

THE ANALYSIS OF EFL STUDENTS' ERRORS IN WRITING *SKRIPSI*

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ABSTRACT

This study aims at analyzing EFL students' errors in writing *skripsi* as the requirement to leave academy. The subjects of this study were thirty three *skripsi-s* written by the students who majored English language education in STKIP Siliwangi. The analysis of this study is based on the checklist of research articles elements in *skripsi* as proposed by Paltridge and Starfield (2007) who state that there are six moves to analyze the elements of *skripsi*. The results show that, based on each move of the checklist, there are only less than 50% of the students who can fulfill the requirements of each move item. Based on the facts, further research and development to resolve the problems are necessarily needed. We also need to reformulate a good standard of academic writing agreed by the institution through a book containing guidelines of how to make an appropriate *skripsi-s*.

Key terms: *analysis, students' errors, skripsi*

A. Introduction

The urgency of academic writing as evidence of intellectuality of academician is apparent nowadays (Alwasilah, 2010). Moreover, most exams that assess one education achievement often rely on writing proficiency for measurement of knowledge (Harmer, 2004). Besides, Weisser (2002) identifies public assumption that the writers of any kind of text types are public intellectuals. This shows how writing is adhered to intellectuality.

In academic context, writing is an important part of university study (Zemach and Rumisek, 2005). There are many writing assignments that administered to students in many taken courses. Furthermore, writing becomes requisite for graduation from most of higher education level institutions, such as, paper, journal, thesis, or dissertation. In this context, academic writing terminology emerges. Hooks (1999; in Murray, 2009) defines academic writing as the desire to think and write more, to fill these gaps that informs the desire to leave academy. In academic writing, one thinks and writes of subject chosen, in the manner that s/he wishes to write in whatever voice s/he chooses.

The convened set of academic writing rules are fixed in terms of systematic of writing, punctuation, format, and other features of writing. *Skripsi* is one of academic writing forms that demand different expectation of writing features of writing in discourse community point of view. *Skripsi* in this study refers to scientific composition/writing that has to be written by students as requisite for completing academic education (Kamus Bahasa Indonesia, 2008), usually for undergraduate degree.

Regarding the convention about research papers (*skripsi-s*, theses or dissertations), this study seeks to present thick description of EFL students' *skripsi-s*. This study is really important in order to lead the students to international acknowledgement of students' research paper writing. This study will also show the common construction of the EFL students' research papers

compared to those of research papers acknowledged by academic writing experts. Therefore this study takes *An Analysis of EFL Students' Error in Writing Skripsi* as title of this study.

The questions for this study are: (1) how is the portrait of common writing construction of the students' *skripsi-s* in EFL context? and (2) what are the common errors made by the students in writing *skripsi-s*?

B. Literature Review

Skripsi, thesis and dissertation are similar as some forms of academic writing which is written as requisite to leave academy.

As research, *skripsi* and thesis have to be presented in systematic way. The followings are typical main body parts of *skripsi* and thesis in conventional writing style (Alwasilah, 2008 & Emilia, 2008).

First is title page, all academic writing begins with title. Title includes key words that represent the whole body of a text. Although title is put in the first place, it does not mean that it is fixed and unchangeable. During the process of writing, this title can change according to the better ways of conveying what the writing is about have come to mind (Hartley, 2008).

Second is declaration page: to state that the work is original (Emilia, 2008). *Third* is approval page: providing signature for supervisor approval (Emilia, 2008). *Fourth* is abstract. Although abstract is usually finished lastly, abstract is what reader can read first (Emilia, 2008; Paltridge & Starfield, 2007; Hartley, 2008). It is a representation of whole body of text so that reader can understand a work at glance. In other words, it is condensed body of thesis or dissertation as a signpost for reader.

As summary, abstract has to represent the whole body of *skripsi* or thesis. The following is typical structure of abstract (Paltridge & Starfield, 2007; and Hartley, 2008): (1) Overview of the study/Background; (2) Aim of the study; (3) Reason for the study; (4) Methodology used in the study; (5) Findings of the study; and (6) Conclusions.

This structure has to be done in very condensed paragraph/paragraphs, some time in as few as 150 words (Hartley, 2008). Whether the abstract is structured in paragraphs or a paragraph is optional. However, Emilia (2008) suggests that abstract is written in paragraphs in accordance with the parts within in order to make reading easier.

Fifth is acknowledgement. The main purpose of acknowledgement is thanking (Emilia, 2008). Thanking is obligatory in acknowledgement if it is compared to reflecting move, accepting responsibility or flows and errors, and thesis dedication as *moves* in writing acknowledgment (Paltridge and Starfield, 2007).

Sixth is table of contents/contents. It contains headings and subheadings to show the organization of writing. In short, it functions as the map of writing that helps the reader find what they want to read (Paltridge and Starfield, 2007; Emilia, 2008).

Seventh is list of figures, tables. This section is the lists of tables and figures in the main body parts of the writing. The list usually includes the name of the tables and the figures as well as their pages. *Eighth* is dedication page. This is optional.

