

Chapter Four

Finding and Discussion

In this chapter, the findings are presented and discussed to answer the research questions. Hence, the discussion is divided into two main parts. They are the first year students' difficulties in writing English academic text and the causing factors of the first year students' difficulties in writing English academic text. The findings are reported based on the result of data analysis from the interview with four participants.

The First Year Students' Difficulties in Writing English Academic Text

In this point, the findings and discussions related to the first year students' difficulties in writing English academic text are presented. Based on the result of the interview, all of the four participants faced the difficulties in writing English academic text. There were five main findings related to the difficulties in writing academic text faced by the first year ELED students in this research. They were difficulties in generating the ideas about the topic, giving supporting detail, organizing the ideas, expressing the idea, and using the correct grammar.

Difficulty in generating the ideas about the topic. It has been found in this research that the students found difficulty in generating the ideas about the topic. There were two participants in this research who have difficulty in term of generating the ideas about the topic when they wrote academic text. The first statement was stated by Ani, who said that, "I feel difficult to make the points because we need to think critically." The answer from Ani revealed that in term of generating the ideas about the topic, Ani felt difficult to think of the points that

would be discussed because she needed to think critically if she wanted to make the points.

Moreover, Desti also has the similar difficulty as Ani. She stated that, “Probably, I feel difficult in looking for the sentences. Difficult to look for the sentences means toss off the sentences for my essay, for example, at that time I made about ‘music for life,’ and then, what I should do with that topic, I am confused.” The statement from Desti indicated that she had difficulty in term of developing the topic. It is because, after the topic has been given, Desti seemed to have no ideas about what would be discussed in the given topic. Furthermore, the answer from Desti also revealed that the students are asked to make an academic text, which is an essay based on the certain topic.

At this point, what is meant by generating the ideas about the topic was the way the students elaborated the topic by making some points related to the topic that is discussed in their academic text. Murshidi (2014) pointed that one of the difficulties faced by the students in academic writing was generating the idea according to the topic being written. Moreover, Fareed, Ashraf, and Bilal (2016) also pointed that when the students wrote academic text, they lacked of ideas when they need to discuss the topic. Thus, it has been found that developing the topic was not easy because the students still struggled to think about what would be discussed in their writings.

Difficulty in giving supporting details. Another finding in this research was about difficulty in giving supporting details. It was as stated by Ani who said that, “after I made the point and the explanation of the point, I feel difficult to give evidence, because to give the evidence, we need to relate the point with the real

context.” Ani’s statement revealed that giving evidence was not easy because she needed to give the fact that could be used as evidence to support her argument. Hence, what is meant by evidence in this research, for example is a fact, example, statistics, and many more that could be used to support the students statement related to their writing activity in making an academic text with a certain topic.

In addition, Ani added, “I am difficult to make a lot of sub points. When there is a point, it needs to be elaborated. It was difficult, because we need to give a lot of explanations in order to make the writings more detail. So, sometimes I am stuck. I have no ideas about what will I explain again because I already stated it previously.” In that statement, Ani believed that in order to elaborate the main idea, the more the explanations are given, the more detailed the writing is. However, elaborating the main idea by giving the detailed explanation related to the main idea was difficult to do for Ani. Ani explained that sometimes, she was stuck when she needed to continue explaining the main idea because what she would write was already explained previously.

Moreover, Cici shared the same thought as Ani that she felt difficult to give supporting details. Cici said, “At that time, we are asked to write an essay which the theme is about music... I mean, about game. I feel like I do not know what I should write. Previously, I already have the main idea, but later I am confused to develop it.” The statement from Cici showed that she felt stuck to develop the main idea. Cici said that she was able to make the main idea, but the difficulties came when she needed to develop it.

Hence, at this point it has been found that giving supporting details became one of the difficulties in writing academic text. It is because, to give

supporting detail, the students need evidence and reasons (Rustipa, 2016).

However, the finding showed that the students had a problem in term of giving supporting details. Furthermore, in term of giving supporting details, Ani felt difficult in both giving the evidence and giving explanation in order to make the writing more detail. Moreover, Cici shared the same thought as Ani that she felt stuck to give supporting detail for the main idea in her essay.

