

LECTURERS' ATTITUDE TOWARD WRITING AND TEACHING WRITING STRATEGIES IN RELATION TO WRITING ATTITUDE OF THE SIXTH SEMESTER STUDENTS OF ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM OF FKIP SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY

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Abstract: Writing is the most difficult skill among other three basic language skills. Apparently, most of the sixth semester students of English Education Study Program of FKIP Sriwijaya University already had good achievement toward this skill. The purposes of this study were to find out the attitude toward writing of the sixth semester students and the attitude toward writing and teaching writing strategies of the writing course lecturers of English Education Study Program of FKIP Sriwijaya University. Participants of the study included the sixth semester students of writing course themselves (N=84) and the lecturers of the sixth semester writing course students (N=3). The sample was taken by using purposive sampling test. A descriptive analysis study was applied as the method of the study. Survey in a form of questionnaire was used as data gathering instrument. Data analysis revealed most of the students and all the lecturers had positive attitude toward writing; and all the lecturers had positive attitude on their teaching writing strategies.

Keywords: *Writing, Writing Attitude, Attitude on Teaching Writing Strategies*

Writing refers to a process of channeling the writer's thoughts or opinion, knowledge, and/or information into the written form. According to Finocchiaro (1974), writing is one of the language skills used for communicating indirectly. It is a way to communicate by conveying or expressing feeling through the written form (Harmer, 2001). Moreover, Inderawati, Pratama, and Loeneto (2018) emphasize that writing is a writer's way to communicate with the readers by expressing, generating, developing, and organizing ideas by using graphic in a certain language. In line with statements, Harmer (2004) also states that students, through writing, are able to express their ideas, thoughts, and feeling into its written symbols. This activity can be done by working in other skills of listening, speaking, and reading (Nation, 2009). In brief, according to those experts, through writing, the students can easily express themselves by pouring what they think and feel into the form of writing and all at once improving their basic language skills.

In other case, among other basic language skills, writing is the most difficult one for students. Fajri, Inderawati, and Mirizon (2015) emphasize that many students cannot write well because writing skill is the most difficult skill to learn. They found that in their experimental study of the tenth grade students of SMA Negeri 3 Prabumulih, the writing achievement before the treatment was 46.4516. In other words, writing is a difficult skill for the students to be achieved. Furthermore, it is a complex task (Graham, Harris, & Mason, 2005). It is a difficult skill for both native and nonnative speakers since the writers should balance multiple issues, such as content, organization, purpose, audience, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, and mechanics (Hashemian and Heidari, 2013). In addition, it is a complex skill since it encourages thinking and learning, motivates communication, and makes thought available for reflection. In line with that, Hadley (1993) states that English academic writing seems to be the most difficult skill to be mastered by students since it needs to imply the ability of telling or retelling some information into the written form with the correct grammar and sense covered by with good unity and coherence. Also, Tasykirah, Inderawati, and Ihsan (2016) mention that writing and composing words in the second language are not easy because there are many substances which the students must be able to cover, such as the function of various forms, structures, and punctuation marks which is based on the English standard then using them in communication properly. It can be sum up that writing is a difficult skill to be managed by the students.

The main problem faced by the students about writing is they do not have knowledge of the writing process and mastery of this basic skill to produce good writing, (Quible & Griffin, 2007). In line with that, a strong proposition by Chalk, Hagan-Burke, & Burke (2005, p. 75), "students lack a basic knowledge about

how to approach writing and the writing process as a whole.” Moreover, Joyner, Gibson, Wiley, Leech, Leader, Fiester, Kim, (2015) state that many students have less ability in usage and mechanics and in sentence formation which means they cannot utilize language that invites the readers. Most of them are not good at presenting their ideas in a logical sequence and they do not use specific strategies while doing writing. Thus, the students are lack in the skill of developing a controlling idea and supporting it with elaborated details (Joyner et al., 2015). Eventually, it is difficult for the readers to imagine and sink into the sense they try to convey.

