

EFL STUDENTS' LEARNING STYLES ON ENGLISH ACADEMIC WRITING AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL IN INDONESIA

Syayid Sandi Sukandi¹ and Yulmiati²

^{1,2}STKIP PGRI Sumatera Barat, Padang, Indonesia, ✉ said_sandi@hotmail.com

Abstract

This research reports descriptive statistical data on the circumstance in the form of a survey study through questionnaire about EFL students' preference on learning styles – alone or group. Respondents were students who enrolled in 2017/2018 academic year at Research subject in three class sections: 2015 A; 2015 B; and 2015 D. Findings show that 59% of the respondents preferred to study alone and in group when they were on campus and only 15% of them preferred to study in that style when they were at home. 22% of the respondents preferred to study in group when they were on campus and 9% of them chose to study in group when they were at home. Preference on studying alone when they were on campus was 15% and 77% of the respondents when they were at home. Only 2% were undecided about their preference on learning styles when they were on campus. The findings show that raising our awareness on which learning styles that the EFL students most prefer can help us design how we conduct exercise or tasks techniques to them. Eventually, we can achieve better pedagogical outcomes in academic writing classroom afterwards.

Keywords: Learning Style, Academic Writing

Introduction

The key issue that this research presents is related to learning English as a foreign language (EFL) in the 21st century. Research on EFL learning discusses insights on literacy. As a developing country in Asia region, Indonesia has its own literacy. Literacy in Indonesia is an interesting area of research to be investigated. In particular, background of this research has close relationship, as Nocon and Cole [1] explained, to 'a sociocultural-historical perspective on literacy', especially 'literacy as progress' [pp. 15-9]. Literacy has been viewed as one of predictors to see how well a country develops in terms of education. An interesting topic within literacy of English as a language is literacy on the basis of English academic writing. Most literatures that provide findings on English writing and composition, as well as findings on rhetorical studies, claim that being able to write in English is a sign of an individual's literacy existence and growth of.

Academic writing, as a term, has its own definition and concept. According to Douglas [2], academic writing is a genre of written language among other type of genres [p. 219]. Written language is crucial in establishing language competence. The different aspect of this point is writing as a means of communicating in the academic sense. This notion leads us to ask for further inquiry on English academic writing. Additionally, we need to comprehend and realize the writers' existence. Writing academically well has close relationship to the writers who produce the writing. Green and Lidinsky [3] proposed an idea: writers who actively produce writings academically realize that process involved in writing is crucial [p. 12]. The cruciality of a particular piece of writing depends on the circumstance of which purpose the writing was produced. In relation to this research, it briefly viewed learning styles that EFL students mostly preferred when they were at home and campus. Knowing the students' preferences on learning styles on these two places can help us, as English lecturers, in designing learning tasks or assignments for them. Since EFL students who were studied in this research were college students; therefore, we need to approach this issue firstly from theories on adult learning. These students, particularly, were young adult students. Fry, Ketteridge, and Marshall [4] explained that a principle that is acceptable in the sense of Adult Learning Theory or Andragogy is that 'adults become ready to learn when they experience a need to know something' [p. 14]. We named the 'need to know something' as internal-call. From this theory, we know that such internal-call toward the goal of learning a language is necessary to be explored

further through research. This research investigated this internal-call by studying EFL students' learning styles at home and campus.

Field, Area, and Scope of Research

Like many other research in the literature, this research has its specific field, area, and scope within the discipline of English studies. It can be classified as primary research in the field of English academic writing and the topic of research is EFL students' learning styles. This topic might be a common topic to be explored; however, approaching this topic through the context of EFL English in Indonesia is relatively new, especially when it was explored in a non-native English speaking environment. To make this research concentrated, determining scope is needed. Scope of this research is EFL English in Indonesian context. According to Norland [5], EFL English is regarded as the activity of English teaching and learning that 'occurs in places where English is not the native language' [p. ix]. Norland theorised EFL English as verisimilitude of English being studied and used in environments where this language is used not in daily basis. As such, focus of this research relates to EFL students' learning styles and connects these styles to teaching and learning English academic writing in Indonesian context.

