

A Narrative Inquiry of English Graduate Students' Experiences in Writing for Publication

Pradhita Ramadhani¹, Endang Fauziati², Suparno³

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Abstract

Academic writing in higher education mainly focuses on writing for publication. The success of writing for publication depends on the learners' ability to access, understand the relevant references, evaluate, and synthesise the ideas, opinions, and sentences to make their academic pattern. Viewed from prior studies, it seems that many EFL learners have faced various problems in writing their academic papers, specifically writing for publication. To respond to this issue, this narrative inquiry aims to investigate (1) how learners acquire their knowledge in writing for publication, (2) the difficulties they face in writing for publication, and (3) how they face those difficulties. This present study intended to dig up the experiences of two graduate students of English Education major in writing for publication. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data. Then, the data were analyzed using thematic analysis. This study shows that the participants acquired knowledge and experiences from various sources that were useful for writing their academic papers. Surprisingly, the various difficulties they faced motivated them to learn more and improve their writing skills for publication. Pedagogical and future research implications are further discussed.

Abstrak

Academic writing di perguruan tinggi terutama berfokus pada penulisan untuk publikasi. Keberhasilan menulis untuk publikasi tergantung pada kemampuan peserta didik untuk mengakses, memahami referensi yang relevan, mengevaluasi, membuat sintesis dari ide, pendapat, dan kalimat untuk membuat pola tulisan akademis mereka sendiri. Dilihat dari studi sebelumnya, tampaknya banyak pembelajar EFL menghadapi berbagai masalah dalam menulis karya ilmiah mereka, khususnya menulis untuk publikasi. Untuk menanggapi masalah ini, naratif inquiri ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki (1) bagaimana siswa memperoleh pengetahuan mereka dalam menulis untuk publikasi, (2) kesulitan yang siswa hadapi dalam menulis untuk publikasi, dan (3) bagaimana siswa menghadapi kesulitan tersebut. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggali pengalaman dua mahasiswa pascasarjana jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris dalam menulis untuk dipublikasikan. Wawancara semi terstruktur digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data. Kemudian, data dianalisis dengan menggunakan analisis tematik. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa para peserta memperoleh pengetahuan dan pengalaman dari berbagai sumber yang berguna untuk penulisan karya ilmiah mereka. Anehnya, berbagai kesulitan yang mereka hadapi memotivasi mereka untuk belajar lebih banyak dan meningkatkan keterampilan menulis mereka untuk publikasi. Implikasi penelitian pedagogis dan yang akan datang akan dibahas lebih lanjut.

¹ Universitas Sebelas Maret, Indonesia
Email: pradhita_rama@student.uns.ac.id

² Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Indonesia
Email: endang.fauziati@ums.ac.id

³ Universitas Sebelas Maret, Indonesia
Email: suparnodr@staff.uns.ac.id

INTRODUCTION

Academic writing in higher education mostly has a purpose for publication. Academic writing is a mental and cognitive process and refers to a product of the mind (Fadda, 2012). It contains many aspects as the foundation for successful academic writing. The writing centre usually deals with the policy recommendation for language development in a university context. This aims for diversification and internationalization (Lennartson-Hokkanen, 2016). Some universities in the world require students in undergraduate, master, and doctoral degrees to publish their academic papers nationally or internationally. This publication is one of the requirements for obtaining an education degree in Indonesia based on The Decree of the Director-General of Higher Education No.152/E/T/2012. The government set the requirements to provide students with sufficient knowledge and a good understanding of scientific publications. Besides, academic writing for publication is believed as rewarding through citation, which can prove the productivity of the students and lecturers (Wells & Soderlund, 2018; Drajadi et al., 2020). Consequently, students should have the knowledge and ability to write academic papers for publication to graduate from their studies.

Writing for publication is an outstanding privilege that should be approached in innovative ways (Klein, 2008). It means that students have the opportunity to share their original idea, take apart, and report the findings of their research in scientific form and proper ways based on the particular topics they are interested in. The success of writing for publication depends on the learners' ability to access, understand the relevant references, evaluate, and synthesise the ideas, opinions, and sentences to make their own academic pattern. The students should have the ability to absorb person's opinion and write what they got with their own sentences. When the students present what they learned, they should show which one is their own and which one is drawn from other people (Fadda, 2012). This case seems to be a factor that makes the students considers writing for publication as challenging.