Ninth is chapter one: introduction. This is one of main body parts of academic writing. Moreover, this can be the beginning of readers' decision whether they want to continue reading the writing or not (Emilia, 2008: 171). This part can guide the reader to the orientation and problems of research; arouse the reader interest; establish a research territory; and show the relationship between the writing and the field (Mauch and Park, 2003: 108; Emilia, 2008: 172; Paltridge and Starf, 2007: 86; and Creswell, 2012: 50).

Tenth is chapter two: review of the literature. Literature review is kind of window to a thesis or skripsi (Emilia, 2008). It tells the summary and synthesis of relevant literature on a research problem as a critique of the status of knowledge of defined topic (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001). The source could be professional journals, reports, scholarly books and monographs, government documents, dissertations, film, audio tape, presentation files, lectures, diary, artifact, CD, DVD, and electronic resources. In composing a literature review, the researcher may cite articles that are both quantitative and qualitative studies as the sources of information to construct a literature review as a step in the research process (Creswell, 2012: 82).

Eleventh is chapter three: Methodology. This section of thesis demonstrates how the research is conducted by using certain theoretical paradigm and framework so that it can be a justification to construct the credibility of research (Paltridge and Starfield, 2007; Emilia, 2008). This section reveals in details the methodology employed, research materials, and the research procedure. There are at least three subdivisions of this section: 1) division that describes *participants*; 2) division that describes measures; and 3) division that describes procedures (Hartley, 2008: 45).

Twelfth is chapter four: results or findings and discussions. The main purpose of this section is to explain presents the data clearly and comprehensively (Paltridge and Starfield, 2007; Hartley, 2008; and Emilia, 2008). The way the results and findings presented varies depending on the research methodology employed (Creswell, 2012). The data presented in this section can be the experiment results in numerical description or any information from observation and any other techniques (Emilia, 2008). By considering the data collection and methodology employed, this section is not only presentation of the data, but also argumentation and evaluation. The involvement of selecting and ordering the data in results section leads to subjective effort of a writer (Paltridge and Starfield, 2007: 135).

Thirteenth is chapter five: conclusions. In this section includes limitations of the skripsi-s or theses and implication for further research, namely, in suggestion and implication. Therefore, in conclusion section what is presented is not merely the summary of the skripsi-s or theses. That's why Emilia (2008) emphasizes that conclusion section highlights what are important to show in skripsi-s and theses. It is like discussion but in condensed form (Paltridge and Starfield, 2007).

Fourteenth is bibliography or references. It is the list of any references from which material and information are gained. This bibliography and references must correspond to the citation that has been done in all body parts of the skripsi-s or theses.

Fifteenth is appendices. Appendices include all raw materials that can be attached to skripsi-s or theses so that they can be employed as evidence of the research. This can, in some respects, increase the credibility of research (Emilia, 2008).

C. Research Methodology

1. Participants

This research tries to describe the *skripsi-s* of students' majoring English language education. They live in EFL environment where English is not used in daily life except in certain condition, such as, in *conversation club* or in *English days*. Accordingly, this study is the inquiry of students' academic writing skill, especially it concerns abstract of research paper. To what extent the students meet the requirements of writing abstract is what this study is about.

2. Data Collection

This study deals with qualitative research. For qualitative data, there is one instrument employed, namely, document analysis, in this case, checklist designed based on Paltridge & Starfield (2007) theory. That instrument is able to answer research question for qualitative research (Alwasilah, 2008; Moleong, 2007). The instrument that is employed as the main qualitative research instrument in this study is **document** in the forms of students' *skripsi-s*. Checklist developed to help the execution of document analysis is the following checklist:

Introduction Section		
Move 1: Establishing a research territory	Yes	No
a. by showing that the general research area is important, central, interesting, problematic, or relevant in some way (optional)		
b. by providing background information about the topic (optional)		
c. by introducing and reviewing items of previous research in the area (obligatory)		
d. by defining terms (optional)		
Move 2: Establishing a niche	Yes	No
a. by indicating a gap in the previous research, raising a question about it, or extending previous knowledge in some way (obligatory)		
b. by identifying a problem/need (optional)		
Move 3: Occupying the niche	Yes	No
a. by outlining purposes/aims, or stating the nature of the present research or research questions/hypotheses (obligatory)		
b. by announcing principal findings/stating value of research (optional)		
c. by indicating the structure of the thesis and providing mini-synopses (previews) of each subsequent chapter (obligatory)		
d. by outlining the theoretical position (optional)		
e. by describing the methods used in the study (optional)		
Literature Review Section	Yes	No
a. the key issues which underlie the research project;		
b. the major findings on the research topic, by whom and when;		
c. the main points of view and controversies that surround the issue being investigated;		
d. a critical evaluation of these views, indicating strengths and weaknesses of previous studies on the topic;		
e. general conclusions about the state of the art at the time of writing, including what research still needs to be done; that is, the gap that remains in the research that the study will aim to fill.		
Methodology	Yes	No
a. Research design, for example, planning to conduct research including steps to do in order to show hardwork.		
b. The Participants and how is it selected. Ethics approval (optional)		
c. The detail of data, how is data collected.		