Review of Related Research

Researches in the topic of learning styles inform interesting findings. Some researchers in this literature involved insights about modalities on learning styles; other researchers talk about learning styles and teaching method; and the other researchers presented findings on students' learning styles and teachers' teaching styles. Wintergest, DeCapua, and Verna [6] conducted research on learning style modalities for ESL/EFL students in the context of Russian EFL students, Russian ESL students, and Asian ESL students. Modalities on learning styles that they found among the students were Project Orientation, Group Activity Orientation, and Individual Activity Orientation. Research that was done by Wintergest, DeCapua, and Verna [6] concentrated on modalities on learning styles. Besides, their research had large pool of students' types. Which type of learning styles that the students preferred, was not studied in their research. They concentrated on modalities on learning styles, but the group activity orientation and individual activity orientation has slight connection to this research.

Furthermore, learning styles are discussed as part of the key concepts in English Language Teaching (ELT). Hatami presented brief review on scholars' description on learning styles. Theoretical statement of Sternberg, Grigorenko, and Zhang in 2008 on learning styles, as Hatami [7] described is that "diagnosing students' learning styles and matching them to teaching methods, [possibly make] learning can be greatly enhanced" [p. 488]. Hatami's research highlighted the relational link between learning styles to teaching methods. This research gives clues to see that such reciprocal relationship was possible to happen.

Another thought provoking research on learning styles was done by Wong and Nunan. After conducting a comparative investigation toward one hundred and ten undergraduate university students in Hong Kong about the learning styles in 2011, Wong and Nunan concluded that being effective and ineffective learners emerged from their scores on a standardized proficiency test. In addition, Wong and Nunan [8] also studied the students' learning strategies and patterns of language use and an interesting statement from their research was that "the more effective learners in this study were more active and more prepared to take control on their own learning" [p. 154]. Their finding provides further evidence that being aware to students' learning styles is beneficial toward the success of English teaching and learning process in the classroom. Different research results might be found if only research of Wong and Nunan was conducted in the context of EFL English. Similar to Wong and Nunan, Bidabadi and Yamat also conducted research in 2010 on learning style preferences. However, the different between the former and the latter is that the former was set in Hong Kong, while the latter was set in Iran. The closer context to this research is research done by Bidabadi and Yamat. They applied random sampling toward 92 Iranian students. Their research included gender as a variable. Bidabadi and Yamat [9] implied that 'the teaching style should be matched to students' learning style and that the materials should also suit students' learning preferences' [p. 219]. Research that was done by Bidabadi and Yamat shown further understanding that students' learning styles had close causal impact from teacher's teaching styles. What the students needed to learn should be accommodated in line with materials that they need to learn. This notion is also acceptable, possibly, in the context of EFL English in Indonesia.

Research on learning styles also involved the conception of gender. Gender seemed to play a critical role toward the achievement of English language learning. In 2016, Natsir, Yusuf, and Huri [10] conducted research on EFL students' learning styles and they conducted research on 'the differences between male and female students' language learning styles of grade 8 (junior high school level) in Banda Aceh'. They found that no different between male and female students in terms of learning styles. In addition, their research shown that

male students tend to be visual learners, while female students tend to be auditory learners. Natsir, Yusuf, and Huri emphasized that recognizing students' way of learning is beneficial for goal of teaching and learning. Their research informed us that in the context of Indonesia, gender might not be that influential toward learning styles, especially toward learning achievement.

Latest research on learning styles was conducted by Şener and Çokçalışkan in 2018. They investigated multiple intelligences and learning styles on secondary school students [11]. Their research shows different result from research results of Natsir, Yusuf, and Huri. They found that 'there was a significant difference between males and females' in terms of learning styles; moreover, 'it was seen that most of the intelligence types and learning styles had a moderate positive correlation' [11]. It seems clear now that context influences how far students' learning styles help them achieve better and desired learning outcomes. Context at this point means broad external aspects beyond the students' current learning environment. Hypothetically, each student who learns English in EFL context views English academic writing in quite different ways. It leads to recognize that even in the same background – that is to say, the EFL background, EFL students are individually different. Theoretically, in the context of andragogy and pedagogy, Fry, Ketteridge, and Marshall [4] pointed that 'learners experience the same teaching in different ways'; meanwhile, 'teachers need to be aware of the impact of cultural background and beliefs on learner behaviour, interpretation and understanding'. Reid [12] also pointed out that the learners' culture mediates their learning styles; similarly, personality influenced their learning styles [p. 53]. This theory then becomes the foundation of where this research was directed. From this theory, we were inspired to raise two-simple-but-contextual research questions.

