

The Problems in the Writing of the Thesis by Final Year Students in the Japanese Language Study Program in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the description and analyzes the problems faced by final year students in the Japanese Language Education study program. The research followed several considerations: 1) the number of problems faced by students when completing their studies is not only the problem of writing a thesis, but other academic and non-academic problems need to be solved so that students can graduate on time, 2) the need for harmony between curriculum and academic policies and processes that make it easier for students to graduate on time, 3) the alignment of the curriculum, academic policies and processes are needed to increase the acceleration of graduates and the fluency of final year student studies in completing their studies. The research used a qualitative method through authentic discourse analysis (contrived observation discourse). An authentic discourse analysis observes the emergence of data on the discourse created (conditioned) through a questionnaire instrument and interviews with the respondents' data sources. Data sources came from lecturers and students of the Japanese Language Education Study Program of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY) from the academic year 2017-2018 or students in the 7th and 8th semesters.

Keywords: *Research, Case Studies, Final Year Students' Difficulties, Curriculum, Policy, Academics*

1. INTRODUCTION

Every student must have a dream of graduating on time, and it has become such pride for them, their family, and even the study program. At the university level, especially in the Japanese Language study program, completing studies on time for students is essential to improve graduates' quality. One of which is how the students complete their studies by writing a thesis because no learning process does not involve writing. However, the results of researchers' observations so far and research findings, as reported by Alwasilah [1], proved that most students, especially language education students, considered writing a thesis as a challenging task. The majority of undergraduate students involved in research also considered writing to be one of the most challenging subjects. The reality, as described above, had been the concern of researchers so far. Simultaneously, the researchers believed that research investigating this phenomenon was an urgent need since the students of the Japanese Language

Education Study Program of UMY and Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ) must write these papers and other academic writings.

This research focuses on the following issues: 1) the difficulties faced by students in writing a thesis, not in full Japanese, but they must write abstracts in Japanese; 2) the factors causing the difficulties; and 3) what should be done to minimize all these difficulties, both from the perspective of students and lecturers as thesis instructors and supervisors, and study program leaders. This study's objectives are formulated as follows: 1) Describing students' difficulties in writing theses and assignments and other scientific works. 2) Describing the causes of all the students' difficulties from the perspective of students and lecturers. 3) Exploring possible ways or steps to help students minimize the problems in writing thesis and assignments and other academic writing from students, lecturers, and study program leaders.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This study evaluated Japanese language learning included in the scope of expertise in the education field, with strategic issues evaluating language learning topics and their difficulties in completing their studies.

Several researchers have conducted research related to problems in completing the thesis, as follows: Julita, Elida, Wirmelis Syarif, Family Welfare Education Department, Faculty of Engineering, Padang State University, with the title *INTERFERENCE FACTORS IN COMPLETING STUDENTS' THESIS IN FAMILY WELFARE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT*. This research describes the factors inhibiting completing the thesis, including internal and external factors, and belongs to descriptive qualitative using the mixed method. Quantitative data collection techniques used questionnaires and qualitative data by observation, interviews, and documentation. The quantitative data analysis technique was descriptive, while the qualitative data applied three activity streams. They were data reduction, data presentation, and concluding.

The results showed that, in general, the students' obstacles in completing their thesis in terms of internal factors (motivation) were quite good, with a score percentage of 45.23%. However, students' obstacles in completing the thesis in terms of external factors (looking for material or thesis title, searching for literature, and problems with the supervisor during the thesis consultation) were still experiencing obstacles—qualitative data description of the inhibiting factors in completing the thesis in terms of external factors. External factors inhibiting the thesis' completion based on the research include—first, looking for thesis material or title. Students' difficulties in finding the material or thesis title were due to the lack of students' seriousness, attention, ability, and enthusiasm in submitting thesis titles that are rational and creative. The students had not been able to compose ideas. It was difficult for the lecturers or thesis supervisor to understand the ideas and problems proposed. Students' motivation must support the issues above. When the proposed title is interesting, it would likely be accepted by the thesis supervisor.

