing 3'. Materi tersebut juga bermanfaat bagi mereka dalam mempersiapkan penulisan laporan akhir mereka dan memenuhi kebutuhan mereka akan topik tentang penulisan ilmiah (academic writing). Selain itu, komponen dari setiap bab/topik membantu mahasiswa untuk menulis laporan akhir dengan tepat karena materi diambil dari sumber terpercaya dan latihan yang diberikan membantu mereka untuk mengeksplorasi kemampuan menulis mereka. Hal ini juga menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa memahami unsur/fitur kebahasaan dan format di setiap bagian dalam karya tulis ilmiah.
Kata kunci: persepsi mahasiswa, 'writing 3', penulisan laporan akhir mahasiswa

INTRODUCTION

Writing, according to Garcia (2003), is the result of a brain activity that involves global functions that are closely related to one another, and it transmits familiar words from another person or one's own existential memory through traces, as well as the ability to express ourselves through narration. Correct spelling, grammar, word order, language aspects, writing techniques, and vocabulary in academic writing appear to be among the complicated abilities

that should be acquired (Javed, Juan, and Nazli 2013). Reading and writing are more difficult to perfect since people learn to speak by listening to noises around them and imitating them before learning to read and write (Kreidler, 2002). As a result of the challenges and complexity of writing, students find this task to be a nightmare. Organizing ideas, grammar, vocabulary, mechanics (punctuation, spelling, and structure), and content are the five parts of writing to consider (Byrne, 1988).

Writing is one of the language skills in English curriculum that should be learnt by students. It is vital to the students' academic success, in that it is identified as one of the most important requirements for students to be able to earn excellent grades and a good degree (Nasser, 2016). For English Department students of Diploma 3 in Politeknik Negeri Malang (Polinema), writing is taught from the second semester to the fourth semester before they prepare the final report proposal in the fifth semester. Each student should at least master how to write sentences well united in a paragraph coherently. Students should also be able to organize their ideas cohesively in order to make a good final report. Therefore, students should be given materials that can ignite their ability and skills in writing.

Academic writing materials were given to all students in the academic year of 2019/2020 (fourth semester) from class D3 2A to class D3 2C. In the context of the research, the academic writing course is named 'Writing 3'. The number '3' in the course shows the course order and focus. Previously, the students were offered 'Writing 1' in the second semester, and 'Writing 2' in the third semester. If the previous writing courses were focused on general sentence and paragraph writing, 'Writing 3' is offered to equip students with academic writing skills. The researchers created materials that cover how to write abstract, introduction, literature review, research method, results and discussion, conclusion, and the references. It is expected that the materials given will help them in writing the final project report in semester 6 (the time of the research). By knowing their perception, it will contribute to the considerations of designing a syllabus and lesson plan for an academic writing course. Moreover, it becomes a good source to know what skills should be strengthened to increase students' writing skill. Therefore, we assume that it is needed to know students' perception on the use of 'Writing 3' materials to prepare their final project report writing.

METHOD

This paper aims to find out English Department students' perception on the use of 'Writing 3' course materials. It also figures out whether 'Writing 3' materials play some contribution in helping the students prepare their final project report writing. A mixed method approach is

utilized in this research to answer the questions above. The purpose of this method is to obtain quantitative results from a sample and then continue with several individuals to explore those results in more depth (Cresswell, 2013). Dörnyei (2007) characterized this approach as an alternative that could offer multiple perspectives in order to foster the development of theory. It corresponds to the two instruments used in this research, they were questionnaires as the quantitative data instrument and written interview questions as the qualitative one.

The questionnaire consisted of a list of eight Likert-scale questions that was distributed through Google Form. The item questions were about the suitability of the course materials to the needs of the students and the contribution of the materials to the students' knowledge during their preparation of final project report writing. As it is set up in Google Form, the data were well secured to ensure that the respondents cannot access others' data information. It is done to maintain the validity and reliability of the participants' responses.

Additionally, a written interview was done on an online platform. It was done online due to the pandemic in which there was not any student available at campus. Therefore, the interview was established through Google Form where they can access it from home. The data obtained from Google form was completed by the email address of each student, so it can be assured that each student answered the interview by them. Therefore, the trustworthiness of the data can be guaranteed. There were eight open-ended questions in the interview. The questions were mainly about their rationale in choosing the scale range of questionnaire responses. The sample of this research was third-year students in their last semester (sixth semester) who had previously passed 'Writing 3' course in the fourth semester. There were 42 students from Diploma 3 of English for translation and hospitality industry. During the research, they were in the process of writing their final project report. It is a compulsory required diploma thesis for the students to complete their diploma program.

