

# **A STUDY ON THE FIFTH SEMESTER OF ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM IN WRITING EXPOSITION TEXT: THE ABILITY AND THE PROBLEMS**

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## **Abstract**

Mastering writing skill for undergraduate students of English Education become a challenge. They must have the writing skill due to in the future they will be English teachers who will be teaching the skill to the students. This research was intended to find out the mastery level of writing exposition text and its majority problems. It used descriptive quantitative method to analyse the data. The result of this research was the mastery level of the respondents' writing of exposition text was in range of beginning to developing level. The problems in writing were divided into two categories, internal problems and external problems. The internal majority problems were lack knowledge of exposition text; lack practice of writing; grammatical problems. The external problems were difficulty in understanding the explanation from the lecturer; too many kinds of text to be learnt; and lack of practice at class due to limitation of time.

**Keywords:** Exposition Text; Problems in Writing; Writing Mastery Level

## **INTRODUCTION**

In the era of Society 5.0, the role of educators is very important in preparing students to cope with this era by providing the students with some needed skills. The skills, namely 5c skills, there are Complex Problem Solving, Critical Thinking, Creativity, Coordinating with others, and Cognitive Flexibility. This 5c skills illustrated in the needs of the world of work quoted from KOMPAS online magazine, the World Economic Forum (WEF) released the 10 most needed skills in the world of work until 2025, namely: able to think analytically and innovatively; active and independent learners; expert in solving complex problems; critical thinking and being able to analyze; creativity, originality, and initiative; the ability to lead and exert social influence; reliable use of technology; able to design technology and programming; have resilience, stress tolerance, and high flexibility; and have the power of reasoning, able to formulate ideas, and good at finding problem solutions. All these skills need to be taught especially to students in higher education so that when they graduated from college, they are able to compete for jobs or open jobs. English Study Program of FKIP Palangka Raya University compiled courses to meet the students' needs. For several semesters, the students learn about writing skills. Learning writing skills in English starts from Basic English Writing subject, then continues to Intermediate English Writing subject and then to Advanced English Writing subject. In addition to the courses mentioned above, the English Education Study Program also has a program namely Teaching English as Foreign Language Productive Skills course. This course is for students who are entitled already have high-level writing skills. In this case, it can be seen from the ability of students in writing various kinds of writing including academic writing. Furthermore, regarding the Creative Writing Based on Local Potential

course, students are invited to use their knowledge in writing various kind of topics writing of local potential around them. All the courses that have been described above are presented to meet the need for learning with critical thinking skills so that students are able to think critically and solve any problem creatively, offer knowledge as a potential solution, and have the confidence to do so. Styron (2014) posits that critical thinking is the intellectual disciplinary process of activity and skills in conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating from information that is collected from observation, reflection, reasoning, or communication as a guide in performing actions. So, according to Onions as cited in Widodo, Indraswati, & Sobri (2019), "critical thinking leads to valid conclusions that are resistant to criticism". Critical thinking aspects themselves have begun to be taught in writing courses, for example in Advanced English Writing course where students begin to learn exposition text. Exposition text is a text that contains a critical evaluation of an idea that aims to convince that something is true or untrue, good or bad, important or unimportant; or aimed to persuade others to do something (Emilia, 2011). Furthermore, Khoiri et al. (2017) said exposition text involves critical thinking in analyze and evaluate issue by giving valid arguments and can be accounted for the readers can be convinced. However, during the advanced English writing course, students' writings were still poor on average. It was not as expected even though they had taken basic and intermediate writing course before. The problems will arise when they take Teaching English of Foreign Language for productive skills and PLP 2 (practice teaching at school) courses. In both courses, the students need to apply their skills in writing because they assign to create lesson plan and implement it at school. After graduated from the university, the students will become the future English teachers. When they have no skill in writing, they cannot teach writing optimally. Therefore, it was essential to investigate the students' mastery level and its problems in writing exposition text for it was not being persistent or ignoring problems. Some previous research found some problems in writing. The main problems or difficulties were lack of vocabulary and language used or language competence (Alisha et al, 2019; Rahmatunisa, 2014; Anh, 2019); lack of idea (Ibnian, 2017); grammar problems (Ummah et al., 2019; Ariyanti and Fitriana, 2017; Yulansari, 2019); the difficulty of how to start writing, lack of both intensive and extensive reading, and limited exposure to English vocabulary, and lack of interest in writing English (Wahyuningsih, 2018); reading habit (Linuih and Winardi, 2020); internal factors: student's self-motivation, student's self-confidence, student's lack of knowledge, student's feeling under pressure and external factors: teacher's teaching style, classroom atmosphere, and materials (Budjalemba and Listyani, 2020).