According to Darmono [2], "Problems arise because of challenges. There is a gap between expectations and reality, either between activities or phenomena that already exist or will exist." The second external factor is issues with the supervisors during the thesis consultation. This issue is all about good communication between students and thesis supervisors. The standard-issue related to this matter is the unclear consultation schedule so that students find it challenging to meet the supervisor. There is fear and lack of courage when consulting and fear of making more mistakes after

revision. The students are afraid of not meeting the supervisors' expectations to improve the thesis and their lack of ability. Students may find it difficult to tell the problems. Therefore, the supervisors and students should establish good communication to complete the thesis. Students who can understand the situation and circumstances during the thesis consultation, come on time, keep their promises, diligently improve the thesis based on the supervisor's advice will have a successful consultation. Sarwono [3] quotes, "One of the factors that determine the positive and negative factors of a relationship is communication because it is one of the components forming an interpersonal relationship." According to Rahkmat [4], effective interpersonal communication causes two individuals to become involved in the communication process, thereby encouraging mutual openness.

On the other hand, if interpersonal communication runs ineffective, it causes communication actors to develop a tense attitude. With students' openness in communicating with supervisors, they will understand the complaints and problems raised better. Thus, communication is a crucial factor in interpersonal relationships.

The effectiveness of interpersonal communication will be achieved, especially if there is a good relationship between students and supervisors. The conclusion based on the research results obtained regarding the inhibiting factors in completing the thesis in terms of internal (motivation) and external factors shows that students' motivation in completing the thesis is good enough. The indicators of awareness, persistence, and environmental are in a good category. The indicators of enthusiasm, desire to succeed and the family indicator are fairly good.

Furthermore, external factors (looking for material or thesis title) used quantitative, qualitative, and experimental research methods to find the same problem when searching for material or thesis title. There were still students who did not understand how to submit thesis titles, what problems would be raised and lack rational and creative ideas or thesis titles. Also, they had not had proper literature sources and references. The supervisor's unclear schedules made students difficult to meet the supervisor. Students still felt afraid and anxious when communicating with the supervisor due to fear of not answering the supervisor's questions or the revisions that did not meet the supervisor's advice. Suggestions to overcome this problem are that the study program should provide a limit and timeframe in the thesis completion process so that students feel responsible for completing the thesis on time. For the supervisors, they must provide a predetermined consultation schedule so that the guidance process runs

smoothly. The students must be serious in completing their thesis, have self-confidence and not be afraid or anxious in telling opinions or ideas. Also, they should be able to take advantage of the knowledge to continue their life after college.

Another research conducted regarding this issue is *Fundamental Research on the Students' Motivation in Selecting Japanese Language Education Expertise* by G Natsumi Kobari FPBS, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI). UPI's role and responsibility are massive in educating Japanese language teachers at the high school or SMA / SMK / MA level in Indonesia. Therefore, it is expected that UPI will always educate qualified educators. However, the researcher argued a big difference between students who wished to learn Japanese and their efforts to become Japanese language teachers. This study aimed to determine the students' motivation to choose their Japanese language education expertise using an open questionnaire survey. Their interests influenced most students to become students with Japanese language education expertise from the coding results obtained.

This interest was most influenced by the relationship between their interest in pop culture and their experiences when studying Japanese at the SMA / SMK / MA level. Besides, 33% of the respondents preferred jobs as Japanese language teachers in Indonesia. This number was less than respondents who had alternative job options. From the results of this study, 50% of respondents wished to continue their master's degree level. This study revealed students' motivation to become students who had Japanese language education expertise and their paths when they finished their studies. This research came from a survey using an open questionnaire with 82 respondents. Of course, choosing respondents with Japanese language education expertise does not require all students to become Japanese language teachers. Their choice of work, of course, is determined by their desires. There is no guarantee that all students will immediately get a position as Japanese language teachers once they graduate. However, students with Japanese language education skills must still be motivated, especially if UPI students are universities engaged in education. It is common for them to produce qualified Japanese language teachers. There needs to be self-awareness of each lecturer to convey by motivating students to improve Japanese language skills and interest in daily classroom interactions. This research was fundamental research that examined students' motivation to choose Japanese language education skills and the paths after graduating. This study aimed to develop further studies, as described below.