The writing format for publication has been formally established to help researchers write in the correct way. Scientific papers are usually published in peer-review scientific journals. There are two kinds of journals: subscription-sed and open access (Cuschieri, 2018). The scientific paper format is based on "IMRAD" structure – Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussions. However, Cuschieri et al. (2019), then classified the scientific format in specific patterns, namely title, abstract, keywords, introduction, methods, results, discussion-conclusion, acknowledgement, and references. These detail patterns will ease the researchers to write a scientific paper for publication. Another study from Mateu Arrom et al. (2018) showed that they performed a systematic structure of original articles such as in IMRAD characteristics of the original article and publishing an article in the PubMed and Scopus.

Prior studies revealed that non-native English students faced many difficulties writing their academic papers in English as the core requirement for their publication (Salager-Meyer, 2014). Students should differentiate between spoken and written words, review grammar, and join sentences to make a coherent and cohesive paragraph (Fadda, 2012). The other difficulties are brainstorming and generating ideas based on the topic they are concerned about. Flowerdew (1999) classified the difficulties faced by students in writing academic papers into (1) Grammar, (2) Use of citations, (3) Referring to the published literature, (4) Structuring of argument, (5) Textual Organization, (6) Relating text to audience, (7) Ways in which to make knowledge claims, (8) Ways to reveal or conceal the point of view of the author, (9) Hedges to indicate caution expected by the academic community. In sum, students mostly faced difficulties in the writing conventions for publication.

Considering its importance in writing for publication, English Graduate students' experiences in writing academic paper has drawn attention to the researchers. Continental European master students negotiate with their prior academic writing experiences about academic English conventions as autonomous rules that came increasingly dependent on their disciplinary knowledge and the epistemological approaches of their theses (Kaufhold, 2015). Non-Anglo-Saxon doctoral students from Eastern European tried to transform and develop their academic writing skills during PhD studies in

an Anglo-Saxon context. The difficulties of these doctoral students were expressed through the metaphor of the "Bermuda Triangle" of academic writing (Iermolenko et al., 2021). Not only in Europe but also in Asia, adolescent EFL learners from Korea and China have been investigated to find out the potential of a short writing task in assessing academic writing (AW) skills which is relevant to extend academic writing in adolescent English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners (Jo, 2021). This case also emphasized the Rabab'ah (2003) ideas, the learners who come from Asian universities commonly encounter difficulty in the requirements of English academic writing. In the Indonesian context, claiming knowledge was the most difficult aspect in writing articles for Graduates students. However, the students agree that writing for publication is a crucial aspect of academic writing, and they need support from the university to prepare them to face it (Azizah, 2018).

Considering those prior studies, studies concerning the students' difficulty in writing academic papers were in great quantities. The research mostly focuses on writing conventions such as vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, coherence, citation, and others. However, studies about writing convention, specifically in IMRAD, using narrative inquiry was least explored. Thus, the present study attempted to fill this gap by digging up the experiences of English graduate students in writing for publication, specifically in IMRAD, using a narrative inquiry. The students' stories on how they write research papers have struggled to face difficulties in writing an academic paper until they can publish their academic work is an intriguing topic to discuss. This study aimed to investigate (1) How they acquire their knowledge in writing for publication, (2) The difficulties faced by the graduate students in writing for publication, and (3) How they face the difficulty in writing for publication.

METHODS

The context of the study

We conducted this research in one of the universities in Indonesia. In this university, academic writing is one of the university's compulsory courses for graduate students. This course is held in the first semester, for a semester. The purpose of this course is that students will be able to write good and appropriate academic papers and then publish a research paper as one of the requirements to graduate and get a master degree. The main focus of this research is we want to know the stories of English graduate students' experiences in writing for publication. Thus, a narrative inquiry is a suitable method to explore this issue.

Narrative inquiry

This study was a narrative inquiry proposed by (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). This method is aimed to provide knowledge to the readers that it is not only more than telling of stories but also making meaning in life experiences. It is the activity of gathering personal reflections of events, the causes, and the effects of an individual. We used narrative inquiry because we wanted to deeply explore the graduate students' experiences in writing for publication.

