Problems of Indonesian EFL Students in Writing Thesis in the Field of English Education

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Abstract: Context of this research is thesis writing in the level of bachelor's degree in the field of English Education. This research used total sampling. The number of questionnaires returned was 95 questionnaires of the total number of expected questionnaires. Respondents were categorized into two groups: 1) quantitative research group (QRG-1); 2) qualitative research group (QRG-2). Findings of this research were divided into three items: 1) most problematic; 2) problematic; 3) less problematic. Findings show that the most problematic item for QRG-1 is finding sources (30.43%); meanwhile, starting the thesis or idea (21.13%) is most problematic item for QRG-2. Problematic items in QRG-1 have three items with equal percentage: 1) developing ideas in writing (16.67%); 2) typing in wrong spelling (16.67%); 3) analyzing data (16.67%). On the contrary, problematic item for QRG-2 is finding sources (19.72%). Less problematic item for first group is organizing ideas in writing (21.74%); meanwhile, less problematic item for second group is writing in correct grammar (21.13%). In this research, EFL students' problems in writing thesis are *basically* different individually; however, this condition is largely influenced by their perception on thesis writing and how process approach rather than product approach *should be* implemented to them.

1 INTRODUCTION

To write well in English, in a sense, is problematic for Indonesian students. Few of them mentioned that English has many grammatical rules to be remembered, and at the same time, to be applied to writing. This phenomenon increases when the students composed thesis in English for the first time. In Indonesia, studying at bachelor's degree is the stage where the students composed a thesis. As a matter of fact, "English is only a foreign language in Indonesia, whereas the Indonesian language is the national, official language of Indonesia and, at the same time, the lingua franca among speakers of different mother tongues" (Pasassung, 2003, p. 35). Not only English is viewed as a foreign language, English is also considered as an international language. On top of those all, the dominant view in this regard is that English is a foreign language in Indonesia. It remains as it is until today (2017).

Within the notion of English as a foreign language in Indonesia, research that addresses issues on writing, learning writing, and teaching writing seems to be small in numbers. This type of research is structured in composition studies. Basically, research in composition studies relate to issues on pedagogy and learning writing (Lauer & J., 1988, p. 98). Therefore, this research was framed within issues that were related to pedagogy, especially in relation to Indonesian students' problems in composing or writing their thesis in the field of English Education. Furthermore, research paradigm in this research relates to Neo-Aristotelians and Positivists. This paradigm indicates that "objective reality can be known through the senses, with the addition of either deductive or inductive reasoning" (Bridwell-Bowles, 1991, p. 98). The reality that we mean at this point refers to students' responses toward questions that we asked in a questionnaire. Their responses were noted and these responses became objective reality afterwards.

In the context of writing thesis as an act of composing a text, Wendy Wright in El Camino College described that the composing process involves in discovering, drafting, revising, and polishing (Anderson, 2001, p. 31). Anderson highlighted that writing a thesis in the field of English Education demanded gradual process that students need to encounter. Within each stage, as

stated above, the students need to find what they wanted to search in a research, write a draft of what they research, revise what they had written in that research, and finalize such writing to become an acceptable piece of writing to be called a thesis.

Unfortunately, though, students who learn English as a foreign language and students who learn the language as a second language are different. In fact, they create diverse pedagogical circumstances (Ra'uf, 2017). The diversity between EFL students and ESL students, in Hyland's terms, is that they have "different linguistic proficiencies and intuitions about language" (Hyland, 2003, p. 31). By taking Hyland's statement, then, we could draw a line that learning English as a foreign language was framed through different layers that might be different within each student. This circumstance is needed to receive proper attention from scholars and practitioners in the field.

Research on this topic had been viewed by researchers coming from different places in the world. In Egypt, similar problems on cohesion and coherence were encountered by EFL students (Ahmed, 2010). This leads to the barrier of accomplishing the goal of English language teaching classroom, which is to achieve the 'critical thinking' skills (Banegas, 2016, p. 455). Problems on academic writing within EFL setting also happened in China. Cailing pointed out that those Chinese students "are more inclined to employ inductive strategy in their English writing while westerners favour deductive strategy" (2017). Also, direct more was much preferable by EFL students in China (Lee, 2017). To overcome problems in EFL writing, such as those in Bangladesh, Malik and Nahar emphasised that analysing errors in the students' writings is important (2017). However, giving appropriate training on English writing for teachers is necessary in Sudan, for example (Osman, 2017). At this point, we can claim that how different it is to see EFL writing and ESL writing (Ortega, 2009, p. 232). In fact, Zidane also stated that fluency and style are the most problematic aspects of academic writing for EFL students (2018).