Hairston (1986) also states that most of college teachers are not well-trained to teach writing. They are indoctrinated that to be good teachers of writing, they must: (1) mark all student writings accurately and comment on them substantially; and (2) have one-to-one student talks regularly. They think, “*The more marks on the students' papers, the better the teacher.*” However, Hairston (1986) refers to the serious drawbacks of this approach that not only it is impractical but also damaging a program, its faculty, and graduate students. More importantly, it simply does not result in student writing improvement. Students, after their writing have been marked and be returned, (1) will “react to a mass of negative comments by refusing to read it.” (p. 121).; (2) most of them do not know how to work on their teacher’ comments to revise their writing; (3) assume their writing has been completed and not interested in working on it again since knowing that their writing have been turned and graded; (4) are confused of mixed signals on their writing; and (5) think that teachers do not care what they say and consider teaching writing as a great burden and thankless task.

While, Huy (2015) explains that if student has good capability in writing, it brings many advantages: (1) easily developing the ability of using vocabulary and grammar and increasing the use of the language; (2) helping in speaking and reading texts more effectively since writing is an important instrument in supporting other skills; and (3) easier understanding modern information technology and gaining knowledge. Furthermore, mastering writing skill for the students can help them finding job, making their own money since having other expertise beside their majority, and of course will facilitate them in writing thesis to finish their college. With those advantages of having good competence of writing, this substantial skill can no longer be left behind.

In Sriwijaya University, mainly in English Study Program, writing is the basic course which must be taken by every student without leaving behind other basic skills. This is in line with Mohammad and Hazarika (2016) that all the skills have equal importance in a language yet writing has more in academic discipline because it is one of the most crucial instruments to examine students’ performance in their respective fields of study. The writing course, in Sriwijaya University English Study Program, is divided into four kinds which are Writing I, Writing II, Writing III, and Writing IV. Each class of the courses is taught by two lecturers in order to achieve the effective teaching and learning process. Dealing with the subjects of the study, the writer focuses on the sixth-semester students of English Study Program of Sriwijaya University which have taken Writing I, Writing II, Writing III, and are taking Writing IV course and the lecturers of English Study Program of Sriwijaya University who are teaching the semester-six students writing course.

The result of Sriwijaya University Academic System, out of 84 students of the sixth-semester students of English Study Program of Sriwijaya University who have taken the last writing course, Writing III, shows that 56 students or 66.66% of them got A, 26 students or 30.95% got B, and 1 student or 1.19% got C and E. It can be concluded that most of the students have good writing achievement. In other words, the lecturers of writing have met the objective of the teaching and learning process.

One of the factors which influence students’ good achievement is the teaching and learning process done by the lecturers (Sanders & Horn, 1998). It all cannot be separated from the lecturers’ attitude toward the course and the teaching strategies chosen, and, of course, students’ attitudes toward writing itself.

In the teaching and learning process, lecturers’ attitude toward writing plays a prominent role. Graham, Berninger, and Fan (2007) define writing attitude as an effective regulation that causes the author to feel happy or unhappy during the writing activity. In other words, if the person is happy for writing, it means that she has positive attitude and vice versa. When the lecturers’ attitude toward writing is good or positive, then they will consider writing as an important skill and course. Therefore, they will apply the best strategies to teach this course and this also will help the students improve their writing achievement.

In the process of schooling, lecturers play an important role in making learning happen. In accordance, Islam (2017) states that lecturers have a major effect in the way of students learn. In corresponding to the major effect of lecturers to students, Khan (2015) states that lecturers’ decision of adopting methods and strategies in order to build effective learning atmosphere is very necessary. Lecturers need to apply fun method, technique, or strategy to attract the students’ attention and make them capable in writing (Febriyanti, Inderawati, and Fiftinova, 2018). Furthermore, Inderawati (2017) emphasizes that involving technologies during the teaching and learning process can make the students understand the material faster. In choosing the proper strategies to apply, Sopin (2015) claims that the lecturers’ choice probably will in turn build the formation of students’ belief. The term of methods or strategies themselves refers to means or ways used to

reach a goal or to make something done easier. Basically, the application of the strategies aims to students can easily adopt the knowledge and information taught and learned in the process teaching and learning. Hornby defines (2010, p.1475), “strategy is a plan that is intended to achieve a particular purpose.” Based on this definition, it is implied that if the particular purpose is achieved, it means that the strategy fits to the subject applied. The same as the strategies applied to teach Writing III on the sixth-semester students of English Study Program of Sriwijaya University which produced a good result. It showed that the lecturers have applied suitable strategies to the students.