Participants

This study was carried out with 2 EFL graduate students from one university in Indonesia. They were students in the fourth semester, in which they finished their academic writing class in the first semester. The participants were chosen by purposive sampling. We chose them because they are matched with the criteria of this research. They participated in academic writing classes and successfully published academic writing papers both nationally and internationally. Thus, it brought our curiosity to explore their experiences in writing for publication. The selection was also based on the participants' willingness to participate in this research. The two participants were given the pseudonym of Emily and Jason. Emily is a female student. She is 25 years old. She took the Master of English Education Program in one university in Indonesia. She has experience in publishing 2 articles (Scopus Q1 and WOS indexed) in reputable journals. Meanwhile, Jason is a male student. He is around 27 years old. He also took the same major as Emily. He was experienced in publishing an article indexed in Sinta 4. In conclusion, the participants were familiar with academic writing and had experiences with it.

Data collection analysis

The three research questions will be answered using semi-structured interviews to obtain the stories about students' experiences in writing for publication. The open-ended questions allow participants to elaborate and the researcher to pursue developing themes (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). The interviews focused on the experience of English graduate students in writing for publication. We allowed the participant to speak in Indonesian when they told their stories to make them comfortable and enjoy sharing their stories. The interviews were conducted on October 2021, and it took 1 hour for each participant. We recorded the interviews using a digital voice recorder to avoid data loss. After we built stories from the interviews' responses, we confirmed the stories to the participants. After they confirmed the stories, we began analyzing the data.

In analyzing the narrative data, we used thematic analysis to analyze multiple case studies of the data. Thematic analysis is suitable for multiple case studies because it compares the narrative in the data set, shares themes, and highlights individual differences. We used the thematic analysis model proposed by Barkhuizen et al. (2014), which consist of three steps, namely (1) reading of the data repeatedly, (2) coding and categorizing the data extracts, and (3) recognizing the thematic heading. First, we read the data several times to comprehend the stories. Next, the participants' stories were coded under three main themes: (1) how they acquire their knowledge in writing for publication, (2) the difficulties faced by the graduate students in writing for publication, and (3) how they face the difficulty in writing for publication. Then, we categorize the data and put them into the table under the same themes to ease the interpretation process. Last, we interpreted the data by connecting the codes and identifying the themes using the research questions as the headings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The told stories

In this section, we retold the stories from the participants regarding experiences of English graduate students in writing for publication in the context of Indonesia university, specifically in IMRAD and difficulties in writing for publication. The narratives of each participant including, (1) how they acquire their knowledge in writing for publication, (2) the difficulties faced by the graduate students in writing for publication, and (3) how they face the difficulty in writing for publication. All the themes were presented separately.

Emily's story: she acquired knowledge in writing for publication

Emily is an English graduate student in one of the university in Indonesia. She is 25 years old. She took undergraduate majoring in English Education and continued her master degree with the same major. She continues her master degree to increase knowledge and opportunities for the future. According to Emily, writing is both challenging. She has loved writing since Senior High school. However, since she enrolled in an undergraduate program, she rarely wrote. Due to the demands of education, it required her to write. She was firstly accustomed to writing, such as composing poetry, reviewing articles, or summarizing novels, but in her graduate program, she was required to write journals or articles. From the results of her writings, she published many articles both nationally and internationally. Emily's writings are more widely accepted by the public when she writes academic papers than poetry.

The difficulties faced by Emily in writing for publication

Writing Structures

According to Emily, all the components in academic writing was complex. All components are a unity that cannot be separated. Each structure has its difficulties. The easiest thing in writing for publication was adjusting the manuscript into the journal template.

TITLE: She thought choosing a title was difficult because she had to make readers interested in her title so that they want to read her article. Also, the title should be different from other titles that have been published so that reviewers are interested in publishing her articles.

ABSTRACT: The abstract section was also difficult because it includes all components.

INTRODUCTION: In the previous study, she thought that she had to use new previous studies, so it's a bit difficult to find it. It took a long time to read the articles, synthesize it, then pour it into writing.

METHODOLOGY: She thought about how the data should be presented, and it was not easy.

RESULT: Finding data with good quality is difficult. Then, putting the data into the finding is also challenging. She also had to think about whether the data provides new insights for readers or not.

DISCUSSION: She taught that discussing is also difficult because she has to compare her findings to the existing theory.

