

Analysis of Students' Drawback in Writing Mini Research in 2020 Pasundan University Curriculum Setting

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Abstrak

Memperoleh kemampuan menulis yang baik sangatlah penting, karena hal ini memungkinkan siswa untuk menyempurnakan tiga kemahiran berbahasa lainnya: membaca, mendengarkan, dan berbicara. Kemahiran ini sangat penting untuk memperkuat dasar siswa dalam penulisan akademis. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kelemahan siswa dalam menulis makalah penelitian mini. Partisipan penelitian adalah mahasiswa di sebuah universitas di Bandung. Contoh tulisan dan wawancara digunakan sebagai analisis data. Temuan penelitian ini menggarisbawahi kebutuhan mendesak bagi siswa untuk meningkatkan kemahiran menulis mereka dan pemahaman mereka tentang kerangka kerja penulisan penelitian. Sebagai landasan komunikasi akademis, keterampilan menulis yang efektif sangat penting bagi siswa untuk menyampaikan ide-ide mereka dengan jelas dan koheren.

Kata kunci: Mahasiswa, Kelemahan, Penulisan, Riset Mini

Abstract

Acquiring proficient writing abilities is essential, as it allows students to refine the other three language proficiencies: reading, listening, and speaking. These proficiencies are vital for bolstering students' groundwork in academic writing. This study aims to analyze the students' drawbacks in writing a mini research paper. The participants were college students at a university in Bandung. Writing samples and interview used as data analysis. The findings underscore the pressing need for students to bolster both their writing proficiency and their grasp of research writing frameworks. As the cornerstone of academic communication, effective writing skills are essential for students to convey their ideas with clarity and coherence.

Keywords: Students, Drawback, Writing, Mini Research

INTRODUCTION

Acquiring proficient writing abilities is essential, as it allows students to refine the other three language proficiencies: reading, listening, and speaking. These proficiencies are vital for bolstering students' groundwork in academic writing (Al Badi, 2015; Bazerman, 2010; Huy, 2015). Mastering writing skills also enables students to pay closer attention to the readability of their texts and enhance them by reading aloud or seeking feedback from peers (Huy, 2015). Consequently, this progression contributes to the future development of students' language acquisition.

Nonetheless, numerous people find composing such texts to be among their most formidable challenges (Arianto et al., 2017; Sari et al., 2018). Emilia et al. (2018) points out that the intricacy of this task stems not only from mastering sentence structures (such as tenses and verb phrases) but also from formulating persuasive arguments, as the analytical exposition text falls under the category of argumentative genres.

Despite being regarded as the most esteemed language proficiency, writing often receives minimal attention within our education system. This neglect results in high school and college students having to engage with instructors and professors who may lack adequate qualifications (Alwasilah, 2001). Alwasilah (2001) asserts that a majority of educators lack effective instructional techniques, writing skills, and an understanding of the intricacies of writing. This issue is particularly pertinent for students learning to write in English, as they encounter numerous obstacles. Alwasilah, (2001) emphasizes the importance of educators addressing this concern. Additionally, Richard and Renandya (2002) further expound on the difficulties of writing, which include the generation and organization of ideas using appropriate vocabulary, and their integration into cohesive written pieces.

The English proficiency of students is significantly low because of their educational backgrounds. A large portion of students struggle to write proficiently, making the task of teaching English writing skills even more challenging. On the other side, some of college students are required to finish their study by writing a thesis in English. Writing skills play a crucial role in students' academic journey, enabling them to express their thoughts and emotions clearly and convey meaning through coherent text. According to David Nunan (2003), writing involves both a physical and mental process. At its core, it involves physically transcribing words or ideas onto a medium, while mentally it entails generating ideas, contemplating their expression, and structuring them into comprehensible statements and paragraphs for the reader.

University students should possess the ability to articulate their ideas clearly regarding subjects within their areas of research (Mustaque, 2014). Despite prolonged practice in writing, students encounter several challenges with writing upon entering university for higher education. According to Uddin (2014), in his research, writing emerges as the most concentrated yet the least refined English language skill among university learners.

Numerous academic inquiries have delved into the realm of error analysis among ESL learners within diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. Seyabi and Tuzlukova (2014) delve into the discrepancies existing in English language education and acquisition between post-basic schools and universities in the Sultanate of Oman. Their investigation reveals that a notable portion of students, spanning both educational levels, grapple predominantly with issues pertaining to vocabulary and content in their writing endeavors. Furthermore, Wigado (2017) conducts an analysis focusing on the writing challenges encountered by PGSD UNNES students. The findings underscore that college students primarily contend with two major difficulties, namely linguistic constraints and ideational complexities.

Since writing is the primary focus of this research, this study aims to analyze the students' drawbacks in writing a mini research paper. Writing is a skill that many students find challenging, particularly when it involves more complex tasks like research writing. Understanding these challenges is crucial for developing effective teaching strategies that can help students improve their writing competencies.