d. How is data proceeded, analyzed and structured. Elaboration should be comprehensive.		
Results and Discussions	Yes	No
a. Presenting metatextual information		
b. Presenting results		
c. Commenting data		

3. Data Analysis

Research question of this study becomes initial guide of how the data will be analyzed. After qualitative data are collected along with experimental treatment, grounded theory design will be employed to explain the result of quantitative analysis. Therefore in this research there will be always connection between statistical facts and collected qualitative data this grounded theory design focuses on theoretical sampling that this study set in the research questions (Creswell, 2012).

To analyze qualitative data, Alwasilah (2008) set three general phases: coding, categorizing and theorizing or generalizing. In coding process, this study will present description of setting, give meaning to situation in the classroom, interpreting students' perspectives, identify processes, activities, or events in the classroom, and investigate strategies and relationships in the teaching-learning process. Those data will be collected by three instruments as mentioned. Second phase, after data are identified, is constructing matrix to make sensible categorization to answer the two research questions. And the last phase is building two interpretations from the two research questions based on the categorization.

D. Research Findings

There are thirty three papers that have been analyzed. This analysis is based on the checklist of research articles elements in skripsi. According to Paltridge (2007), there are six moves to analyze the elements in skripsi. Each move has its own sub-elements. We would like to count how many sub-elements found in these papers and there are two scales for choosing each sub-element, namely *yes* or *no*. The following is the result of complete checklist of research elements found in skripsi:

Move 1

- a. 30 (y) = 90.9% 3 (n) = 9.1%
- b. 30 (y) = 90.9% 3 (n) = 9.1%
- c. 10 (y) = 30.3% 23 (n) = 69.7%
- d. 27 (y) = 81.8% 6 (n) = 18.2%

Move 2

- a. 3 (y) = 9.1% 30 (n) = 90.9%
- b. 31 (y) = 94% 2 (n) = 6%

Move 3

- a. 32 (y) = 97% 1 (n) = 3%
- b. 18 (y) = 54.5% 15 (n) = 45.5%
- c. 28 (y) = 84.8% 5 (n) = 15.2%
- d. 31 (y) = 94% 2 (n) = 6%
- e. 29 (y) = 88% 4 (n) = 12%

Literature Review Section

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| a. 33 (y) = 100% | 0 (n) = 0% |
| b. 29 (y) = 88% | 4 (n) = 12% |
| c. 20 (y) = 61% | 13 (n) = 39% |
| d. 1 (y) = 3% | 32 (n) = 97% |
| e. 3 (y) = 9.1% | 30 (n) = 90.9% |

Methodology

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| a. 28 (y) = 84.8% | 5 (n) = 15.2% |
| b. 24 (y) = 72.7% | 9 (n) = 27.3% |
| c. 30 (y) = 90.9% | 3 (n) = 9.1% |
| d. 30 (y) = 90.9% | 3 (n) = 9.1% |

Result and Discussions

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| a. 12 (y) = 36.4% | 21 (n) = 63.6% |
| b. 32 (y) = 97% | 1 (n) = 3% |
| c. 19 (y) = 57.6% | 14 (n) = 42.4% |

Based on the research findings, it can be stated that in Move 1, *establishing a research territory*, students tend to lose obligatory parts of the writing, namely, *by providing background information about the topic* by only 30.3% who can fulfill the requirement of this move item.

In Move 2, *establishing a niche*, students tend to find difficulties in *indicating a gap in the previous research, raising a question about it, or extending previous knowledge in some way* with 90.9% of them who cannot fulfill this requirement.

In Move 3, *occupying the niche*, the students seem to find difficulties in announcing principal findings or stating value of the research. This can be proven by the fact that there are 45.5% of the students who cannot fulfill this requirement.

In Move 4, *Literature Review Section*, the students appears to have difficulties in reading the previous research in very detail. Consequently, they do not make a critical evaluation of the previous research, namely the strength and the weaknesses of previous research. It can be proven that there are only 3% of the students who fulfill this requirement.

In Move 5, *research methodology*, there are 27.3% of the students who seem to have difficulties in describing the way how to select the participants.

In Move 6, *results and discussions*, the students tend to ignore the additional information of their *skripsi-s*. It means, most of them do not *present meta-textual information item*. This item needs adding in *skripsi-s* because it can support the research findings and the validity of research. There are only 36.4% of the students who fulfill this item requirement.

E. Conclusions

Based on the facts above, it can be stated that for the sake of *skripsi-s* improvement, further research and development to resolve the problems are necessarily needed. So, we can find what kinds of errors the students made in their *skripsi-s*. Additionally, we need to formulate a good standard of academic writing agreed by the institution through a book containing guidelines of how to make an appropriate *skripsi-s*.

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