Writing Convention

GRAMMAR: Emily faced difficulty in grammar. When she wrote an academic paper, she often got feedback from lecturers on the aspect of grammar. To overcome this problem, she studied grammar from a book. She has also used online grammar, but the results are less accurate for grammar accuracy. In addition, she also often proofread her writings to her friends, who are better at using grammar. From the feedback, she learned how to use good and proper grammar.

VOCABULARY: Emily has difficulty choosing the right words to use in her academic paper. She often reads articles or other books to have additional insight into the use of her vocabulary.

COHESION and COHERENCE: The use of cohesion and coherence was quite difficult. She had to check many times in writing.

CITATION: She should often read the APA guidelines not to forget or make mistakes in writing.

PARAPHRASING: She had received material in lectures on paraphrasing. However, before she attended academic writing class, she read it many times and wrote in her language.

Emily solved the difficulty in writing for publication

Emily was required to publish an academic paper in a reputable journal as one of the requirements for her scholarship. During making an academic paper, there was a lecturer who guided her. Many campus facilities were provided to her, such as participating in an article writing workshop. Thus, she had more knowledge and experience in writing an academic paper. Furthermore, in their master degree, there were also courses on academic writing that supported her in writing. She had been in the world of academic writing for a year before she took her master degree. It aimed to prepare her for writing academic papers in the future. After starting the master degree, she could write articles well. She did not face any problems with the publishing process because she had been given a template by her journal target. She has also often been rejected in publications, but that it did not dampen her enthusiasm to keep learning in writing for publication.

Jason's story: he acquired knowledge in writing for publication

Jason took an undergraduate degree in English Education major, and then he continued the master degree with the same major. He took his master degree because he wanted to be a lecturer. Since childhood, he did not like to write, because according to him, writing is something very complicated. When entering undergraduate, he must write a research paper as one of the requirements for obtaining a degree and graduation. The teacher has high expectations of the students' results about their writing. He put much effort to write the research paper because he had no experience in writing. After graduating from undergraduate, he took a year off to seek work experiences, but in reality, the world of work is not as easy as he previously imagined. Then, he planned to continue his master's degree to expand his opportunities in work. In the graduate program, everything was always related to writing. Every semester, assignments from lecturers were always to publish several articles, both nationally and internationally, as his teacher has high expectations of the students' writing skills. From there, he was forced to study harder in writing, reading articles, looking for references for his research, and so on

because it was also one of the requirements for obtaining his master's degree. He managed to publish an article in a national indexed journal.

The difficulties faced by Jason in writing for publication

Writing Structures

According to Jason, similar to Emily, all components or structures in the academic paper had their own characteristics, which were difficult.

TITLE: Making the title is the last part because it is often changed. The difficulty in making a title is that he had to pay attention to the selling point of the title, whether it is interesting or different from other titles that have the same topic, whether the grammar is correct, and many more that must be considered.

ABSTRACT: Jason usually writes the abstract in the last step because it is the most difficult and it is the conclusion of the content of his article.

INTRODUCTION: Jason taught that the difficulty that is often encountered in making an introduction is finding articles related to the topic and must be published in the latest year, commonly in 5 years prior. Not all articles related to his topic can be accessed. In addition, determining the research gap was also difficult because he had to read many articles before he could find out what makes his article different from other articles.

METHODOLOGY: He had to rethink how to find data, find subjects, process data, analyze data, and all that is very complicated.

RESULT: Finding the quality of the data was difficult because it all depends on the answers from the participants he examined.

DISCUSSION: Discussion was the longest part of the article. Jason is sometimes still confused about how to discuss the finding and integrate it with the previously discussed theory.

Writing Convention

GRAMMAR: Jason is weak in grammar. When he consulted his articles with his lecturer, he always gets feedback on his grammar. Because of his weakness, he always learns grammar from online applications and grammar books. Sometimes he also uses online grammar to check the grammar of his writing.

VOCABULARY: Jason is also weak in vocabulary. He did not master a lot of vocabulary. Every time he writes, he always opens a dictionary and uses an online application to find the appropriate synonyms to use in his writings.

COHESION and COHERENCE: Using cohesion and coherence was difficult. To correct it, he always asks a friend who is an expert to proofread his writing.