After completing the data collections to the students, the data from the questionnaire and the interview were then analyzed based on the stages suggested by Miles et.al (2014: 31-33). Firstly, the data were condensed by selecting, simplifying, concentrating, abstracting, or paraphrasing without any reduction of the main information. Then, the data were displayed by organizing and compressing the information. The data were then listed from the positive responses to the negative ones. The last phase was drawing and verifying conclusions by interpreting the data that have been determined.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Then, the questionnaire was distributed to the students and continued by doing a written interview from June to July 2022. There were 42 students responded the questionnaire and the written interview. From the first questionnaire item, it is found out that 23 students (55% of the respondents) strongly agreed that the materials in writing 3 subjects are suitable with the needs of scientific writing, while 18 students (43% of the respondents) agreed and the rest only 1 student (2% of the respondents) disagreed. One of the answers stated that the material covered the steps of constructing background, finding and writing literature review and also research methodology. Besides that, there were respondents stating that the module also gave detailed explanation such as writing structure of each part starting from abstract to references, the content of each chapter, and also tenses used in each component. Those reasons strengthened the suitability of the materials given in the module.

Question number 2 was answered by all the 42 respondents. The answer reveals that 20 students (48% of the respondents) strongly agreed and 20 students (40% of the respondents) agreed that the materials in writing 3 subjects are suitable within the scope of scientific writing. Meanwhile, 2 students (4% of the respondents) stated disagree. The answer of question number 3 shows that 19 students (45% of the respondents) answered "strongly agree" that the materials written in the module are taken from trusted sources. 22 students (55% of the respondents) stated agree and the rest 2 students (4% of the respondents) stated disagree.

The data of question number 4 shows that 17 students (40% of the respondents) answered really agree that the example of each component is delivered precisely and easy to understand. 22 students (52% of the respondents) chose agree and 3 students (7% of the respondents) disagreed that the example of each component is delivered precisely and easy to understand.

In the fifth questions, there were 25 students (60% of the respondents) strongly agreed that the exercises given are able to explore the students' writing ability. Meanwhile, 16 students (38% of the respondents) agree and 1 student (2% of the respondents) disagreed with the statement. Meanwhile, in the sixth item, 16 students (38% of the respondents) stated that they agreed with the statement that the materials of academic writing can motivate students in writing their final report. Most of the students or 52% of the respondents agreed and 4 students (10% of the respondents) disagreed with the statement.

Next, in the 7th questionnaire item related to the material on each topic in the "Writing 3" course and its contribution to help students write each section in the final project, the data reveals that 47.62% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed, while the other 4.76% of

respondents disagreed. Meanwhile, in the 8th item of the questionnaire regarding the need for academic writing material in the "Writing 3" course in equipping students to write final assignments, 29 students (69% of respondents) strongly agree and 13 students (31% of the respondents) agreed.

The whole data collection results from the questionnaire are presented in the following figure (See Figure 1). The whole data show that there were 21 students from the three classes chosen (50.3% of respondents) strongly agreed that the materials in 'Writing 3' help them in finding scientific writing topics and are useful for preparing their final report writing. Additionally, there were 19 or 48.8% of students who agreed that the materials of 'Writing 3' are useful for them. Meanwhile, there were 2 students or 3.9% who disagreed. It means that they considered the material less useful for them in some aspects.
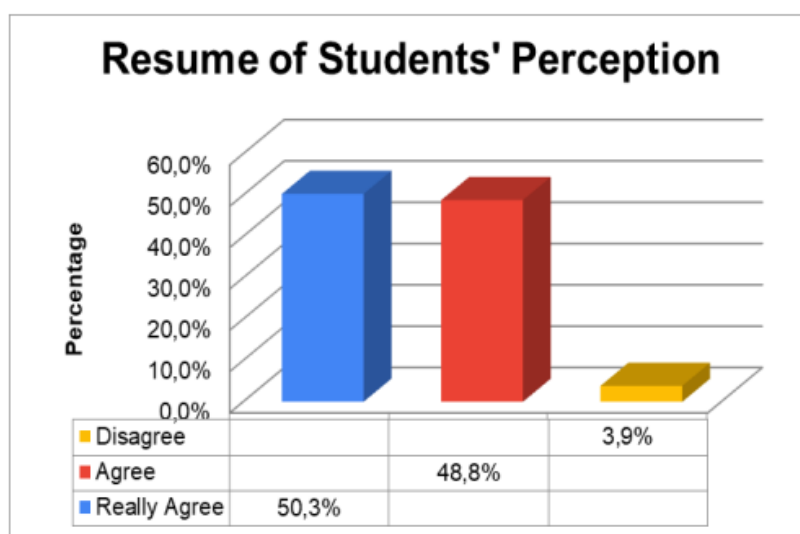