1. Qualitative research on students who choose to have Japanese language education expertise because they want to become Japanese language teachers from the start to reveal how students maintain their motivation
2. A qualitative study of students wanting to become Japanese language teachers emerged after entering college to reveal changes in their motivation
3. Quantitative or qualitative research on students whose goals are not Japanese language teachers and comparative analysis research with the motivation of students who wish to become Japanese language teachers.

Furthermore, there is research on the relationship between students' attitudes towards research and motivation in completing theses in the final year of medical faculty at Universitas Lampung by Entan Teram Zettira. Research is a learning tool to find solutions to problems. A thesis is a form of scientific writing that contains research on a problem. Many students have difficulty completing their thesis. One of the factors that play a role in the process of completing this thesis is motivation. Lack of motivation can trigger students to complete their thesis, which leads to delays in graduation. This study used a cross-sectional approach. A total of 192 final year student respondents at the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Lampung, in 2017, filled out the Revised Attitude Towards Research (R-ATR) questionnaire and the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (IMI). This study's research results showed the students' attitudes towards the respondents' research, namely good attitudes (95.8%) and bad attitudes (4.2%). Almost all respondents had the high motivation (96.4%), and only a few did not (3.6%). There was a significant relationship between students' attitudes towards research and motivation in completing their thesis with $p = 0.029$ in Fisher's test.

Based on the results of the research:

1. There was a relationship between student attitudes towards research and motivation in completing a thesis in final year students at the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Lampung.
2. Students' attitudes towards research at final year students completing their thesis were mostly in good attitudes towards research (95.8%), and the rests were bad (4.2%).
3. Almost all final year students who were motivated to complete a thesis had high motivation to complete the thesis (96.4%). The rest had low motivation to complete the thesis (3.6%).

Suggestions

Future researchers should develop further research to determine the factors affecting students' attitudes toward research and motivation. Journal of Educational Research Vol. 34 Number 2 of 2017 also identifies the

results of identifying factors that influence completing a thesis for Semarang undergraduate psychology students. This research is part of a multi-year research and development program with the ultimate goal of having an accelerated thesis completion model for undergraduate psychology students. In the first year, this study aims to identify the factors that cause the length of the thesis completion period for psychology students. The subject of this research is the institution that organizes the undergraduate psychology study program in Semarang. The data were collected using interview techniques, and the research data was processed using coding analysis. The results showed that the average psychology student took two semesters to complete their thesis. The factors that influenced the thesis's completion are the faculty policy in completing the thesis, the obstacles in completing the thesis, and the students' efforts in completing the thesis. With these results, the preparation of a thesis completion acceleration model is an urgent suggestion to be followed up. Keywords: thesis completion factors, psychology students

Based on this discussion, several conclusions can be drawn. The factors that influence students in completing their thesis are: first, the faculty policy in completing the thesis; second, constraints related to thesis completion; and third, students' efforts to complete their thesis. Thesis completion models or systems, both in general and specifically, what the psychology faculties at each university do vary widely.

The variety of factors influencing students in completing the thesis and the variations in the thesis completion system at each institution do not change the fact that psychology students take a relatively long time to complete the thesis.

These issues should be followed up with strategic and practical steps to optimize or improve the ongoing system. Therefore, the accelerated thesis completion program for psychology students is urgent to do.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted in the Japanese Language Education study program of UMY and UNJ. Participants who were involved in the research can be grouped into two categories.

1. Students of the Japanese language education study program, both those who are still active or writing a thesis or those who have graduated (30 students participated in this study).

2. All lecturers of the Japanese language education study program of UMY and UNJ.

This study used a qualitative research design [5], particularly a case study research method [6]. Data collection techniques used included document analysis. It consists of information about student achievement, theses, and assignments collected by students, questionnaires, and interviews with participants, both individual interviews [7] and focus group.

All data obtained from data collection techniques were analyzed in stages. In particular, the thesis was analyzed with text analysis, and the questionnaire used thematic analysis. Triangulation of data obtained from all data sources [6] was conducted to compare data obtained from text analysis (thesis and assignments), questionnaires and interviews and at the same time convincing. Whether all data tend to lead to the same conclusion, they are intended to confirm and validate the research conclusions [6].