Tai investigated the learning styles of adult EFL students and their relationship to motivation in learning English. He claimed that 'adult EFL students vary in their perceptual learning style preferences' [13]. In his research, he applied the concept of Reid's Perceptual Learning Style Preference with actual theories on modalities (visual, kinaesthetic, and tactile) and two social interaction factors (individual or social group learning). Gender also plays influential roles in learning styles and strategies. After he analysed his research data by applying statistical analyses, Tai concluded that 'there were significant relationships between auditory, tactile, kinaesthetic, and computer-assisted learning style and motivation in learning English' [13]. He recommended that as teachers or instructors of English in EFL context, we need to remember one important aspect: 'do not ignore what adult students' need or preference in order to just catch every weekly course schedule' [13]. In 2013, Oxford [14] wrote an overview about language learning styles and strategies. She used the term of L2 as reference to either ESL or EFL. For some scholars, the use of L2 as a term had been used exclusively in the context of English as a second language. In her article, Oxford [14] refers the term learning styles to aspects that construct it: sensory preferences, personality types, desired degree of generality, and biological differences. However, her article did not focus further the aspect of learning styles in relation to social interaction, such as group or individual. With that condition, this research, therefore, addresses the issue of learning styles in the light of this interaction and relates it to English academic writing course.

From the articles above, we can see that investigating EFL students' learning styles in the aspect of English academic writing skill needs further support. Research on this topic is somehow rare, especially research that addresses such topic in the context of Indonesia. Bailey [15] listed that two of the four purposes of academic writing are 'to report on a piece of research the writer has conducted' and 'to synthesize research done by others on a topic' [p. 3]. EFL students, such as those in Indonesia, learn academic writing on the basis of composing research article in a particular field. They not only learn how to master English academically, but they also need to be able to possess good skills on applying technical aspects of academic writing.

Research Questions

A closer look of theory in this research emphasized that the research questions were connected to the notion of learner behaviour, as a channel to see their personality, to learning styles. Moreover, questions that were raised in this research were related to interests as lecturers of English, as Blakeslee & Fleischer pointed out [16] on EFL students' learning styles [p. 14]. As practitioners ourselves, we observed that conducting research on aspects that are connected to pedagogical improvement of our own teaching is important.

In other words, as Creswell [17] mentioned, research questions are forms of inquiry [p. 139]. The research questions are: 1) Which learning styles that the EFL students preferred to have between alone, group and alone-and-group when they were at home?; 2) Which learning styles that the EFL students preferred to have between alone, group and alone-and-group when they were at campus?

The first question was raised in this research for the purpose of investigating EFL students' preference on learning types when they were at home. The second question was raised as the same purpose to the first question, but the different aspect is that the second question asked for EFL students' preferences when they were situated

at campus. These two research questions were simple on their terms; however, they can provide clues for English lecturers in constructing learning tasks for their students.

Methods

Research Design

The design of this research follows convention on academic research in the field of EFL English studies, particularly studies on English academic writing. Besides, an important element that this research has, according to Leedy [18], is the goal that it achieves [p. 5]. The goal of this research was to find out answers of the research questions and link the answers to emerging situation happening in academic writing classroom in EFL setting. In addition, this research was designed carefully after considering key concepts, issues and contexts of research, as Blaxter, Hughes, and Tight mentioned [19], on English academic writing in Indonesian background [p. 35]. Key concepts that this research has are concepts on English as a foreign language, language learning, and students' cultural background. Issues are related to EFL students' learning styles at the time when they learned English academic writing in Research course.

Methodologically, this research is quantitative on its nature. Meanwhile, approach toward data in this research used surveys. Questionnaire was used as the research instrument or technique to collect the data. The use of questionnaire in research basically provides numerical data. These data are then used to interpret the EFL students' learning styles. To put it more specific, the form of this research, in other words, is non-experimental quantitative research. The worldviews that this research has, in line with Creswell [17], is constructivism where the end of this research is 'theory generation' [p. 6]. Furthermore, this type of research, according to Leedy [18], usually 'relies largely on a statistical investigation of the data' [p. 111]. The collected data in this research were reported statistically by using frequency (*f*) and percentages (%). These data were then interpreted descriptively so that they can provide generated hypothesis and theory on EFL students' learning styles in Indonesia.