This finding was supported by Alfaki (2015) who found that, in writing, the students had trouble in elaborating the paragraph, that is, they were less able to give supporting detail to develop the main idea. Moreover, Rass (2015) found that the students had learnt about giving supporting detail, such as evidence and reason to develop the main idea, but they still found to be weak in giving supporting detail. Hence, supporting detail such as evidence and explanation are needed, but the students were still found to be difficult to give supporting detail.

Difficulty in organizing the ideas. Organizing the ideas in order also became something difficult for one of the participants in this research. It is as stated by Ani, who said that, “It is probably about how I arrange the Ideas. We just at the first semester and we are still less able to put the points in order like where we should put this sentence and that sentence.” Ani’s statement indicated that she felt difficult to organize the ideas because she was confused on what idea that needed to be stated first.

Chokwe (2013) stated that in academic writing, the learners needed to be able to generate idea from their reading so they could break it down into different ideas and put them in order, because putting the ideas in order was one of the basic ability that should be achieved by the learners in writing academic text.

However, Kalikoha (2008) found that the majority of the students revised their essay, and most of them needed to re-organize the ideas. Hence, this research found that organizing the ideas is not easy for the first year students.

Difficulty in expressing the idea. In this research, it has been found that sometimes, showing the idea was not easy because there was something that could obstruct the students to show their idea in a written form. It was as stated by Bunga, who said, “Sometimes, when I write, I did not know the vocabulary. It is like we want to write something, but we do not know the vocabulary.” The statement from Bunga revealed that basically, Bunga had the idea to write, but it became difficult because when she wanted to express her idea in a written form, she was obstructed because she did not know the vocabulary.

Thus, this finding was in line with Al-Khasawneh (2010) who mentioned that the students who lacked of vocabulary were unable to show their ideas freely and accurately because they have less vocabulary to use. Furthermore, according to Xiao and Chen (2015) the students were often found to be obstructed when they tried to express their ideas in a written form because they lacked of vocabulary. Hence, this research found that expressing the idea is not easy for the first year students.

Difficulty in using the correct grammar. The next difficulty in writing academic text found in this research was about grammar. This research found that the students found to be difficult in using the correct grammar. For instance, Ani said, “I am afraid of making mistakes in grammar.” Bunga also said, “I feel that I am still making mistakes in grammar.” Moreover, Desti said, “when we made a sentence, we need to use grammar, and I felt difficult in grammar. I do not

understood about it (grammar)” (Desti.). Thus, the statement from Ani, Bunga, and Desti revealed that grammar was one of the difficulties faced by the first year students in writing academic text since Ani was still afraid of making error in grammar, Bunga often made mistakes in grammar, and Desti did not understand about grammar.

This research has been found several aspects related to the difficulties in using the correct grammar. They were difficulties in term of tenses, conjunction, and phrasal verb.

Tenses. In term of tenses, it has been found that all of the four participants answered that they had difficulty in term of tenses. Ani said, “In grammar, the difficulties are exactly about tenses. Someone that is not mastery in the use of tenses, they must be confused, like which tense that I need to use. There are sixteen tenses, I confuse about which one that should be used.” Ani’s statement explained that there were sixteen kinds of tenses, but to use the proper one was somewhat confusing for her. Desti also share the same thought as Ani, she said, “I am still not understood about the use of proper tense until now.” Thus, those participants’ statements revealed that both Ani and Desti were confused in the use of proper tense.

Moreover, the answers from the rest of two participants were also indicated that they had problem in the use of tenses. Bunga said, “In tenses, sometimes, I like to confuse. For example, whether it should be using –ing or –ed, like excepted and excepting.” Bunga statement revealed that she was confused about which one that she needed to use, whether it should be present participle or past participle. Cici was also share the same thought as Bunga that she had the

difficulty in term of tenses. Cici said, “I am still not good in English, so it is like I often make some grammar mistakes in each paragraph like it lack of –ing, or -ed, and usually I am mistaken in the use of was and were in tenses.” From Cici’s statement, it could be seen that she was mistaken in the use of present participle and past participle. She often missed to add suffix *-ing* as present participle and *-ed* as past participle. In addition, Cici also mentioned that she was mistaken in the use of was and were in tenses.