## METHOD

This research is intended to find out the mastery level of the students' writing of exposition text and its major problems. The data were analyzed by using descriptive quantitative method to reveal the phenomenon of the students' problems in writing exposition text. To gain the data, there were two instruments that were used, those are the written test of exposition text and the interview. The data from the written test were analyzed by using exposition text of scoring rubric (Coffin et al. 2003:23; Hyland, 2004:176 in Emilia, 2011). The interview data were analyzed descriptively by clustering the data into two categories of problems, internal problems and external problems.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

#### *Students' Mastery Level*

In order to find out the specific level of students' mastery in writing this text, the level was divided into five aspects that is stated in the scoring rubric. There are organization and content, thesis, arguments, reiteration or conclusion, and language features.

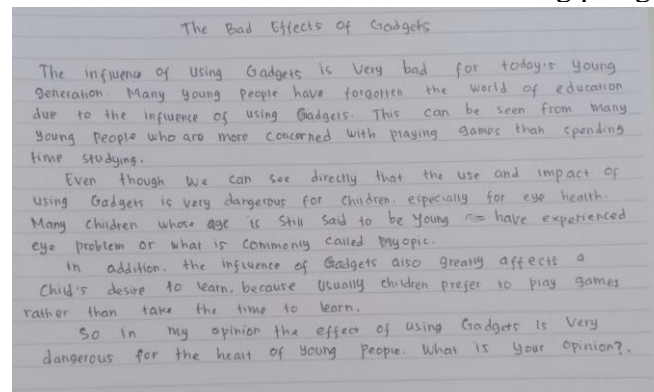
### Organization and Content

The result of the data showed that in organization and content, the students' mastery level was dominated by beginning and developing level.

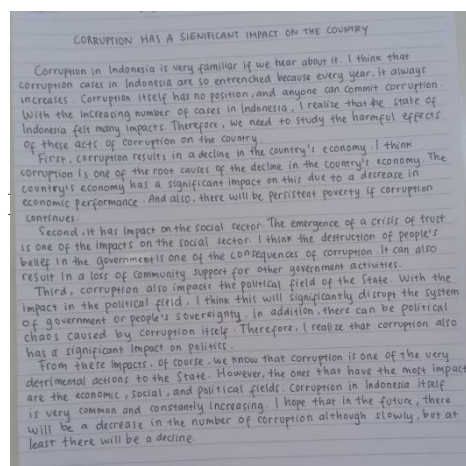
Table 1. Organization and Content

| LEVEL                | SCORE RANGE | TOTAL STUDENTS |
|----------------------|-------------|----------------|
| <b>Beginning</b>     | 50-65       | <b>29</b>      |
| <b>Developing</b>    | 65-75       | <b>29</b>      |
| <b>Consolidating</b> | 75-85       | <b>18</b>      |
| <b>Extending</b>     | 85-100      | <b>0</b>       |

When the students were in the beginning level, it means their writing on organization aspect of the exposition text is slightly unorganized well. It had the relation to the development of introductory paragraph which consists of thesis statement, the body paragraph consists of series of arguments, and the reiteration or conclusion in the concluding paragraph.