METHOD

Participants

The participants were college students at a university in Bandung. They were in their final semester, meaning they were close to completing their undergraduate studies. Throughout their coursework, they had already learned all the fundamental writing skills necessary for academic success. These skills included structuring essays, developing coherent arguments, conducting research, and properly citing sources. This prior knowledge was crucial as it prepared them for more advanced tasks, specifically writing a mini research project. Completing this project was a significant milestone, serving as a precursor to their upcoming theses, where they would engage in more extensive and independent research in their chosen fields of study.

Data Collection

1. Writing Samples

As instruments to collect data, the researcher used writing samples from the participants. Writing samples were chosen as the primary research instrument because they can provide a clear and direct insight into the writing problems faced by college students. Through these

samples, the researcher aimed to identify common issues such as grammar mistakes, structural weaknesses, and overall coherence in the students' writing. To gather the necessary data, each participant was asked to conduct a mini research project. This task involved selecting a topic, performing some preliminary research, and writing a concise report or essay. By analyzing these mini research projects, the researcher could assess various aspects of the students' writing abilities, including their ability to synthesize information, develop arguments, and maintain clarity and cohesion in their written work. This approach allowed the researcher to obtain a detailed understanding of the specific writing challenges students encounter, thereby providing a foundation for developing targeted interventions and support strategies to improve their academic writing skills.

2. Interview

Some of the college students were chosen randomly to be asked several questions regarding the various challenges and drawbacks they faced while writing their mini research projects. The survey aimed to identify common issues and provide insights into how the process could be improved to better support students in their academic endeavors. Participants shared their experiences, including difficulties with topic selection, research methodology, and time management.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings from Writing Samples

The findings of this research indicated that students encounter numerous challenges when writing in English. Students struggle with paragraph structure, coherence, and cohesion. Analysis of the students' writing samples suggests that a considerable majority, approximately 88%, struggle to organize their ideas effectively. During the writing process, they exhibit greater concern for language-related difficulties.

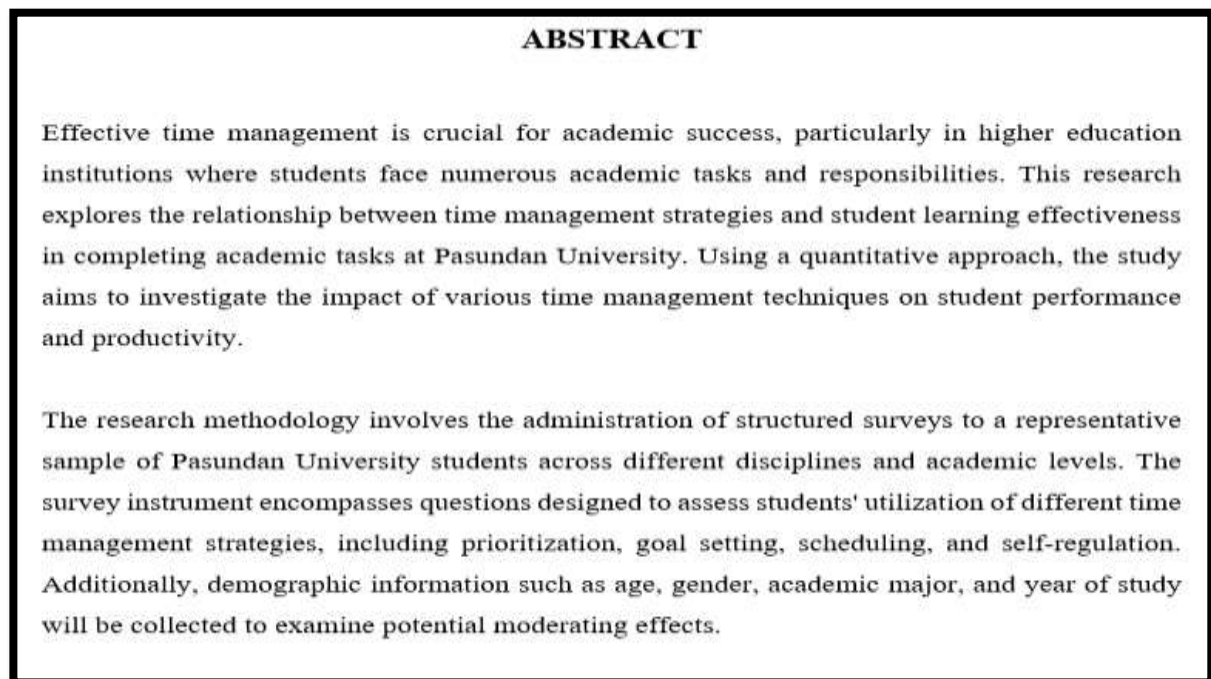


Figure 1

From this picture, we know that the college student made some mistakes in writing the abstract. He incorrectly structured the abstract into two separate paragraphs with a space between them, which is not the proper format. Additionally, he failed to include any keywords, an essential component that aids in the categorization and retrieval of the document. These elements are crucial for maintaining professionalism and aiding in the research process, and their absence reflects a lack of adherence to standard academic practices.