In theory, Hyland emphasizes that each type of students, between ESL and EFL students, has "different learning experiences and classroom expectations" (Hyland, 2003, p. 31). Besides, lack of reading, lack of writing exposure and low motivation to learn English academic writing are some factors that affect students' writing performance in EFL setting (Sari, 2018). Grammar also played a key role in learning academic writing in EFL context (Solikhah, 2017). In Sudan,

for example, learning discourse markers for constructing academic writing in EFL setting is crucial to solve such issue (Tom, 2017).

The above literature, therefore, has led us to conduct research in the form of a survey study. The purpose is to investigate Indonesian EFL students' problems in the process of writing a thesis. Therefore, this article highlights some of the most important issues that happen among students when they were in the middle of writing a thesis.

1.1 Academic Writing in Higher Education

The obvious language circumstance that exists in Indonesia is that "[the country] is linguistically so diverse" (Riza, 2008, p. 93). From Aceh to Papua, or from Sabang to Merauke, Indonesia has a national language and tremendous number of vernacular languages. By knowing this fact, it is evident to say that the process of teaching and learning English in Indonesia is dilemmatic and complex on its own terms. In relation to reasons of learning academic writing of English in Indonesia, one of them is to enhance "language development", which leads to acquire "the mental activity we have to go through in order to construct proper written texts is all part of the on-going learning experience" (Harmer, 2003, p.79). Writing thesis in English as a foreign language, thus, demands such process of language development and that the students who face this process should face the growth of mental activity through different layers. Furthermore, "…writing is both a social and a cultural activity, in that acts of writing cannot be looked at in isolation but must be seen in their social and cultural contexts" (Weigle, 2002, p. 22). Although learning academic writing is framed within academic setting, writing in its own terms as Weigle mentioned, is basically constructed within certain social and cultural setting. For instance, Japanese students were much influenced by Confucian education ideals and as such, it influence the way Japanese students learn EFL academic writing (McKinley, 2013).

From Indonesian historical standpoint, writing seems to be limited to students who came from rich family. Not until late 1990s, Indonesian government paid attention to the development of literacy as part of growing awareness on academic writing. Even today, "despite this long tradition of writing, literacy in Indonesia has until recently been accessible only to the elite" (Lowenberg, 2000, p. 139). Lowenberg may state controversial statement, but apparently,

the statement may lead to the true condition of literacy to the country. Moreover, Peter Lowenberg claimed that "with regard to writing skills, many educators complain that students receive insufficient training and practice in writing, largely because few teachers of language or other subjects give writing assignments or collect or correct the assignments that they do give" (Lowenberg, 2000, p. 144). The same complain might exist as well when we assess students' writing in the level of higher education. In the sense of pedagogical perspective, teachers and lecturers who teach English and give assignments to their students really need to check and correct the assignments. In terms of thesis writing as a form of academic writing, therefore, lecturers supervising students' thesis need to check and correct the students' thesis. Otherwise, the students will not be aware of what aspects of their thesis that are incorrect or correct under the acceptable standard of research report and academic writing.

After conducting a small-scale survey research to 20 postgraduate students of four nationalities in Australia, Al Badi concluded that EFL "students tend to have similar difficulties in academic setting", such as writing own voice, finding relevant topics and sources (2015). Meanwhile, Astorga emphasized that introducing writing pedagogic cycle is important for EFL students: pre-writing, writing, and post-writing (2007). Problems in voice may relate to lack of understanding on discourse communities (Canagarajah, 2004). On this concern, Ferenz mentioned that foreign language practitioners need to be aware as well on the academic discourse community (2005).

Research shows that gap between English languages learning outcome at high school to what is expected in the university context may end up in insufficient language skills to study effectively in academic scheme (Al Seyabi & Tuzlukova, 2014).