Furthermore, the outcome of this research is to offer hypothesis or theory for researchers to explore this topic of research in their next research endeavour. The idea on this research followed what Blaxter, Hughes, and Mentioned [19] that 'quantitative research may be mostly used for testing theory [;] it can also be used for exploring an area and generating hypotheses and theory' [p. 65]. The proposed theory or hypothesis will be useful for conducting further research on this topic in the future. Specifically, this research applied surveys approach toward the data. According to Johnson [20], the purpose of survey research on topics of Second (Foreign) Language Learning is 'to gather demographic information about language learners' [p. 105]. Thus, information that was collected from the demography related to their learning styles as Indonesian EFL students, when they learned English academic writing.

In addition, Tayie [21] also mentioned that the use of survey in this research was 'to investigate problems in realistic setting' [p. 50]. Finding out how EFL students learn was an insightful research purpose. Besides, as Fraenkel and Wallen [22] emphasized, 'information is collected from a sample rather than from every member of the population' [p. 390]. Such method possibly provides valid data. Three classes had been collected from four available classes in the Research subject at the college. Additionally, Nazir [23] theorised that this research is classifiable as practical research or applied research where the end of such research is that a practical solution over the problem is offered [p. 17]. This research eventually, as Blaxter, Hughes, and Tight [19] mentioned earlier, offers hypothesis on EFL students' learning styles.

Research Instrument

This research used instrument that is supportive toward technique of data collection. In this aspect, sources of data in this research are closely related to responses of the respondents. Questionnaire was distributed to the respondents. Methodologically, questionnaire is a common method used in collecting survey data [16, p. 113; 14, p. 191; 17, p. 49; 20, p. 78]. The use of questionnaire in this research was meant to gather data that were connected to EFL students' preference on which learning style they preferred. Since an individual EFL student has particular learning behaviour, then to find overall picture of all EFL students, as in the population, needed questionnaire. Moreover, form of questions in the questionnaire was closed questions, following what Bailey [15] mentioned, as they 'are easier to process' [p. 268]. As Fraenkel and Wallen [22] mentioned, the questions in the instrument were designed to be 'as simple as possible' [p. 397]. Therefore, questions that were distributed to the respondents consisted of two questions. The questions related closely to EFL students' learning styles.

Research Instrument: Questionnaire	Even Semester 2017/2018
<p>Ketika anda belajar di kampus, anda lebih memilih gaya belajar yang mana di bawah ini?* (When you want to study, which learning style that you most prefer below?)</p> <p>a. sendirian (<i>alone</i>) (.....)</p> <p>b. kelompok belajar (<i>study group</i>) (.....)</p> <p>c. sendirian dan kelompok belajar (<i>alone dan study group</i>) (.....)</p> <p>d. tidak tahu (<i>undecided</i>) (.....)</p> <p><small>*) beri tanda tidi satu jawaban yang paling sesuai menurut anda di bagian yang sudah disediakan</small></p>	1
<p>Pada saat anda di rumah, anda lebih memilih gaya belajar yang mana di bawah ini?* (When you were at home, which learning style that you mostly prefer below?)</p> <p>a. sendirian (<i>alone</i>) (.....)</p> <p>b. kelompok belajar (<i>study group</i>) (.....)</p> <p>c. sendirian dan kelompok belajar (<i>alone dan study group</i>) (.....)</p> <p>d. tidak tahu (<i>undecided</i>) (.....)</p> <p><small>*) beri tanda tidi satu jawaban yang paling sesuai menurut anda di bagian yang sudah disediakan</small></p>	2

Figure 1. Research Instrument i.e. Questionnaire

Technique of Data Collection

In practice of quantitative research method, Blaxter, Hughes, and Tight [19] described that ‘surveys are usually associated as a research approach with the idea of asking group of people [the same] questions’ [p. 77]. The two questions in the questionnaire were asked to the respondents. Being aware on considering the purpose of this research at the time of designing the questionnaire for this research was an indication to achieve the reliability of this research design quantitatively. Likewise, following what Tayie [21] mentioned, questionnaire of this research had been designed in accordance to ‘the basic purpose of this research’ [p. 52]. Meanwhile, the purpose of this research was intended to find answers of the research questions.