As stated by Swales (2012), In academic writing, an abstract is a concise summary of a research paper, thesis, or article. It typically provides an overview of the study's purpose, methodology, results, and conclusions. The abstract serves as a preview of the content, enabling readers to quickly grasp the main points and decide whether to read the full text. It is often written in a standalone paragraph and should accurately represent the key findings and contributions of the research.

1.1 Research Background

In the contemporary educational landscape, characterized by rapid advancements in technology, globalization, and evolving pedagogical approaches, the significance of effective time management in fostering academic success has garnered increasing attention. Within higher education institutions like Pasundan University, where students engage in a diverse array of academic pursuits, ranging from coursework to research projects and extracurricular endeavors, the ability to navigate and optimize one's time has become paramount. The academic journey at Pasundan University is marked by a multitude of demands, including lectures, seminars, group projects, internships, and examinations, each vying for students' limited time and cognitive resources. Consequently, students often find themselves grappling with the challenge of striking a delicate balance between academic commitments, personal obligations, and leisure activities.

Figure 2

In his background studies, he also demonstrates a significant limitation in comprehending the essence of what constitutes a thorough background study. Rather than commencing with a broad and general discussion that lays the foundation for his research, he jumps directly to the core points of his argument. This approach lacks the depth and context that a well-rounded background study would typically provide. Furthermore, his writing is devoid of references to statements or insights from established scholars in the field, which could have lent authority and credibility to his work. This absence of scholarly engagement further weakens the overall impact and academic rigor of his studies.

The background of studies, often referred to as the literature review or theoretical framework, serves to contextualize the research by summarizing existing knowledge, theories, and findings relevant to the topic. It outlines the historical and theoretical foundations of the study, identifies gaps or controversies in the literature, and articulates the research problem or questions. By reviewing previous research, the background section establishes the rationale for the current study, demonstrates its significance, and provides a foundation for interpreting the results (Creswell, 2014).

1.6 Benefits of The Research

a. Theoretical Benefits

Advancement of Knowledge: The research contributes to the academic understanding of time management dynamics within the context of Pasundan University, filling a gap in empirical literature. By elucidating the interplay between time management strategies and student learning outcomes, it adds to the theoretical framework of educational psychology and student success.

Theoretical Framework Development: Findings from the research can inform the development or refinement of theoretical models that explain the mechanisms through which time management influences student academic performance. This contributes to the ongoing theoretical discourse surrounding student success and time management in higher education.

Figure 3

Furthermore, it is evident that the author discussed the theoretical benefits of their research without referencing any scholars. This oversight highlights a deficiency in their understanding of how to properly structure and cite sources in a mini research report. Academic writing necessitates acknowledging the contributions of previous scholars and integrating their work into the discussion to provide a solid theoretical framework for the research. Failing to cite relevant literature not only undermines the credibility of the study but also overlooks the opportunity to build upon existing knowledge and theories in the field. Therefore, it is imperative for the author to enhance their grasp of academic writing conventions and ensure proper attribution of ideas in future research endeavors (Creswell, 2014).

Findings from Interviews

The responses gathered during the semi-structured interviews were analyzed in terms of percentages. The diverse perspectives shared by five college students and two lecturers at one of universities in Bandung.

- a) All participants in the study highlighted grammatical weaknesses as a primary issue among undergraduate students.
- b) Mostly, students find it challenging to explore and articulate their ideas effectively in writing. This difficulty often stems from a combination of factors, including limited exposure to diverse writing styles and genres, insufficient practice in brainstorming and organizing thoughts, and a lack of confidence in their own writing abilities. Additionally, students may struggle with expressing complex concepts in a clear and concise manner, grappling with the transition from spoken to written language.
- c) Another notable issue concerns students' knowledge and comprehension of the writing process. Many students lack understanding of how to approach writing tasks and struggle with developing supporting details.
- d) Lecturers expressed concern over students' limited writing activities outside the classroom, even when assigned writing tasks. This lack of practice outside formal settings contributes to students' weakened writing skills, as they primarily engage in writing within the confines of classroom exercises and exams.
- e) Lecturers also attributed students' writing weaknesses to their educational backgrounds. The prevalence of Indonesian-medium instruction and exam-focused curriculum designs in Indonesia leads students to feel more comfortable with writing in Indonesian, consequently impacting their proficiency in English writing.

CONCLUSION

This study delved into the writing challenges faced by students when undertaking mini research projects. Conducted at a university in Bandung, the research shed light on the prevailing shortcomings in college students' writing skills and their comprehension of research writing structures. The findings underscore the pressing need for students to bolster both their writing proficiency and their grasp of research writing frameworks. As the cornerstone of academic communication, effective writing skills are essential for students to convey their ideas with clarity and coherence. Moreover, a solid understanding of research writing structures is paramount for students to produce scholarly work that meets academic standards. Thus, addressing these identified deficiencies through targeted interventions and pedagogical support is imperative to foster students' academic success and prepare them for the rigors of scholarly inquiry in their respective fields.

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