Those statements revealed that both Bunga and Cici faced the same difficulty in grammar, in which they made error in the use of tenses. This finding was also discovered by Kambal (as cited in Al-Khasawneh, 2010) who found that, in writing, tense became one of main types of error in term of grammar. Alfaki also (2015) found that the students found to be mistaken in the use of correct tenses, in which they made error in the use of present participle and past participle.

Conjunction. The next difficulty in term of grammar was about conjunction. The use of conjunction became a challenge in writing academic text faced by one participant in this research. It was as stated by Bunga, who said that, “I am confused in connecting the sentence. The example is, ‘I want to... something... but...’ and then, after that, there should be subject and to be again, but I often make incomplete sentence, like my sentence was lack of subject.” The statement from Bunga showed that making a complete sentence by using conjunction was not easy. Bunga stated that sometimes, when she used conjunction in her sentence, she made an error by making an incomplete sentence. For example, Bunga wanted to write a compound sentence in which she needed to

put at least two independent clauses in a sentence joined with comma, semicolon, or a conjunction. However Bunga stated that she made error by missing the subject so that her sentence became incomplete. According to Solikhah (2017), the most common error made by the students in an essay was they made an incomplete sentence. Thus, in this research, the incomplete sentence made by the student was when they made sentences by using conjunction.

Phrasal verb. It has been found that phrasal verb was also identified as the difficulty area in term of grammar in this research. One of the participants in this research stated that phrasal verb became one of the difficulties in writing academic text, as she stated,

“Sometimes, we are asked to use phrase (phrasal verb) in our writing. The use of phrase (phrasal verb) is really difficult, because the phrase (phrasal verb) is like there are two words become ones but it will result different meaning. The example is like ‘Show off’. So, there are two words, but the meaning is different. I feel like sometimes I do not know what the phrase that should be used.”

Ani’s statement showed that the use of phrasal verb became one of the difficulties in writing academic text. Ani explained that she felt difficult because sometimes, she did not know what the phrasal verb that she needed to use when she wrote sentences by using phrasal verb.

This finding was in line with Wei (2010) who mentioned that the use of phrasal verb became a challenge for EFL/ESL students due to its syntactic and semantic complexities and the difficulties came when the students comprehend and use it. In addition, Imrose (2013) pointed that the students tend to avoid using

phrasal verb and prefer to use one-word verbs alternatively in writing to decrease the possibility of making mistakes in writing.

At this point, grammar became the big issue in writing academic text in this research since all of the four participants in this research was identified that they had difficulties in term of grammar. According to Al-Khasawneh (2010), Grammar was extremely important to convey accurate messages. However, Hirano (2011) reported that grammar was one of the most common language weaknesses affecting writing. As a consequence, the students who had weaknesses in grammar, they may convey inaccurate message. Hence, the students' difficulties in term of grammar found in this research were in the use of correct tenses, making a complete sentence by using conjunction, and in the use of phrasal verb.

The Factors Causing the First Year Students' Difficulties in Writing English Academic Text

In this point, the findings and discussions related to causes factors of the first year students' difficulties in writing English academic text would be presented. The findings are discussed within several categories based on the theme of the causing factors of the difficulties in writing English academic text. Therefore, there were five main findings about the factors causing the difficulties in writing English academic text. They were the lack of critical thinking, the lack of reading, exhaustion, the unclear explanation from the lecturer, the lack of vocabulary, and the lack of grammar knowledge.

The lack of critical thinking. In this research, the lack of critical thinking found as one of the factors that caused the students' difficulties in writing

academic text. It was as stated by one of the participants in this research. Ani said, “I have difficulty to make the points because of the blunt of critical thinking. So, like this... the point should be related to the theme or the title, if the points are out of topic, it (the point) will be unrelated to the theme.”

Based on the statement from Ani, it could be seen that the lack of critical thinking was the factor caused the difficulty in generating the ideas about the topic. Furthermore, Ani’s statement was also indicated that critical thinking was needed to decide whether or not the points that will be discussed in academic text are relevant with the topic. Thus, if the students were lack of critical thinking, deciding the relevant points became something difficult. According to Al Badi (2015), the students need to put their critical thinking in academic writing, because in academic writing they need to present their ideas logically, which means that there is a relation between the topic and the discussion in their writing. However, Bair and Mader (2013) reported that the lack of critical thinking was one of the students’ weaknesses that caused them difficult to make an academic text. In addition Shaheen (2012) also identified that the lack of critical thinking lead to poor academic writing performance.