Population and Sample

In relation to population in this research, we applied the concept of target population. Target population in this research was students who enrolled at Research class in 2015 A, B, and D session at 2017/2018 academic year. The demography of research respondents in this research, or the population, consists of 92 students who enrolled at Research course at English education study program in a private college in Padang, West Sumatera province of Indonesia. They were separated to three classes: 2015 A, 2015 B, and 2015 D. Meanwhile, 2015 C was included in this research because three classes were considered as enough as research samples. A certain sampling technique was implemented in this research. This research applied ‘simple random sampling’ – a form of probability sampling technique [19, p. 163, 18, p. 213, 24, p. 122]. This technique referred to selecting samples from population randomly. In this research, samples that were randomly selected were three classes among four classes where students in those classes received the distributed questionnaire.

Technique of Data Analysis

Data analysis technique in this research uses the analysis of numbers and descriptive statistics. Blaxter, Hughes, and Tight [19] stated that numbers in this research are reported through ‘a measure of proportion’ or percentages [p. 200]. The percentage means the highest and lowest frequency of each item of answers in the questionnaire. Furthermore, data in this research were analyzed through descriptive statistics with nominal or ordinal data in the form of percentages [19, p. 216, 20, p. 116]. Besides, the process of analysis in this research is in the form of understanding what the percentages reveal. In this case, Blaxter, Hughes, and Tight claimed [19] that understanding means ‘perception of the meaning of [numerical findings]’ after measuring data after the questionnaire was returned by the respondents [p. 206]. The percentage was considered as the numerical values to reflect the EFL students’ learning styles.

Findings and Discussion

After collecting the data and measuring the percentage, we reached the research findings. In relation to what Leedy [18] explained, findings of this research are presented in the form of numbers and followed by description of the meaning of the numbers [p. 106]. In doing so, this research then followed quantitative descriptive research design. Findings of this research are presented according to the list of the research questions.

Learning styles that EFL students preferred when they were at home

This first finding informs what EFL students preferred to choose between studying alone, group, or alone-and-group when they were at home. The purpose of this question was to get first data about their learning styles

at home, so that their learning styles can be contrasted with second data about their learning styles at campus. The following tables (Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3) show that each class has its highest point, which is similar, one another. However, each class has different percentage in terms of the frequency.

Table 1. Responses of Students in 2015-A on the First Question

2015 A	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	%
sendirian (<i>alone</i>)	25	28	89%
kelompok belajar (<i>study group</i>)	0		0%
sendirian dan kelompok belajar (<i>alone dan study group</i>)	3		11%
tidak tahu (<i>undecided</i>)	0		0%

EFL students who were registered at 2015-A class preferred to study alone when they were at home. This can be seen from the fact that 89% of the population in 2015-A class chose to study alone when they were at home. Students who preferred to study in group and remained undecided about their preference are in the same number, which is zero. In 2015-A, only three students who preferred to study alone and three students preferred to study in group.

Table 2. Responses of Students in 2015-B on the First Question

2015 B	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	%
sendirian (<i>alone</i>)	18	28	64%
kelompok belajar (<i>study group</i>)	4		14%
sendirian dan kelompok belajar (<i>alone dan study group</i>)	6		21%
tidak tahu (<i>undecided</i>)	0		0%

Table 3. Responses of Students in 2015-D on the First Question

2015 D	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	%
sendirian (<i>alone</i>)	20	26	77%
kelompok belajar (<i>study group</i>)	3		12%
sendirian dan kelompok belajar (<i>alone dan study group</i>)	3		12%
tidak tahu (<i>undecided</i>)	0		0%

Similar to 2015-A, 2015-B has slightly different preferences on learning styles. More than a half students in 2015-B, or 64% of the population in the class, preferred to study alone when they were at home. In this class, surprisingly, four students preferred to study in group and six students preferred to study between alone and in group. No student in 2015-B preferred to be undecided for their option. Additionally, the different level for their highest percentage is 35%.

For 2015-D, the respondents also preferred to study alone when they were at home. 77% of the population preferred to study alone. The number of students who preferred to study in group and in mixed option (alone-and-group) is the same. Each preference was chosen by three students. Also, no student preferred to be undecided for their option. In terms of population, 2015-D has 26 students who responded the questionnaire. This number is different from 2015-A and 2015-B. Although population in 2015-D is slightly different from population in 2015-A and 2015-B, the percentage of each preference remains the same. Almost all students either in 2015-A, 2015-B, and 2015-D preferred to choose to study alone when they were at home. For the highest percentage, compared to 2015-A as the highest, the difference is 12%.

Learning styles that the EFL students preferred when they were at campus

The following findings inform what EFL students preferred to choose between studying alone, group, or alone-and-group when they were at campus. The purpose of this question was to get second data as comparison to the first data on which learning styles that the EFL students chose when they were at home.