CITATION: He often forgets how to properly cite using APA seventh edition because he always uses the rules in APA sixth edition.

PARAPHRASING: When he was in college, he had received lecture material on how to paraphrase. However, he has not been able to paraphrase properly and correctly. Sometimes he still often relies on online paraphrasing, which is sometimes misleading and inappropriate in use.

Jason solved the difficulty in writing for publication

During his master's degree, Jason is required to write several articles for publication, either as an assignment for the final semester exam or a requirement for obtaining the Master degree. He has faced multiple rejections in submitting his articles. However, it did not dampen his enthusiasm to write articles for publication. To improve his writing of articles for publication, he always attends seminars or workshops, whether organized by campus or off-campus. After joining a seminar, he always makes a summary in his notebook to study it again in the future. In addition, he also participated in online article writing training, which lasted approximately one week. From all the activities he participated in, he is motivated to return to writing for publication purposes. He managed to publish an article in Sinta 4 indexed journal for approximately two months. Due to his success, he became more active and confident in writing for publication.

They acquire knowledge in writing for publication

Viewed from Emily's story, she acquired knowledge and skills of writing since senior high school. She studied to write from activities that she liked, such as composing poetry and summarizing novels. This habit was proved to be able to improve her writing skills since knowledge will be obtained from meaningful learning, such as doing preferred activities. Furthermore, Chipamaunga & Prozesky (2019) said that meaningful learning is an integral part of high order thinking and learning that promotes integration. Also, an individual's belief about the nature of knowledge and how they acquire them will influence how students approach learning (Muis, 2007). Students need time to absorb all of the knowledge that they get from their meaningful learning.

Academic writing for publication is a complex activity. Learning to write brought from experiences in senior high school is not enough for students. Many students do not have sufficient knowledge about writing for publication during their bachelor degree. Students are first-timers in reading and writing academic papers when they are in a master degree, as found by this current study. However, in the master degree, students are required to read scientific papers every day so that they are expected to have critical reading activities (Hyland, 2016). From the reading process, students will learn about writing for publication. It will ease the students to write their chosen topic and begin to write their academic papers.

Students' perception of writing is an essential aspect. The participants of this study reported that their positive perception motivated them to learn academic writing. This finding somehow supports the previous study from Graham et al. (2007), which reported that students with more positive writing attitudes have better writing achievement than those with more negative writing attitudes. We somehow can conclude that students who have good writing attitudes will have greater writing achievement. Another study from Gupta & Woldemariam (2011) said that motivation is the biggest trigger in enhancing EFL students' writing skills. Furthermore, Zumbrunn et al. (2017) stated that students' perception acquires writing knowledge. For example, how the author feels about writing. It is the kind of writing attitude. Emotion can play a powerful part in student's academic motivation, learning, and success (Pekrun & Stephens, 2012). Positive perception will give positive emotion in their acquiring knowledge. Positive emotions such as hope, pride, and enjoyment have a positive correlation with academic engagement and achievement (Linnenbrink, 2007). This case also happened in this current study. The participants' motivation and positive attitudes toward academic writing encourage them to continue learning and improving their academic writing skills, specifically writing for publication.

Based on Jason's story, he said that he did not like writing because writing is a complicated process. As said by (Grami, 2010), writing is a difficult skill to learn and teach because it is not a simple cognitive activity. Writing is believed as a complex mental production that requires concentration, careful thought, and a discipline process. When the students are writing, they have enough time to think clearly about what they want to say then speak. This is the reason that their sentences need to be correct. Furthermore, Nunan (2003) emphasized that writing is a process of thinking to create new ideas, express ideas into good writing, clearly arrange the ideas or opinions into paragraphs. It is essential to express one's ideas, opinions, thoughts, and attitudes.

In their undergraduate degree, Jason was forced to write an academic paper, but he did not have any experience in writing. Furthermore, his teachers have high expectations for their students to write. According to Chou (2011), many Taiwanese doctoral students also face many problems in writing academic papers since their teachers tend to have high expectations. Teachers consider that students with doctoral degrees can write good academic papers. However, the lecturer did not know what the students' needed in writing and the difficulties that students faced.