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results showed that thesis writing problems were related to curriculum policies, teaching materials, teaching media, completeness of facilities and infrastructure, and excellent thesis consultation service.

Students' difficulties in completing final thesis projects are as follows, coming from the students' interview results currently writing their thesis.

In the early stages of research, students were confused in determining the theme and research title, finding the background of the problem, and the research's urgency. Then, when doing the research, students found it difficult to find references, and after finding the right theory, students found it difficult to absorb and synthesize theories. Students also had difficulty retrieving research data from foreign texts. Then, the problem with research procedures, students were confused in determining the appropriate research techniques and methods for their research. Apart from the problem of research procedures, students also experienced non-academic difficulties. These non-academic difficulties occurred while working on the thesis. Simultaneously, there were activities and other problems, so that thesis work did not become a priority. Therefore, laziness arose. Time management made it difficult to determine the time for consultation. Students who would not write a thesis, but through a comprehensive exam instead, this comprehensive choice was taken by students whose study period was almost over. A comprehensive paper must be completed within one semester so that there was often psychological tension. It may decrease the quality of the papers and their comprehensive examination scores. Prerequisite courses also avoided the acceleration of studies.

According to interviews conducted with lecturers, the difficulty in completing the final thesis project was caused by a lack of students' insight into scientific research, linguistic knowledge, insufficient sources of articles, and incomplete linguistic theory books. Besides, students tended to read less language literacy. Regarding research procedures, students did not understand scientific research procedures. They also lacked insight and research areas and did not understand how to collect data and data processing procedures.

Students indeed felt that they encountered many difficulties in completing the final stage of a thesis or a comprehensive examination from the questionnaire results. These difficulties included difficulties in the academic and non-academic fields. More than half of the students' respondents agreed that there was more difficulty in non-academics, namely personal problems completing the final project. These non-academic difficulties included time management problems (63%), laziness problems (62%), financial problems (40%), indiscipline problems, and problems when students have to do odd jobs (24%). Students felt the most non-academic problem, which was time management problems, and the least is when they have to do odd jobs when completing their final assignments.

The academic difficulties included: (a) the lack of competence students had in the academic field, (b) inaccurate teaching methods, (c) lack of insight into student areas or research studies, (e) lack of insight into student research methodologies, (f) lack of student translation competence, (g) lack of reference books, (h) less academically friendly curriculum policies, (i) curriculum policies that did not support competency achievement, and (j) academic policies for final year students.

The conclusions of the difficulties associated with academics are as follows.

1. lack of insight into students' research methodology, which was 81%
2. lack of student translation competence of 78.1%
3. lack of insight into the area or student research studies, which was 73.4%
4. the lack of competence students had in the academic field, of 67.2%

Almost all of the respondents, 82.8%, agreed that academic and non-academic difficulties influenced each other. In terms of subject competence, students had the most difficulty in the field of translation (81%), understanding bunpou (43%), kanji (35%), choukai (21%), sakubun (17%), and kaiwa (8%). The necessity

to write the essence of a Japanese thesis also made it difficult and hindered completing the thesis (50%).

More than half of the respondents agreed that the thesis guidance system lacked quality but quantity instead. Then, 38 out of 64 respondents agreed that the thesis trial exam was burdensome and complicated. 42 out of 64 respondents agreed that the thesis trial was not demanding in terms of scheduling, and 37 out of 64 respondents agreed that the thesis trial was technically tricky. 37 out of 64 respondents agreed that the thesis trial was difficult with the scoring system.

5. CONCLUSION

The solution to this research's issues is that the thesis must be positioned as scientific research in which procedures must adhere to the justified scientific method. The thesis must also function as a means for students to learn to research and apply the scientific method. Another mechanical function of the thesis is a requirement for graduation to obtain a bachelor's degree. It must substantially boost students' competence as a strong cognition to practice and develop their knowledge in society. All of these factors must be categorized and strived proportionally to support each other, be integrated simultaneously through curriculum policies, teaching materials, teaching media, completeness of facilities and infrastructure, and excellent service in thesis guidance.

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