Table 4. Responses of Students in 2015 A on the Second Question

2015 A	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	%
sendirian (<i>alone</i>)	4	28	14%
kelompok belajar (<i>study group</i>)	4		14%
sendirian dan kelompok belajar (<i>alone dan study group</i>)	18		64%
tidak tahu (<i>undecided</i>)	0		0%

In terms of studying at campus, students in 2015-A preferred to study in mixed option (alone-and-group), that is to say, between alone and group. 64% of the population or more than a half of it in 2015-A class chose this option. The same number of frequency goes to study alone (14%) and group (14%). In other words, four students from the population in 2015-A preferred to study alone at campus and the same number of students in 2015-A preferred to study in group. Similar to responses about learning styles at home, no student remained undecided for their option.

Table 5. Responses of Students in 2015 B on the Second Question

2015 B	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	%
sendirian (<i>alone</i>)	4	28	14%
kelompok belajar (<i>study group</i>)	4		14%
sendirian dan kelompok belajar (<i>alone dan study group</i>)	20		71%
tidak tahu (<i>undecided</i>)	0		0%

The above data show similar pattern to data from 2015-A. More than a half, or 71% of the population, preferred to study either alone or in group. From 28 students, four students (14%) chose to study alone when they were at campus and four students (14%) chose to study in group. Number of students who preferred to this each option is the same. Preference on the undecided also has zero frequency, just the same like that in preference to study at home.

Table 6. Responses of Students in 2015 D on the Second Question

2015 D	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	%
sendirian (<i>alone</i>)	6	36	17%
kelompok belajar (<i>study group</i>)	12		33%
sendirian dan kelompok belajar (<i>alone dan study group</i>)	16		44%
tidak tahu (<i>undecided</i>)	2		6%

Unlike data in 2015-A and 2015-B, 2015-D show different pattern. Less than a half of the population, or 44% of it, preferred to study in mixed option (alone-and-group). This number, however, is insignificant as in comparison to the highest point in 2015-A and 2015-B. The number of students who preferred to study in group were relatively higher in 2015-D than those in 2015-A and 2015-B. As many as 31% of the population in 2015-D preferred to study in group when they were at campus. In comparison to responses on preference to study at home, ten students filled out their responses twice in the second question of the questionnaire. 17% of the population preferred to study alone and only 6% remained undecided about which learning style they preferred. The number of population in 2015-D at this point is higher than that in previous point. However, considering the number of students on each preference, the significant difference may not be that exhausting.

Discussion

The above findings show us that learning styles, in general, can be portrayed through survey. However, in terms of learning English academic writing, each student has unique preference toward the way or how they learn at home or campus on daily basis. In line with this notion, Adkinson and Tschudi [25] emphasized that quality of writing 'is virtually inseparable from the context of writer, audience, occasion and content' where the writing is produced [p. 193]. Therefore, approaching how EFL students learn at these two places is necessary. Context of the students' learning styles and the occasion of writing, at large, influence the students to produce such writing academically. When we link this circumstance to designing our teaching activity in the academic writing classroom for EFL students, then we might come to an idea that constructing classroom atmosphere that relates to these diversities should be positively acceptable. Table 7 and Table 8 present the overall measurement of the students' preference on which learning styles they preferred. Respondents in the three classes (2015 A, 2015 B, and 2015 B) dominantly chose to study alone at home. When they are studying at campus, they chose to study between alone or in group. These findings show insightful ideas to be discussed further.

Table 7. Overall Measurement of Responses of Students in 2015 A, B, and D on the First Question

Σ 2015 A, B, D	Σf	Σp	$\Sigma\%$
sendirian (<i>alone</i>)	63	82	77%
kelompok belajar (<i>study group</i>)	7		9%
sendirian dan kelompok belajar (<i>alone dan study group</i>)	12		15%
tidak tahu (<i>undecided</i>)	0		0%

Table 8. Overall Measurement of Responses of Students in 2015 A, B, and D on the Second Question

Σ 2015 A, B, D	Σf	Σp	$\Sigma\%$
sendirian (<i>alone</i>)	14	92	15%
kelompok belajar (<i>study group</i>)	20		22%
sendirian dan kelompok belajar (<i>alone dan study group</i>)	54		59%
tidak tahu (<i>undecided</i>)	2		2%