Based on the stories, the participants got knowledge from their experiences. This finding is in line with the theory of Piaget (1967) about cognitive development. He believed that people understand the world around them, experience discrepancy between what they already know and what they discover in their environment, then adjust their ideas accordingly.

The difficulties in writing for publication

Academic writing is well known with IMRAD (Title, Abstract, Introduction, Methodology, and Discussion) structure proposed by S.S. Agarwal et al. (2011). The use of IMRAD structure in writing is to help the students understand and apply the concept of research in the easiest way of research writing. Based on the current study's findings, the participants experienced the same problems in writing the structure of IMRAD in their academic writings. They said that the structure of IMRAD cannot be separated because it is a unity. Each component has its characteristics and difficulties. However, they showed that writing abstracts is the hardest part. The participants said that the abstract is very complicated among the other parts because the abstract contains all of the components of the research. In line with the research from Oriokot et al. (2011), they said that abstract is an important part of academic writing. It is often read and gets attention from readers or reviewers after the title.

Many factors cause students' difficulties in using the IMRAD format. One of them is from Wolfe et al. (2011) in (Liso, 2020) research in which their findings showed that there is not good technical writing in education and the teacher shows their reactive teaching methods. It means that the teacher will give writing instruction to the students only when problems arise and the teacher provides appropriate comments. Thus, it can be concluded that students who were taught technics for academic writing performed better than those who were not taught the technics. The same case happens in this study. Emily said that she got the writing experience from senior high school by self-learning. She likes to write poetry and summarize some novels. From this experience, she has studied how to write and did better than Jason, who had less writing experience.

Based on the finding, Emily and Jason stated that they were taught that choosing a title is difficult because they have to pay attention to the selling point of their title that will make the readers interested in their title and want to read their article. Furthermore, they should pay attention to the reader and pay attention to the reviewer. Cuschieri et al. (2019) said that the paper's title needs to be eye-catching and intriguing for the readers. The title should be short and specific, and it highlights the subject matter. Besides, in abstract structure, all the participants said that making abstract is the most difficult activity because abstract is the conclusion of all IMRAD structure content. A good abstract should be structured formally that addresses the background of the study, the objective, the methodology, and the importance of the research. Word account in the abstract is commonly based on the university requirement, but generally, it is around 400 words (S.S. Agarwal et al., 2011). "Abstract is positioned after the title, and it is a game-changer for the scientific paper" (Cuschieri et al., 2019). Abstracts will impress both reviewer and reader to read the whole paper if the abstract is interesting. A. Moreira & T. Haahtela (2011) said abstract is the second point most read in academic paper so it must be short and stand alone.

In the Introduction, all the participants face difficulty finding the related previous studies that must be published in the latest year, in 5 years prior. The participants also found difficulty in determining the research gap because they had to read a lot of articles before they could find out what made his article different from other prior articles. Furthermore, the introduction should use the work in context and bring the relevance of the problem that will be analyzed (Mateu Arrom et al., 2018). The introduction should contain general context, relevant literature review, and a clear definition of the problem with hypothesis and research question (Liso, 2020). Then, in methodology, all the participants think how the data should be presented in the right ways, which is not easy. They should know how to find data, find subjects, process data, analyze data, and all of them are very complicated. In this part, they should describe details about the research procedure. They have to think that their methodology has sufficient information to allow other researchers to produce the study. The details of the study such as populations, the materials, procedures, theories and definitions, are used in this research (Cuschieri, 2018).

According to the participant Emily and Jason, the result part is also difficult because they must find the right suitable subject for their topics. The data quality depends on the answers from the subject they examined. It is important to link the subjects' answers to the method previously described and relate to

responding to the research questions (Liso, 2020). Emily also said putting the data into finding should be done carefully because it is the heart and soul of the writing academic (Cuschieri, 2018). They should know whether they use tables and figures in their writing. Next, in discussions, all participants were still confused about blending the result with the existing theory. It is the longest part in IMRAD structures. This section must compare the result with the theories and previous studies' findings.

Non-native English faced many difficulties when writing academic articles, even though mastering academic writing is a basic requirement to publish in a reputable journal (Salager-Meyer, 2014). Based on the current research, writing convention has the same important role as writing structure. All participants faced many difficulties in grammar and vocabulary. Many EFL learners consider grammar as their number one issue (Zhao, 2017). The previous study from (Badenhorst et al., 2015) said that graduate students on writing academic indicate that they took their language difficulties as their main writing problems.