Another thing which plays important role in the process of teaching and learning is students’ attitude (Bertolini, Stremmel, & Thorngren, 2012). When learning, students perform habits that ease their process of learning, (Khan, 2015). This is related to the students’ attitudes. The term of attitude(s) implies feeling or emotion about a fact or situation (Merriam-Webster, 2018). It is more like the way of someone acts over something. This attitude can be positive or negative. In other words, it might be good or bad. Dauda, Jambo, and Umar (2016), “a person’s attitude to an idea or object determines what the person thinks, feels and how the person would like to behave towards that idea or object.” It means that the attitudes of students in the process of teaching and learning influence the result of learning in a certain way. In other words, Dauda, Jambo, and Umar (2016) formulize that the way students perceive a subject decides their success or failure in that subject. Thus, students’ attitudes toward information and knowledge taught and they learn about writing influences the final result as Bulut (2017) mentions that one of the factors affecting individual’s writing achievement is attitude toward it.

Regarding to the writer’s recent study about the relationship between attitudes and writing outcomes, Kotula, Tivnan, and Aguilar (2014) found that there is a consistent relationship between the students’ attitudes and writing outcome. It means that the writing outcome is influenced by the students’ attitude. The last, a study conducted by Sariçoban and Saricaoğlu (2008) shows that there is a significant correlation between strategies used in the teaching and learning process and the students’ achievement. In other words, the students’ learning outcome is influenced by strategies applied by the teacher.

This study aimed to find out the attitude toward writing of the sixth semester students and the attitude toward writing and teaching writing strategies of the writing course lecturers of English Education Study Program of FKIP Sriwijaya University in order to know kinds of attitude students and lecturers had during the teaching and learning of writing that caused most of the sixth semester students had good achievement in writing. Therefore, the writer conducted a descriptive analyses study entitled as “Lecturers’ Attitude and Teaching Writing Strategies in Relation to Writing Attitude of the Sixth Semester Students of English Education Study Program of FKIP Sriwijaya University.”

Method

Design and Procedure of the Study

This study was conducted in a descriptive analysis study. The purpose of this method is to describe what it *is*. The variables of the study were *Lecturers’ Writing Attitude*, *Lecturers’ Attitude toward Teaching Writing Strategies*, and *Writing Attitude of the Sixth Semester Students of English Education Study Program of FKIP Sriwijaya University*. The data of the study were collected by distributing 2 kinds of questionnaires which were in the Likert item of rating scale 5-1 (*strongly agree to strongly disagree*, respectively). The first questionnaire consisting of 15 items and 3 categories (*Belief, Feeling, and Behavioral Component Category*) was aimed to find out the students’ and lecturers’ attitude toward writing and the other one consisting of 19 items was to find out the lecturers’ attitude on their teaching writing strategies. Later, the data collected was analyzed by using percentage analysis (Argyrous, 2011):

$$\% = \frac{F}{N} \times 100$$

Where, F is the frequency of cases in a category and N is the total number of cases in all categories. After being analyzed, the data was interpreted as what it *is*.

Participants of the Study

The first questionnaire aiming to find out the students’ and lecturers’ writing attitude was distributed to the total of 84 students of the sixth semester and 3 lecturers of the sixth semester

writing course students. While, the other questionnaire which was to find out the lecturers' attitude on their teaching writing strategies was only distributed to those 3 lecturers.

Findings

The Results of the Students' Attitude on Writing Questionnaire

The possible score for this questionnaire ranged from 15 to 75. From the data collected by distributing the questionnaire to the students, the minimum score was 40 and the maximum one was 74. While, the average score was 53.64.

To see the positive or negative students' writing attitude, the writer classified the attitude into 2 categories as seen on the table below:

TABLE 1. Students' Writing Attitude Classification

No.	Category	Value	Total Number of Students	Percentage (%)
1	Negative	15 - 45	10	11.90
2	Positive	46 - 75	74	88.09
TOTAL			84	100

Based on the table distribution above, it can be seen that the total number of students who had negative attitude toward writing was 10 students (11.90%), while those who had positive attitude were 74 students (88.09%).