Figure 1 Students' Perception

Besides the results from questionnaires, the study obtained data from a written interview. It is found out that some students stated that the materials and delivery method of 'Writing 3' materials help them in finding topics and research ideas and compiling a better framework for scientific writing. This shows that 'Writing 3' materials are able to direct them to map out what knowledge and information needed based on the framework from various sources (Atherton, 2011).

The students believe that the materials in 'Writing 3' are beneficial for preparing their final report writing and meeting their need for scientific writing topics. It is supported by the result from several written interview responses. Some of the respondents stated that the materials given in the Writing 3 course are helpful in understanding the parts in scientific writing

contextually. Moreover, the 'Writing 3' materials given are very relevant to the procedures for writing proper and correct scientific papers (*materi yang diberikan pada mata kuliah Writing 3 sangat membantu mahasiswa dalam memahami bagian-bagian yang harus ada dalam karya tulis ilmiah. selain itu, mata kuliah "Writing 3" yang diberikan sangat relevan dengan tata cara penulisan karya ilmiah yang baik dan benar.*) This perception comes from the experience they got after taking 'Writing 3' and conducting research simulations on assignments in semester 4 and writing a final project report in semester 6. It is in line with the opinion of several experts stating that studying writing using process method approach can be useful for the students to use a similar format in preparing scientific writing through drafting (Torrance, 2016).

The students agreed that they can learn the content and components of scientific writing from the beginning, especially final project report from 'Writing 3' (*dari mata kuliah writing 3 dapat belajar dari awal mengenal bagian bagian dari penulisan karya ilmiah).* They said that the materials are covered with knowledge, information, explanation, and also the examples in each component of scientific writing, namely abstract, introduction, literature review, research method, result and discussion, and conclusion. The students said that they strongly agree that the course materials are able to support the needs of students in writing scientific papers. This is because the sections in 'Writing 3' are dissected one by one, while at the same time are focused on analyzing the typical phrases. Besides, the students were trained to pay attention to each chapter by completing assignments and holding some presentations. The lecturer explained 'Writing 3' by writing important points that make them understand and provided some essential examples as well. It is in accordance with Hasa (2009), stating that scientific writing materials are highly focused on academic writing knowledge and relevant information, including abstract, introduction, literature review, research methodology, results and discussion, conclusion and reference.

Most of the students from 3A, 3B, and 3C class said that 'Writing 3' course materials help them write the final report because the explanation given by the teacher can be understood well. It was since the course materials covered the explanation on how to write each part of a scientific paper thoroughly. They wrote "*mata kuliah ini melatih dan mengimprovisasi bahasa yang nantinya akan diterapkan baik dalam penulisan dan pengucapan.*" It means that the materials given can equip and improve their range of language features in scientific writing as well as help them write the format for their final project more easily. The student said "As long as I take the 'Writing 3' course, I gain knowledge about choosing a theme, making an outline

and systematic writing, and using good and correct linguistic elements in writing scientific papers."

One of the students from 3A class also said that this course helps him understand some grammatical mistakes in scientific writing (*Saya dapat mengerti kesalahan grammar/*grammatical mistake). It is relevant to the fact there were error analysis exercises on grammatical features in the course materials. The student's response shows that the course strengthens his knowledge about sentence structure in scientific writing and enables them to write their final report. It was due to the fact that the materials in 'Writing 3' were equipped with drafting knowledge, information on paragraph writing, explanations on language features, and authentic writing examples of a scientific paper. The components include abstract, introduction, literature review, research methodology, results and discussion, and conclusion. It is in line with the statement of Harmer (2015) stating the materials provided help them to be able to compose sentences and paragraphs involving planning and editing for each component.