The thesis statement can be found in the first sentence of the first paragraph. Actually, it must be written in the end of the first paragraph. The body paragraph consists of arguments which stated only in one sentence. It is also similar to concluding sentence with addition of question to the reader. This writing only discussed the idea in general without sufficient supports.



In the developing level, the student tried to use framework of exposition text, using the opening statement of stating the position subjectively "I think...". The thesis statement was not supported by the arguments. The arguments discussed about the impact of corruptions not the

important to study the negative impacts of corruption. In addition, the arguments were not supported enough. In concluding paragraph, GI had developed it well by restating the point and her personal recommendation. The message of this writing can be understood although the thesis and the arguments were not in line.

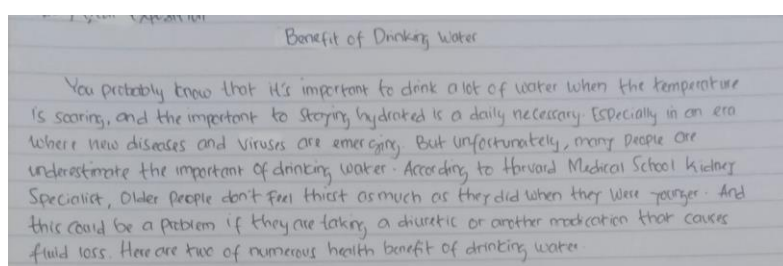
### Thesis

It is found that the dominant level of thesis was dominated by consolidating. However, it also found that 21 students developed introductory paragraph without thesis statement.

Table 2. Thesis

| LEVEL                           | SCORE RANGE | TOTAL STUDENTS |
|---------------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| <b>Beginning</b>                | 50-65       | <b>4</b>       |
| <b>Developing</b>               | 65-75       | <b>18</b>      |
| <b>Consolidating</b>            | 75-85       | <b>22</b>      |
| <b>Extending</b>                | 85-100      | <b>2</b>       |
| <b>Without Thesis Statement</b> |             | <b>21</b>      |

Students' ability in consolidating level means the students' writings of introductory paragraph by giving explanation of the context, using generalization to avoid subjectivity, trying giving some contexts to support arguments. In the following example, it can be seen that GI can provide some contexts of her topic before stating her thesis statement at the end of the introductory paragraph.



### Arguments

Based on the data, the dominant level of students' ability in constructing arguments was in beginning level. It means almost half the students belong to this level.

Table 3. Arguments

| LEVEL                | SCORE RANGE | TOTAL STUDENTS |
|----------------------|-------------|----------------|
| <b>Beginning</b>     | 50-65       | 33             |
| <b>Developing</b>    | 65-75       | 12             |
| <b>Consolidating</b> | 75-85       | 21             |
| <b>Extending</b>     | 85-100      | 1              |

It can be described in this level, the students' writing of arguments either used limited explanation or none of justifications for supporting the argument. For further example, it can be seen in MF writing as follows.

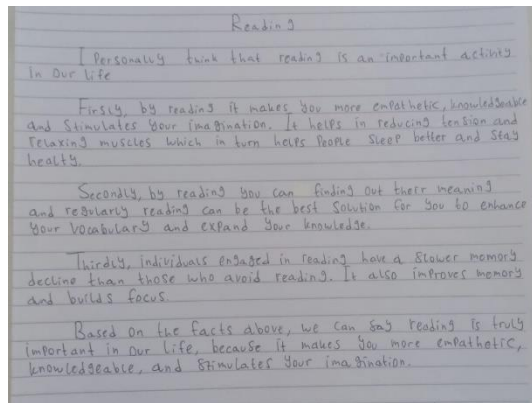


Figure 4. Student Writing (Code:ANS)

The arguments did not develop well. There were two arguments with limited justifications and one argument without any justification.

#### *Reiteration or conclusion*

The result of the data analysis showed that the students' ability in constructing reiteration or conclusion was dominated by the students in beginning level.