By knowing the findings of this research, we come to an interesting statement: it is fine to design learning tasks that will be done at home by asking the students to do the assignments by themselves individually; meanwhile, classroom exercises can be done in group. Additionally, Jokić [29] conducted research in Croatia. He theorised that it is important for teachers who teach at secondary level schools to associate students' needs in learning to teaching strategies that they apply in the classroom. Similarly, Fahriany and Haswani [30] mentioned in their research that the teaching strategies were developed by analysing the students' needs, students' wants, and students' lack [p. 55]. In terms of students' wants, for instance, Sukandi and Syafar [31] found that EFL students tend to prefer the activity of reading than writing in academic English. In teaching academic writing to EFL students, we need to be aware on these preferences about learning styles. However, instructing EFL students to write academically does bring some challenges. After completing research on EFL students' writing performance at Tlemcen University, Zidane [32] claimed that 'the student's writing difficulties are mainly related to the issues of fluency and style' [p. 295]. Designing learning exercises in group might be a good idea at this point. Meanwhile, Wigati [33] found that anxiety, motivation, and self-esteem were forms of psychological interference in developing students' academic writing process. She also mentioned that 'the teacher needs to solve the problems by reducing psychological negative interference through portfolio writing, collaborative writing, psychological engagement by way of consultation and giving rewards' [p. 1056]. Clearly, now, that allowing students to be in group helps them to reduce such fear in learning English academic writing. In fact, research on critical thinking and academic writing, as in Misdi's research [34], informs that critical thinking, critical reading, and critical writing are important foundations to be 'self-driven' in academic writing. Inviting the students to activate their learning motivation is crucial as well.

Our competence as the students' instructor, teacher or lecturer is needed. Arisman, Hamra, and Weda [35] concluded that the influence of lecturer's competence to students' writing proficiency is positive and significant. For example, our ability to design proper academic writing classroom and relevant learning materials for them is helpful for the success of the classroom. Ghufroon [36] found that 'there is a significant difference in students' academic writing skills between the students who were taught by using ELT research papers and those who were taught by using textbook materials' [p. 61]. Selecting appropriate texts for students that does not interfere with the students' learning styles is also beneficial for both sides: the teacher and the students, equally. In terms of teacher's roles in English academic writing classroom, we should place ourselves as a facilitator. We should locate our students as the centre of teaching and learning activity. Darsih [37] summarized that 'several roles of teachers in learner-centered teaching are as guides, facilitator and coaches' [p. 33]. We basically facilitate our students to grow themselves in learning how to write well academically.

Conclusion and Suggestion

From this research, we notice that literacy and English academic writing are inseparable. A good level of literacy in English can be seen from the growth of language competence. Purpose of learning academic writing is to help EFL students to exist in academic community by using standardized English. However, process in learning academic writing is unnegotiable. The internal-call or the need to know something can foster EFL students' motivation to learn. EFL students' learning styles, as in this article presented earlier, can help us construct effective academic writing classroom. Learning styles from interaction perspectives are alone, group, or combination between alone and group learning activity. These preferences surely shape EFL students' achievement on English academic writing. Additionally, students' cultural background also influences students' preferences, as findings of this research shown above. In relation to theory generation, as this research pursued,

we are aware that designing learning tasks need to be made in line with the students' learning behavior. Do the students like to study alone, or, do they much prefer to study in group? This research, therefore, offers a hypothesis: EFL students preferred to study alone when they are at home, while at campus, they can learn in a more flexible situation. Thus, to researchers in the field, we suggest that further research exploring this topic is needed.