Notwithstanding the positive responses from the students, the implementation of 'Writing 3' encounters several constraints. Time limitation becomes one of the challenges. It is because all the materials such as abstract, introduction, literature review, methodology, results, discussion, conclusion, and references need to be covered only within a few months. It is understandable since academic writing materials may consist of distinctive aspects involving a rigid structure and layout, citation, and references, as well as editing and revising strategies (Hasa, 2019; van Kraayenoord, Miller, Moni, & Jobling, 2009). From all those processes of writing, it is hardly possible to implement all writing strategies in each topic. It is reflected from some students' responses when asked whether the materials cover all components in scientific writing. There were 4.8% of students who disagreed that the materials covered all the components and were taught thoroughly (*"Saya tidak setuju, jika itu artinya mencangkup keseluruhan komponen yang disebutkan. Pasalnya, beberapa komponen seperti abstrak, methodology, result & discussion, and conclusion hanya diberikan gambaran secara umum tanpa di analisis lebih dalam."*).

Another student replied that only some of the topics were taught in depth. Meanwhile, some other topics, like abstract and literature review, still need to be taught more intensively to avoid any difficulties when preparing for final project or thesis writing *("Beberapa ada yang sudah dijelaskan, namun ada beberapa yang belum. Pada bagian abstrak yang menurut saya penting, karena mungkin beberapa mahasiswa/i merasa kesulitan ketika menulis abstrak. Selain itu, komponen-komponen yang ada dalam literature review perlu adanya untuk diberikan sedikit*

pemahaman agar ketika menulis Tugas Akhir/Skripsi mereka tidak perlu merasa kesulitan."). This finding shows one of the difficulties experienced by the researchers when teaching 'Writing 3' at the time the course was offered. In fact, some topics such as abstract, conclusion, and methodology were only taught briefly without several practices in detail. Meanwhile, the other topics such as introduction, literature review, as well as results and discussion were taught with a thorough process of writing, including drafting, editing, and revising stages.

In addition, the various topics in 'Writing 3' materials leave the complex tasks for the teachers (the researchers). In several topics, the teachers should spend a lot of time on checking the students' outlines and drafts since process writing involves reviewing stage (Harmer, 2015). Moreover, the job is added when teachers receive revisions from the students after some feedbacks. From the review and feedback process, some studies found out that combining peer feedback and teacher feedback can become a solution. It is confirmed that peers' correction accompanied by the teacher feedback may help students grow self-reflection in writing skills (Badger, 2018; Rakasiwi and Listyani, 2020; Tsuroyya, 2020, Wahyuningsih, 2020). It is, however, not implemented in the 'Writing 3' course. At that time, all the writing pieces were evaluated only by the teachers. This feedback style contradicts what Badger (2018) suggests in classroom, that is to let students provide the feedback to encourage learner autonomy. If the students are allowed to provide feedback for their peers, the teachers may be able to reduce the amount of review work. Instead, the time can be allocated to provide materials in depth so that all the topics can be more comprehensive.

From the teachers' constraints, it is found out that the students also faced some problems. The rigid structure and layout in academic writing essay seems to be challenging for some students. Referring to the fourth questionnaire item, there were 7.1% students who faced difficulties in comprehending the 'Writing 3' materials. They stated that the examples of writing components taught in 'Writing 3' were difficult to understand *("Terkadang saya merasa kesulitan untuk mencerna materi").* Although most respondents approved that the examples and explanation were understandable, some respondents still appeared to face the difficulty to follow the course materials. It is approved that during the course learning process the researchers found some students still needed consistent guidance in the grammar, word choice, and sentence structure. It contradicts what Badger (2018) stated that 'the process of writing is best understood as a set of distinctive thinking processes which writers orchestrate or organize during the act of composing' (p.199). The statement emphasizes that students should have owned adequate basic language skills such as grammar or sentence structure when

they learn academic writing. It is supported by Byrne (1988, in Budjalemba & Listyani, 2020) who stated that writing is a complex process that requires students' independent capabilities in the grammatical devices, conceptual thinking and structure. In fact, some students were still lacking in such basic knowledge. Not to mention that academic writing itself is naturally hard (Silvia, 2018).

CONCLUSION

This research investigated students' perception on the use of 'Writing 3' materials to prepare final project report writing. The results show that students have positive perception in the use of 'Writing 3' materials taught in the fourth semester. Approximately, the majority of the students confirmed that the materials of 'Writing 3' are beneficial for them in preparing and writing their final report. The students also said that the materials are easy to understand. The components of each course topic helped them write the report precisely since the materials are taken from reliable sources and the exercises given also helped explore their writing ability. It shows that the students comprehend the language features and format in each part in scientific writing from the course materials taught.

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