Academic writing in higher education, in short, is socially and culturally constructed. To reach this point, we should start by looking at problems that students' face in that setting of thesis writing. Analogically, we always want the athletes to be the winner, but without understanding the problems they encounter in the process of doing exercises, then we might already conduct the act of pushing too much. Consequently, winning might be achieved, but it will not happen naturally. Right at this point, the role of thesis supervisors is really needed and crucial.

1.2 Supervising Thesis for Senior-Year Students through Process Approach

In the process of writing thesis, a student is advised and supervised by two lecturers. The first lecturer plays a role as a content supervisor. The second lecturer will focus on the clarity of language and mechanics. In the sense of the student, writing is a language activity that involves "both physical and mental act" (Sokolik, 2003, p. 88). Physical at this point refers to the students' ability not only to gather relevant materials, read many sources, and cite the readings in appropriate conduct. Mental act refers to the strength that the students have in writing their thesis. Many situations beyond expectation might happen during this process, so the students need to be able to cope with such situations (Dickson-Swift et al, 2007). As lecturers of English, we are aware that the students will individually view thesis writing in different understanding. As such, we need to see what they had been going through when they wrote their thesis. Writing thesis is challenging, my students said.

Before a student is considered as having liability to write a thesis in the field of English Education; three conditions that they need to meet. It leads to the mastery of language taxonomy. Grabe and Kaplan in 1996 theorized that three types of knowledge involved in "taxonomy of language knowledge": 1) linguistic knowledge; 2) discourse knowledge; 3) sociolinguistic knowledge (Weigle, 2002, p. 30). A student needs to be taught understanding on linguistic aspect before letting him or her compose a thesis. The ability to understand a language linguistically will surely help them to acquire good understanding on language. Discourse knowledge refers to the students' complete understanding on the field they learned. If they studied in the field of English Education, then they need to be trained as well about terms, ideas, concepts, and perspectives that exist in this field.

The same condition applies to other fields of study. Meanwhile, sociolinguistic knowledge leads to their ability to comprehend language varieties in terms of usage, such as academic language, formal language, or informal language. By knowing these three elements, then, they students can be ready to write a thesis in the field of English Education. We facilitate them in the process of writing without feeding them with what we know, but we feed them with techniques of conducting research and academic language expression that they need for composing a thesis (Ghadirian, et al, 2014). This idea is related to local setting of where a student writes a thesis. Certainly, "one of important aspects

of the local context is the local community's concept of teaching and learning" (Pasassung, 2003, p. 16). Therefore, atmosphere of writing a thesis in Indonesia, particularly in West Sumatera, will be different from writing a thesis in other country, such as the United States. Besides, the degree of needs that the students have will vary among students coming from different English language settings. However, research that tries to investigate this notion in Indonesian context seems to be in need of further action. Hopefully, this article is one of them.

2 RESEARCH METHOD

This research is classified as primary research, which is also categorized as original research (Bailey, 2011, p. 289). Primary research means that this research was conducted on the basis of a problem. Problem that was investigated in this research was the students' problems in the process of writing a thesis. Field of study in which this research can be classified is composition studies. Within this field, it is also categorized as field research that used surveys as its instrument (Lauer, 1991, p. 472). The field was College of Teacher Training and Education in the province of West Sumatera in Indonesia. In addition, this research is also connected to research about second language writing [and foreign language writing] in which focus of research is about themes and topics in academic writing (Hyland, 2003, p. 2). A thesis is a form of an academic writing. The core analysis that this research presents is Indonesian EFL students' problems in the process of writing their thesis. Furthermore, as commonly known, a research needs to be conducted within acceptable research method. In a sense, "research methods are designed to achieve the goals of particular paradigms of research" (Cooper, 1997, p. 559); besides, "all research paradigms do not share the same notion of what knowledge is, how it is produced, and how it accumulates" (Cooper, 1997, p. 556). This research is conducted in quantitative research paradigm.