Table 4. Reiteration or Conclusion

| LEVEL                | SCORE RANGE | TOTAL STUDENTS |
|----------------------|-------------|----------------|
| <b>Beginning</b>     | 50-65       | 34             |
| <b>Developing</b>    | 65-75       | 14             |
| <b>Consolidating</b> | 75-85       | 18             |
| <b>Extending</b>     | 85-100      | 1              |

It is half of the respondents belongs to beginning level, it means the respondents did not write the concluding paragraph or they write the concluding paragraphs but it did not refer to the previous opinions. It can be seen in the examples below:

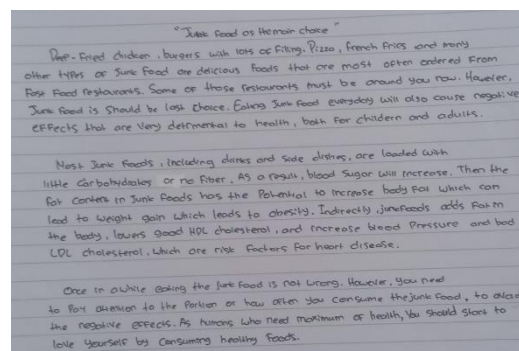


Figure 5. Student' writing without concluding paragraph (Code:CW)

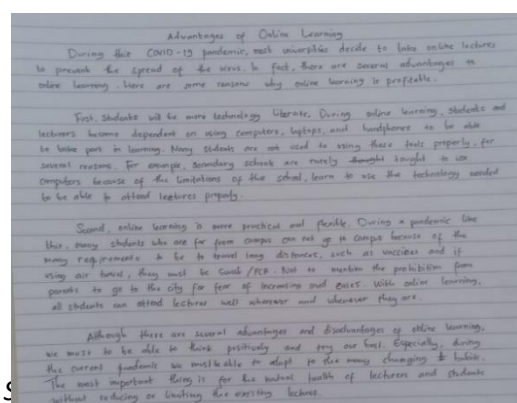




Figure 6. Student' concluding paragraph but did not refer to previous opinion (Code:ASS)  
*Language Features*

After analyzing the data, it can be seen in the following table that the dominant level of students' ability in using language features was dominantly in developing level. It means the respondents used simple conjunctions (for example: and, then, but), using personal viewpoint, using limited transition, making some grammatical mistake, and using inappropriate term or word.

Table 5. Language Features

| LEVEL                | SCORE RANGE | TOTAL STUDENTS |
|----------------------|-------------|----------------|
| <b>Beginning</b>     | 50-65       | 7              |
| <b>Developing</b>    | 65-75       | 39             |
| <b>Consolidating</b> | 75-85       | 21             |
| <b>Extending</b>     | 85-100      | 0              |

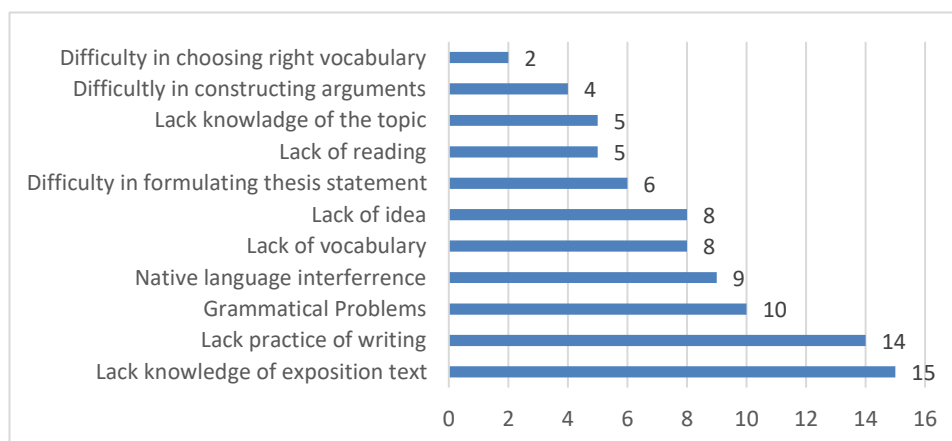
In summary, the respondents' mastery level in organization and content was in beginning and developing level. In the thesis statement, they were in consolidating level but surprisingly it also found almost the same number as the respondents in consolidating level had no thesis statement in their writing, the difference was just one student. Then, their level in the arguments was in beginning level, in the reiteration/conclusion was in the beginning level, and in the language features was in developing level.