For the writing attitude classification, the average score found from the 84 students for the *Belief* category was 3.58 rounded up to 4. This score meant that the students had positive belief on writing. For the *Feeling* category, the average score was 3.41 rounded up to 3 indicating that they had neutral feeling on writing. The last, *Behavioral Component* category, the average score was 3.76 rounded up to 4 meaning that the students behaved positively on writing.

Finding out more, from the 74 students who had positive attitude on writing, it was found that the average score of the *Belief* category was 3.70 rounded up to 4 which meant they had positive belief on writing. For the *Feeling* category, the average score found was 3.50 rounded up to 4 which also meant they had positive feeling on writing. For the last category, *Behavioral Component*, the average score was 3.85 indicating the students behaved positively on writing.

On the other hand, among the 10 students who had negative writing attitude, for the *Belief* category, the average score found was 2.71 rounded up to 3 that meant the students had neutral belief on writing. The same as the average score of *Belief* category, the score of *Feeling* category indicated the students had neutral feeling on writing. The category of *Behavioral Component*, the average score found was 3.1 rounded up to 3 that meant the students behaved neutral on writing.

Based on the description above, it can be sum up that most of the sixth semester students of English Education Study Program of FKIP Sriwijaya University in academic year of 2017/2018 had positive attitude toward writing.

The Results of the Lecturers' Attitude on Writing Questionnaire

The possible score for this questionnaire also ranged from 15 to 75. The minimum score found from this questionnaire distribution to 3 lecturers of the sixth semester students writing course was 61 and the maximum one was 66. While, the average score was 63.66.

The writer classified the writing attitude of the lecturers as shown on the table below:

TABLE 2. Lecturers' Writing Attitude Classification

No.	Category	Value	Total Number of Lecturers	Percentage (%)
1	Negative	15 - 45	0	0
2	Positive	46 - 75	3	100
TOTAL			3	100

Based on the distribution above, it was found that 100% of the lecturers had positive attitude on writing.

For the writing attitude classification, the average score found for the *Belief* category from all the 3 lecturers was 3.66. Rounded up to 4, the score meant that the lecturers had positive belief on writing. For the *Feeling* category, the average score was 4.19 rounded up to 4 which was also meant that the lecturers had positive feeling on writing. The last, *Behavioral Component* category, the average score found was 4.5 rounded up to 5 which indicated that the lecturers behaved very positively on writing.

In other words, all the lecturers of the six-semester students writing course of English Education Study Program of FKIP Sriwijaya University in academic year of 2017/2018 had positive attitude toward writing.

The Results of the Lecturers' Attitude on Their Teaching Writing Strategies Questionnaire

The scores ranged from 19 to 95, the results showed that the minimal score from the distribution of the questionnaire was 79 and 91 the highest. Whereas, the average score was 83.33.

From the data obtained, to see the category of positive or negative attitude of the lecturers on their teaching writing strategies, the writer classified the score into 2 categories. The classification distributed as:

TABLE 3. Lecturers' Attitude on Their Teaching Writing Strategies Classification

No.	Category	Value	Total Number of Lecturers	Percentage (%)
1	Negative	19 - 56.5	0	0
2	Positive	56.6 - 95	3	100
TOTAL			3	100

Based on the classification above, all the lecturers had positive attitude on their teaching writing strategies. In other words, the lecturers of the six-semester students writing course of English Education Study Program of FKIP Sriwijaya University in academic year of 2017/2018 had positive attitude on their teaching writing strategies.

Interpretations

There are some points to be discussed based on the findings of the study. Firstly, the writer obtained positive results on the first questionnaire which aiming to find out the students' writing attitude. According to the findings of the study, most of the students liked writing. There was 71.42% of the students reported they enjoyed writing. There were many factors causing this students' positive writing attitude. The majority of students maintained they felt writing activity was fun. They enjoyed writing and did not feel nervous about their writings. Seeing their thoughts on the paper was also a pleasing for them. Whenever their writings were evaluated, they had no fear about it. Apparently, something that made them less fear about their writing because they had discussed their writing to their desk-mates before it was being evaluated by the lecturers. While discussing, of course they shared ideas and had correction on each-ones' writing, so that they became more confident on their writing. Hence, it can be sum up that those attitudes toward writing in his finding were one of the means that supported the sixth semester students' good writing achievement. Moreover, according to Graham, Berninger, and Fan (2007) writing attitude is an effective regulation that causes the author to feel happy or unhappy during the writing activity. Based on the theory, it can be said that these sixth semester students were feeling happy in the course of writing activity. In other words, the students were in the open hand while the teaching and learning of writing processing.