References

- Nocon H, M Cole 2009 Relating diversity and literacy theory *Handbook of Research on Literacy and Diversity* ed L M Morrow et al (New York: The Guilford Press) pp 13-31
- Douglas BH 2004 *Language Assessment: Principle and Classroom Practices* (New York: Pearson Education)
- Greene S, Lidinsky A 2011 Jul 6 *From Inquiry to Academic Writing: A Text and Reader* (Boston: Bedford/ St. Martin's)
- Fry H, Ketteridge S, Marshall S 2003 Dec 16 Understanding student learning *A Handbook for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: Enhancing Academic Practice* vol 2 ed Fry H et al (New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group) pp 8-26
- Norland DL, Pruett-Said T 2006 *A Kaleidoscope of Models and Strategies for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages* (Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group)
- Wintergerst AC, DeCapua A, Verna MA 2003 Mar 1 Conceptualizing learning style modalities for ESL/EFL students *System* **31** 85-106
- Hatami S 2012 Dec 28 Learning styles *ELT Journal* **67** 488-90
- Wong LL, Nunan D 2011 Jun 1 The learning styles and strategies of effective language learners *System* **39** 144-63
- Bidabadi FS, Yamat H 2010 Jan 1 Learning style preferences by Iranian EFL freshman university students *Proc., Social and Behavioral Sciences* vol **7** pp 219-26
- Natsir Y, Yusuf YQ, Huri AD 2016 Mar 26 The male and female EFL students' language learning styles *Proc., English Education International Conference* **1** 66-73
- Şener S, Çokçalışkan A 2018 Jan 27 An investigation between multiple intelligences and learning styles *Journal of Education and Training Studies*. **6** 125-32
- Reid G 2005 Oct 3 *Learning Styles and Inclusion* (London: Sage)
- Tai FM 2013 Dec 1 Adult EFL students' preferred learning styles and motivation *The Journal of Human Resource and Adult Learning* **9** 161
- Rebecca L, Oxford P 2003 Language learning styles and strategies: an overview *Learning Styles and Strategies* (New York: Routledge)
- Bailey S 2014 Oct 3 *Academic Writing: A Handbook for International Students* (New York: Routledge)
- Blakeslee AM, Fleischer C 2009 Mar 4 *Becoming A Writing Researcher* (New York: Routledge)
- Creswell JW 2017 Dec 12 *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (New York: Sage Publications)
- Leedy PD 1993 *Practical Research: Planning and Design* (New York: Macmillan)
- Blaxter L 2010 Sep 1 *How to Research* (New York: McGraw-Hill Education)
- Johnson DM 1991 *Approaches to Research in Second Language Learning* (New York: Addison-Wesley Longman Ltd)
- Tayie S 2005 *Research Methods and Writing Research Proposals* (London: Pathways to Higher Education)
- Fraenkel JR, Wallen NE 2008 *How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education* (New York: McGraw-Hill)
- Nazir M 2014 *Metode Penelitian* (Bogor: Penerbit Ghalia Indonesia)
- Sugiyono MP 2016 *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif dan Kombinasi (Mixed Methods)* (Bandung: Alfabeta)
- Adkison S, Tchudi S 1997 Grading on merit and achievement: where quality meets quantity *Alternatives*

- to Grading Student Writing* ed Tschudi S (Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English) p 192
- Cohen L, Manion L, Morrison K 2002 Sep 11 *Research Methods in Education* (New York: Routledge – Falmer, Taylor and Francis Group)
- Abdulkareem MN 2013 Sep 1 An investigation study of academic writing problems faced by Arab postgraduate students at universiti teknologi malaysia (utm) *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* **3** 1552
- Mappiasse SS, Sihes AJ 2014 Sep 22 Evaluation of English as a foreign language and its curriculum in Indonesia: a review *English Language Teaching* **7** 113
- Jokić A 2018 Learning styles of students in prva riječka hrvatska gimnazija *EJMS European Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies Articles* **7**
- Fahriany F, Haswani F 2017 Effective ways in teaching English as foreign language to young learners with various learning styles *Indonesian EFL Journal* **3** 55-63
- Sukandi SS, Syafar DN 2018 Mar 1 EFL students' responses to learning basic reading and writing skills *Studies in English Language and Education* **5** 40-53
- Zidane R 2018 Jan 1 The challenging facets of EFL learners' writing performance *Social Sciences Review of the Faculty of Sciences and Letters University of Uludag/Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* **19**
- Wigati FA 2017 Psychological interference on the student's academic writing process *The Social Sciences* **12** 1056-65
- Misdi M 2018 Feb 13 Beyond Critical Thinking in Academic Writing: A Discourse Perspective *Basis (Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris)* **1** 51-6
- Arisman R, Hamra A, Weda S 2017 Nov 18 Lecturer's competence and students' writing proficiency at university level in Indonesia *ELT Worldwide* **4** 161-70
- Ghufron MA ELT 2017 Sep 28 Research papers as authentic materials in teaching research-based article writing: a case in Indonesian context *Indonesian EFL Journal: Journal of ELT, Linguistics and Literature* **3** 61-77
- Darsih E 2018 Jan 29 Learner-centered teaching: what makes it effective *Indonesian EFL Journal* **4** 33-42