### ***Problems in Writing***

The data for respondents' problems gained by conducting the online interview to respondents who were achieved for all aspects in the beginning to developing level of writing. There were 25 respondents participated in online interview. The results divided into two categories, internal problems and external problems.

#### ***Internal Problems***

The data from interview shows that the internal problems were lack knowledge of exposition text; lack practice of writing; grammatical problems; native language interference; lack of vocabulary; lack of idea; difficulty in formulating thesis statement; lack of reading; lack knowledge of topic; difficulty in constructing arguments; and difficulty in choosing right vocabulary.



The three dominant internal problems were lack knowledge of exposition text, lack practice of writing, and grammatical problems. From the interview, the interviewee (Code: C) said that:

*"I understood less of exposition text"*

Moreover, the respondent code R said:

*"When I studied about exposition text at class, it could be understood but I forgot it later)"*

One of the respondent J added:

*"I understood less of exposition text because I did not restudied it. After studying it, I continued to studied other kind of texts according to what must be studied next"*

It was strengthened by the respondent code EK informed that:

*"Because there were many kinds of texts that must be learnt, I had difficulty in differentiate each kind of texts"*

This respond was categorized as external problem because it had relation to the syllabus.

The respondents also confirmed that they had less practice of writing. Respondent code: D said that

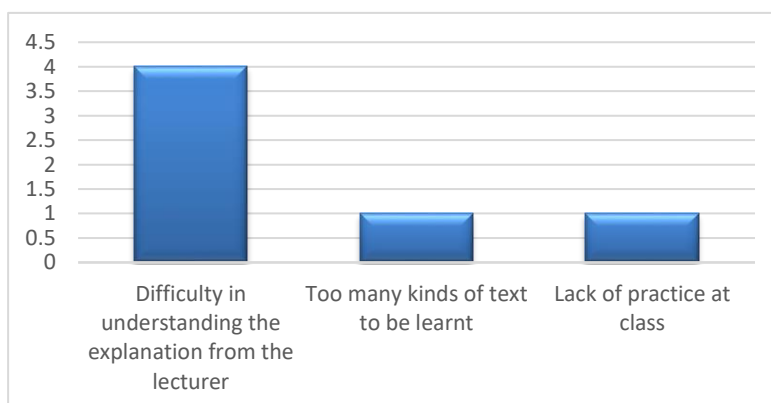
*"I rarely practice to write"*

These data showed that the respondents had problem related to lack knowledge of exposition text and hence the respondents did not completely acquire the theory of exposition text. Furthermore, they also did not practice their knowledge frequently. The cause of it could be resulted from the numerous texts that they had to be studied. As it can be seen in the syllabus that in Advanced English Writing class, the students had to studied and practiced various texts which are studied by junior and senior high school students.

|                                   |                                  |  |  |   |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Advanced English Writing<br>3 sks | Penguasaan Ilmu dan Keterampilan | Menguasai keterampilan berbahasa Inggris tulis | Memiliki keterampilan menulis berbagai jenis teks dalam Bahasa Inggris | Mempelajari dan berlatih tentang:<br>- Nature, elements, and function of interpersonal and transactional texts<br>- Short and long functional texts<br>- Unity in a text<br>- Developing various texts which are studied by junior and senior high school students. |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|---|

### External Problems

The data from interview shows the external problems were difficulty in understanding the explanation from the lecturer; too many kinds of text to be learnt; lack of practice at class due to limitation of time.