2.1 A Qualitative-Descriptive Study: A Survey Study

The design of this research falls into a quantitative descriptive research in the field of composition studies (Lauer & J., 1988, p. 99; Bridwell-Bowles, 1991, p. 99). In theory, "descriptive

researchprovides information about conditions, situations, and events that occur in the present" (Postlethwaite, 2005, pp. 2-3). Quantitative descriptive studies is defined as "studies that examine variables with statistical measures" and it "allow[s] researchers to describe patterns within data or subjects" (Bridwell- Bowles, 1991, p. 105). Variables that we searched were categorized into three dimensions, as reflected in the three questions in the questionnaire. In addition, this research was conducted in the form of a survey study. Survey is an approach in quantitative research design; meanwhile, questionnaire is used as a technique in this survey study (Blaxter, et al., 2006, p. 63). In the sense of research taxonomy, survey research means "seeking information about larger groups usually by means of sampling technique" (Lauer & J., 1988, p. 15). The purpose is "to learn about characteristics of an entire group of interest, or a population by examining a subset of that group, or a sample" (Johnson, 1992, p. 104). In this survey study, we distributed the questionnaire to all respondents. In theory on research methodology, it is believed that "*dalam survei, kepada semua responden diajukan pertanyaan yang sama, sejauh memungkinkan dalam situasi yang sama pula*" (Bell, 2006, p. 12). It means that every respondent in this research responded to the same questions in the questionnaire. Moreover, specific form of this survey study is in the form of census, which means that all respondents received the same questions.

2.2 Research Instrument

In this research, three questions were asked to the respondents. Items that were asked in the questionnaire were in the form of "quantity or information", "open-ended", and "ranking" (Blaxter, et al., 2006, p. 181; Johnson, 1992, p. 113).

As the questionnaire is displayed in Figure 1, we notice that question 1 is a question that asked for information, question 2 is a question that has open-ended response, and question 3 is a question that asked for responses in the form of ranking toward five provided items. One of the questions in the questionnaire is in the form of closed question. The purpose of using this type of questions is because such question is "easier to process, but open questions will collect a wider range of responses" (Bailey, 2011, p. 268). In relation to ethics in this research, identity of the students was not requested and it was not displayed in this article in order to reach high anonymity and abide ethical research

conduct (Blakeslee & Fleischer, 2007, p. 58; Bell, 2006, p. 62)

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Questionnaire

1   What is your research approach for thesis?
a.    Quantitative
b.    Qualitative

Answer: ...........................

2    In one word or a phrase, what was the problematic items
     that you faced when you wrote your thesis?
a.    Most Problematic Items
      ...........................................................
      ...........................................................
b.    Problematic Items
      ...........................................................
      ...........................................................
c.    Less Problematic Items
      ...........................................................
      ...........................................................

3   Which one of the following aspects of a thesis that you
    evaluated as problematic to write for you?
(Please arrange from the most difficult, or 1, to the least difficult, or 2)

(..........) Writing Research Title
(..........) References: Books/ Journals
(..........) Place of Research: Campus/School/Village (..........)
English Language: Writing (Sentences/Paragraphs) (..........)
English Language: Grammar (Spelling/Vocabulary/Tenses)
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Figure 1: Research Instrument i.e. Questionnaire

Data in this survey study are in the form of nominal or numerical data. This kind of data means that "numerical values are assigned to categories as codes" (Blaxter, et al., 2006, p. 217). To manage the data in this research, descriptive statistics is applied. It relates to managing data that are in the form of "variable frequencies" (Blaxter, et al., 2006, p. 215; Johnson, 1992, p. 116). Furthermore, coding is used in gathering data of responses in the second and third question of the questionnaire. First question was used to separate responses from the respondents into two groups: 1) quantitative research group (QRG-1); 2) qualitative research group (QRG-2). Analyses toward these responses are briefly presented in the data analysis section of this article.

2.3 Respondents

Questionnaire of this research was distributed in November 28, 2015 when the event of alumnae gathering of English Education Study Program of STKIP PGRI Sumatera Barat took place. Respondents who filled out this questionnaire were students who graduated in 2015. Based on the database about the respondents' grade point average,

more than a half students had GPA from 3.01 to 3.50. This data can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1:GPA Range of the Students in this Research

No	GPA Range	Number of Students	Percentage
1	2.50 - 3.00	8	5.80%
2	3.01 - 3.50	92	66.67%
3	3.51 - 4.00	38	27.54%
		138	

From Table 1 above, it can be seen that majority of the students graduating in academic year of 2015/2016 had good GPA. Only 5.80% of alumnae had lower GPA. Total number of respondents was 138 respondents. Meanwhile, number of responses that was collected after the questionnaire was distributed was numerous. Each question has different number of responses. Each respondent provided response for each question in different manner.