The lack of reading. The lack of reading was also found as one of the factors that affected the students’ performance in writing academic text. Two participants in this research mentioned that they were lack of reading. The first one came from Ani, who said that, “The factor that causes me difficult to give evidence is the lack of reading. It is because if we are lack of reading, we will not understand about what was happened nowadays that caused us cannot make evidence.” Ani’s statement showed that she needed to read to make evidence.

However, Ani stated that she was lack of reading and the result was she felt difficult to give the evidence for her statement. Thus, in this finding, it has been found that the lack of reading caused the students difficult to give supporting detail, which is in term of giving evidence.

Moreover, Ani added, “I feel difficult to give explanation because I lack of reading, just that. It is because if we read, we will understand about what will be discussed so that we could write.” Thus, in this statement, Ani revealed that she was also lacked of reading. Ani also explained that, if the more she read, the more she would be able to write because she already understood about what she would write. Moreover, Ani stated that she felt difficult to give explanation, and for the factor that caused the difficulty was the lack of reading. Hence, it could be seen from Ani’s statement that the lack of reading caused the students face the difficulty in giving supporting detail, which was in term of giving explanation.

Desti also shared the similar thought as Ani that she lacked of reading. She said, “I feel confuse about what to do with the topic because, I lack of reading some books.” Desti’s statement also indicated that the lack of reading was the factor causing the difficulty in writing academic text. Desti also stated that she felt difficult to generate the ideas about the topic which meant that she had no ideas about what she would write in her academic text. For the causing factor of the difficulty, she stated that she lack of reading some books.

According to Chokwe (2013), reading was needed to generate the ideas about the topic, so that the learners will have some knowledge related to the topic being discussed to put into their writing. Olness (as cited in Murshidi, 2014) also pointed that reading helped the students to overcome their difficulty in writing

because they would have knowledge related to the topic being written to put into their writing. Hence, if the students lack of reading, they would lack of knowledge about the topic that would be discussed.

Exhaustion. This research, found that exhaustion also the factor which caused the difficulty in writing academic text. One participant in this research pointed that exhaustion affected her performance in writing academic text. It was as stated by Cici who said that, “I am confused to develop the main idea, probably, because I am tired. It is because, usually there are so many tasks, following organizations, and so on. So, it is like I think of so many things. So, if someone already tired, it would be so hard to think about anything.” Cici’s statement revealed that exhaustion became the factors which caused the difficulty in elaborating the main idea, which meant giving supporting details. Cici mentioned that she could not think because of the exhaustion. Thus, it has been revealed in this research that exhaustion affected the students’ ability to give supporting details. According to Bukhsha, Shahzad, and Nisa (2011), majority of the university students agreed that if they feel tired, they would be difficult to concentrate. Hence, it could be indicated that tiredness affected the students’ ability to think.

The unclear explanation from the instructor. The unclear explanation from the instructor when explaining about academic text affected the students’ ability in writing academic text. One of the participants in this research said that the unclear explanation from the lecturer was one of the factors caused the difficulty in writing academic text. It was as stated by Ani who said that,

“I feel difficult to arrange the ideas because, sometimes, the explanation from the lecturer was unclear. The lecturer is unclear to give the explanation about the arrangement of the ideas... like it should be like this and like this, but how to put the ideas in order is not clearly explained... like... what I should write first after I wrote the main point, when I should explain the argument, are not clearly explained.”

Ani stated that the lecturer gave the unclear explanation when they explained about the arrangement of the ideas. It included how to put the argument properly, what needs to be written after the main idea, and so on. Hence, Ani stated that the difficulty generated from the unclear explanation from the lecturer was Ani became confused on how to organize the ideas. Thus, this research found that the unclear explanation from the lecturer in term of organizing the ideas caused the students difficult to organize the ideas. This finding also found by Tulley (2013) who stated that the unclear instruction from the instructor was one of the sources of the students' poor performance in writing. In addition, Ahmed (2010) pointed that the teacher's competency in teaching writing was considered as a contributing factor to the students successful in writing. Hence, the lack of teaching competency from the teacher in teaching writing caused the students to face the difficulty in writing, because their explanation would be unclear.

The lack of vocabulary. The next factor which affected the students' performance in writing academic text was about the lack of vocabulary. One participant in this research pointed that the lack of vocabulary was the reason of the difficulty in writing academic text.