In case of difficulty in understanding the explanation from the lecturer, the respondent code: L said:

*“When I studied at online class, I cannot fully understand about the explanation of exposition text.”*

Similar respond also given by the respondent code D1, she said:

*“Because of online learning, I cannot fully understand the explanation of exposition text.”*

Since the covid-19, all teaching and learning activities in this university administered in online meeting. The online platforms for Advanced English Writing were Zoom Meeting and Canvas.

Other problem was lack of practice, the respondent code: R said:

*“Less writing practice at class and at home”*

Beside the problems above, the respondent code: EK said:

*“Because there were many kinds of texts that must be learnt, I had difficulty in differentiate each kind of texts”*

This problem had been mentioned in internal problem. This data supported the internal problem as it affected students' problem of difficulty in understanding the explanation from the lecturer beside online learning.

## Discussion

### *Students' Mastery Level*

Based on the result of this research, it can be concluded that the respondents' mastery level in writing exposition text was in beginning to developing level. It means the majority of the respondents still had problems in writing exposition text. Research conducted by Irwan et al. (2018) to the third semester English Department students of Universitas Negeri Padang found the students' level of writing one kind of exposition text, analytical exposition, was overall in proficient level with the score in range 70 to 71.06. It used different scoring rubric and level category. However, when their score range was compared to the score range used in this research, their level of proficiency was categorized as developing level. It was in the same level as this research.

### *Internal Problems*

Three major internal problems were lack of knowledge of exposition text; lack of practice; and grammatical problems. The action of not restudied the exposition text and less practice resulted low achievement of writing skill. According to Yulianti et al. (2020) mentioned that it is easy to learn the theory of writing, but to be skillful in writing it needs practices. Therefore, it needs knowledge of writing and practice of writing to master writing skills.

Enormous research proved that grammar as the main problem in writing for English students at University level. It was found in undergraduate students of English of Universitas Sultan Agung conducted by Hartono and Maharani (2019), they found 95% of respondents claimed grammar difficulties were the most problem of writing anxiety. Other research supported this research conducted by Umamah, et al (2019), the result of their research to the university students mentioned that the respondents' most problem was in grammar. Research conducted by Yulansari (2019) to the third year English students of Universitas Padang found, 62.85% of respondents also had problems in grammar.

### *External Problems*

Having online class affected respondents' comprehension of writing exposition text especially on the explanation session. This result confronted the finding of Nappu, et al. (2002), they concluded that there was positive impact on the students' writing skill after learning through Google Meet and Doc. The platform used in teaching and learning activities were different but still the same because these two platforms have similar features.



The highlight data was in less writing practice at class. According to the course outline of Advanced English Writing Course, the respondents only had maximum 2 meetings for studying one kind of texts. It took 150 minutes. Writing needs more practices and also feedbacks but due to many texts that the respondents had to studied, logically time to practice also limited. One of the lecturers who taught the respondents of this study also admitted that the respondents of this study need more than 4 meetings for the class consisted of 40 students or more (two meetings for hortatory exposition and two meetings for analytical exposition) to practice the writing skill of exposition texts since the respondents had problems in constructing thesis statements as well as introductory paragraph, developing arguments, and reiteration as can be seen in the findings of respondents' mastery level in four aspects. Lack of time to teach writing was caused of overloaded number of students in one class made the lecture gave less attention to each student' writing difficulties (Arianti and Fitriana, 2017).

## CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the mastery level of the respondents' writing of exposition text was in range of beginning to developing level. The problems in writing were divided into two categories, internal problems and external problems. The internal majority problems were lack knowledge of exposition text; lack practice of writing; and grammatical problems. Followed by other problems, namely native language interference; lack of vocabulary; lack of idea; difficulty in formulating thesis statement; lack of reading; lack knowledge of topic; difficulty in constructing arguments; and difficulty in choosing right vocabulary. The external problems were difficulty in understanding the explanation from the lecturer; too many kinds of text to be learnt; and lack of practice at class due to limitation of time.

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