Grammar instruction in the EFL context has been the main issue for students. Relating to the academic writing paper, grammar is an essential part of successful writing. From the finding, Emily and Jason still commit grammatical errors that spend a lot of time of the lecturer to correct their writing. The participants' grammatical errors were varied from trivial to complicated ones. It means that the participants do have not enough knowledge about grammar and the topics. Inexperienced students tend to only remember bits of the knowledge without the right structure. This case can affect to the tendency to memorize facts (Reif, 1987). They are unaware of how to organize their knowledge in the right ways.

Moreover, in using citations, the participants also faced difficulties. They were sometimes confused and forgot how to do citations in their writing. Citation makes the writing more interested and persuasive and helps to avoid plagiarism in writing (Atta-Obeng & Lamptey, 2012). Citation also has an important role in writing because citing others people work means that we respect and acknowledge their intellectual property rights. All the participants claimed that sometimes they forget and make mistakes in citing the references, but they always try to read the references before starting to make citations. Furthermore, Mateu Arrom et al. (2018) said that it is important to consult the guidelines of making citations because each journal has the format and style of bibliography.

They overcome the difficulties in writing for publication

According to their stories, Emily and Jason had a lot of difficulties writing for publication. It is in writing of the structure, the application of writing conventions, as well as the lack of knowledge on the topics they will write about. Emily and Jason tried to find solutions to overcome the difficulties they faced in writing for publication from their weaknesses. They attended seminars and workshops both from campus and outside the campus. Then, they studied grammar books for grammar difficulties and asked a friend who is proficient in grammar to proofread their writing. In addition, Emily also took a course to hone her skills in writing for publication. Mah et al. (2013) found that many students still commit grammatical errors that make lecturers spend more time correcting their writings. Grammatical errors are the biggest scourge in academic writing. Also, students need to participate in different academic events to interact with their people and participate because they're important, especially for students (Iermolenko et al., 2021). This event will provide students with an experience for raising their voices. The goal of the academic discussion was not to make the senior researcher proud of them but to make the students able to contribute to academic discussions.

According to the current finding, participants said they got many writing experiences from seminars and workshops. These events will help the students improve their knowledge and skill in academic writing. On the other hand, the previous study by Iermolenko et al. (2021) reported that students experienced many disappointments during workshops, conferences, and supervisory meetings. They did not gain confidence and motivation from those events. It was probably because the students read widely but without a clear understanding of the theories, approaches, and research methods, that they could not make good conclusions. This situation made the students feel stressed and trauma regarding writing for publication. This negative attitude and motivation were not owned by the

current study participants as they have a positive attitude and high motivation for learning. It is probably why this current study's participants were able to gain knowledge and improve their skills from joining workshops or seminars. Furthermore, self-confidence and high motivation will restore the spirit of students who have been lost. Guidance from teachers is also useful for assisting students in writing for publication.

CONCLUSION

The two graduate students get knowledge and experiences of writing from their writing activities when in senior high school. These activities will make the students improve their knowledge and academic writing skills. Besides, the students also face many difficulties in writing for publication. It is reported that students have struggles in academic writing. The hardest parts in writing for publication are grammar and vocabulary. However, these difficulties and experiences make students more motivated in learning and have a positive attitude about writing. This positive attitude and motivation can be seen in how students face difficulties in writing by finding solutions to these problems by attending various seminars and workshops, studying grammar books, asking expert friends, or consulting with lecturers. This study shows that students' positive attitude toward writing will increase students' motivation to explore more deeply their skills and knowledge in academic writing.

However, this study has two weaknesses. First, this study only uses two participants. Thus, further studies may use greater numbers of participants to get more generalized results. Second, this study uses a narrative inquiry method, so the further researcher can use either qualitative or quantitative methods that may be good to conduct. It may give new insight for other future researchers. Taking into consideration, the findings provide new insight for EFL students who write an academic paper. Academic for publication is not as terrible as people might think. Teachers and students should collaborate to create teaching and learning based on the student's needs as students encounter many difficulties in the process of learning. The results of this study can be used as reference to identify students' needs in writing for publication. Furthermore, several research gaps in this study might invite other researchers to study this topic more deeply.

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