It was as stated by Bunga, who said, “I want to write something but I cannot express it, I think it is because I do not memorize all vocabulary. It is like I know the word in Bahasa Indonesia but I do not know the English. So, it caused me to be difficult while writing (in English).” It could be seen from Bunga’s statement that the lack of vocabulary was the factor that caused the difficulty in writing academic text. Basically, when Bunga wrote, she knew about what she wanted to write, but in the process of writing she became obstructed because she did not know the English vocabulary. Furthermore, based on the statement from Bunga, the difficulty generated from the lack of vocabulary was difficult to express the idea. Hence, this finding revealed that the lack of vocabulary made the students to be difficult in expressing their idea while writing academic text. This finding was in line with Wardani, Basri, and Waris (2014) who pointed that due to the lack of vocabulary, it would be difficult for the students to express and develop their ideas while writing. In addition, Adas and Bakir (2013) also found that mostly EFL students were lack of the adequate stock of English vocabulary, so that they faced the difficulty to state their idea when writing.

The lack of grammar knowledge. Another factor that causing the students’ difficulty in writing academic text found in this research was the lack of grammar knowledge. All of the four participants in this research stated that they lack of grammar knowledge.

Bunga Said, “I often mistaken in grammar because sometimes, if I am being taught about grammar, yes, I understood, but few days later, if I asked to make a sentence by using the correct grammar again, I like to forget what the correct grammar is.” Bunga’s statement revealed that she understood about

grammar when she was taught about it, but later she forgot to use the correct grammar when she needed to make a sentence by using the correct grammar.

In addition, Desti shared the different thought as Bunga. Desti Said, “I think, the difficulty factor that caused me feel difficult in tenses is I am not understand about it from away back so that it is hard to be understood even now.” From Desti statement, it has been revealed that basically, she was not understood about grammar especially in term of tenses from away back. Thus, the lack of grammar knowledge results in the difficulty in the use of correct grammar.

Furthermore, the lack of grammar knowledge also generated from the lack of motivation to learn grammar. There were two participants who indicated that they were lack of motivation to learn grammar. Ani said, “I feel difficult in grammar probably because, I lack of study about grammar. If I already get confused when I learn grammar, I just give up learning about it.” From Ani’s statement, it could be seen that Ani’s motivation to learn about grammar was lack because she just gave up learning about grammar if she did not understand about it. As a result, she faced the difficulty in the use of correct grammar.

In addition, Cici said, “I often making mistake in grammar because I do not like about grammar from the beginning. By that, I am not understood about grammar because grammar is difficult and make me confuse.” From Cici’s statement, it could be seen that Cici’s motivation to learn about grammar was lack because she thought that grammar was difficult and confusing to be learnt, so she did not like grammar. As a result, when Cici talked about the difficulties in writing academic text, Cici stated that she often made mistakes in grammar in her writing.

Therefore, the statement from both Ani and Cici indicated that the lack of motivation to learn grammar became one of the factors causing the difficulty in writing academic text. Thus, this finding showed that the lack of motivation to learn grammar affected the students' ability to use the correct grammar while writing academic text. Salima and Zahira (2015) mentioned that the learners need to be aware of the most grammatical patterns with the aim of producing meaningful and well-structured sentences. However, Hirano (2011) pointed that one of the most common factors affecting the students' weaknesses in writing is the lack of grammar knowledge. Refnita (2014) also pointed that "Some students told that they did not know the correct grammatical features due to lack of knowledge and grammatical competency or they had already forgotten" (p. 293). In conclusion, there were six findings stated about the factors causing the difficulty in writing academic text of the first year ELED students had been found in this research. The factors were the lack of critical thinking, the lack of reading, exhaustion, the unclear explanation from the lecturer, the lack of vocabulary, and the lack of grammar knowledge. Furthermore, it has been revealed in this research that the lack of critical thinking made the student difficult to generate the ideas about the topic. The lack of reading made the students difficult to generate the ideas about the topic and give supporting details. Exhaustion made the students difficult to give supporting details. The unclear explanation from the lecturer made the students difficult to organize the ideas. The lack of vocabulary made the students difficult to express the idea. The last was the lack of grammar knowledge made the students difficult to use the correct grammar.