Secondly, among all the 84 student participants, there were 10 of them (11.90%) reported that they had negative attitude toward writing. After being searched in the terms of writing attitude classification, the writer found that these 10 students had neutral belief and feeling on writing. The average score for each *Belief* and *Feeling* category was 2.71 rounded up to 3. Likewise, it was found that these students behaved neutral on writing with the average score of 3.1 rounded up to 3. Based on the findings, it can be interpreted that the reasons caused the negative writing attitude of these 10 students were the neutral belief, feeling, and the way of behaving neutral toward the course.

In this term, although the rounded up scores of each of the belief, feeling, and behavioral component categories were 3 which was meant as neutral attitude, the writer interpreted that the students were more to the negative attitude. It was because before being rounded up, the scores of the three attitude components indicated that it was negative. For more details, the writer gave an illustration regarding to this case. It was like during the teaching and learning process of writing, those students who had negative writing attitude did not really feel bad of it, yet they did not also feel good toward this course. When they were asked to write, they did not eject it, they were just not doing it with pleasure. It was these neutral interpretations were meant.

Thirdly, it was found that all the lecturers (100%) had positive writing attitude. Hall and Axelrod (2014) state that one of the great motives which emerges the students' writing attitudes is teacher influence. Literally, it can be interpreted that the students' positive writing attitude was influenced by the lecturers' positive writing attitude. In other words, positive vibes can give others positive influence.

With this relation, on the writer's point of view, it was implied that if the lecturers' attitude toward writing was negative, it would probably the students' writing attitude also negative since in the teaching and learning process, the lecturers had a role which unconsciously influencing the students.

Lastly, the result of the study concerning the lecturers' attitude on their teaching writing strategies was also found positive. The data obtained from the questionnaire showed that it was confirmed by the lecturers that teaching strategies of writing was very essential to the students. It was because the teaching-strategy application was how the lecturers could help the students improve their writing. The lecturers believed that their teaching writing strategies was understood by the students. Moreover, by teaching the students how to write well before they were asked to do so, asking the students to write in a given time, giving them a chance to write in topics they like, asking them to share their writing to desk-mates, and allowing use electronic also helped the students enjoy writing and created a good learning-writing environment. In teaching and learning process, the students were allowed to ask for lecturers' help when dealing with difficulties. Checking the students' writing, the lecturers also always gave feedbacks in their writing product. After that, they let the students have their writing draft and gave them time to revise it.

Through the strategy application, all the lecturers believed that their teaching-writing strategies were motivating and useful for helping the students to write well. Furthermore, it was assured that the strategies built the students confidence as writers and helped them enhance their writing achievement. Since teachers' influence plays a role in affecting students' writing attitude (Hall and Axelrod, 2014), this lecturers' positive attitude on their teaching writing strategies might also implicitly be influential to the students' positive writing attitude. Therewith, this lecturers' positive attitude toward their teaching writing strategies were proved by the sixth semester students final writing achievement which more than 60% of the students were in the rank of A (*Very Good*) and 30% of B (*Good*) which meant it really took effect on the students' writing achievement.

Subsequently, in this study, the writer found difficulty to interpret more on the reasons why the students had negative attitude toward writing.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Based on the findings and interpretation in the previous chapter, the conclusions of the study that can be drawn were first, most of the sixth semester students of English Education Study Program of FKIP Sriwijaya University in academic year of 2017/2018 had positive attitude toward writing. Another, the lecturers of the sixth semester student writing course had positive attitude toward writing. The last, the attitude of the sixth semester students' lecturers of writing toward their teaching writing strategies was found positive.

Moreover, the writer constructed suggestions for the students, lecturers, and the future researchers. The writer suggested the students to have more positive belief and feel happier during the process of writing course in order to reach the best ability improvement and product of writing. For the lecturers, it is better to have more attention to those students who had negative attitude toward writing by understanding their writing difficulty, helping them change their negative belief and feeling on writing, and creating opportunities for them to perform more during the teaching and learning process of writing. The last, for the future researchers, it was suggested to have another study dealing with the negative writing attitude that the students had.

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