2.4 Technique of Data Analysis

Data that were collected in this research are in the form of empirical data. Empirical data are viewed as "information that can be sensed or experienced and collected, analysed, and interpreted" (Bridwell-Bowles, 1991, p. 99). The data were collected through a means of a questionnaire, then the data were analysed according to the responses given, and the data were interpreted according to what occur as responses in each question.

In the questionnaire, three questions were provided for respondents to answer. First question was asked to the respondents to classify the responses according to type of research they did. Data were collected numerically by applying note-taking. We noted how many respondents responded quantitative and how many respondents responded qualitative. Second question was asked to determine the hierarchy of problems that the respondents encountered during the process of thesis writing. *Kesulitan paling umum* means the most problematic items. *Kesulitan umum* means the problematic items. *Kesulitan biasa* means the less problematic items. Third question was asked to determine the degree of problems that most students encounter. The provided items in the questionnaire were chosen after initial observation during the process of supervising students' thesis. Thus, we were interested to find out the degree of provided issues that were perceived as common issues among Indonesian EFL students.

3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings of this research are presented into three sections. The first section is the responses from question 1. The second section is the responses from question 2. The third section is the responses from question 3. The responses in each question were presented in the form of table and figures.

3.1 Findings for Question 1

Question 1 in the questionnaire was about classification of respondents according to the type of research that they composed for thesis. Findings for question 1 can be seen in Figure 2.
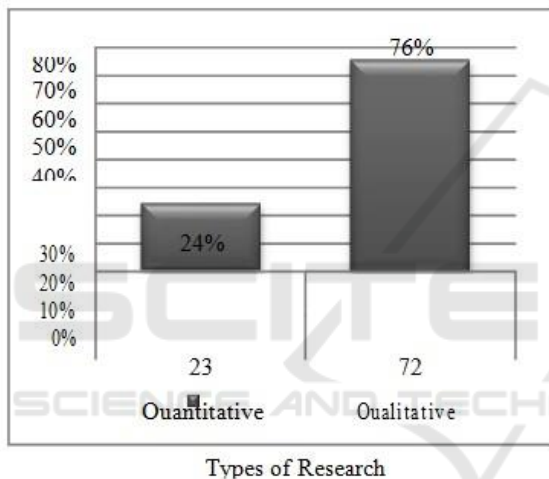

Figure 2: QRG - 1 and QRG - 2

From Figure 1, we can see that two groups had different number of research type. The first group (QRG-1) is lesser than the second group (QRG-2). The total number of respondents who responded the first question was 95 students. Only 24.21% of the population had quantitative research and 75.79% of the respondents had qualitative research for their thesis. In other words, the total number of respondents is 68.84% or 95 respondents from 138 expected questionnaires. Consequently, the validity of this research is relatively high because the data were taken from more than 50% of the population.

3.2 Findings for Question 2

In question 2, the question was directed to find out hierarchy of problems that the respondents had in the process of writing their thesis. Data that had

been collected for responses in question 2 are displayed through a table. One table represents one degree of problematic items, from the most problematic to less problematic items.

3.2.1 Most Problematic Items

Data that were collected from question 2 that are categorized into the most problematic items are displayed in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2: Most Problematic Items for QRG-1

Group	Most Problematic Items	Number of Students	Percentage	
			Within the same reearch type	Within All Researh types
Quantitative (QRG0 1)	Finding Sources	7	30%	7%
	Writing in Correct Grammar	3	13%	3%
	Organizing Sentences Academically	2	9%	2%
	Meeting with Lecturers	2	9%	2%
	Selecting Relevant Theories	2	4%	2%
	Finding Data	1	4%	1%
	Explaining Data	1	4%	1%
	Formulating Calclation	1	4%	1%
	Advising Schedule	1	4%	1%
	Writing Research Background	1	4%	1%
	No Answer	2	9%	2%
	Total	23	100%	

Table 3: Most Problematic Items for QRG-2

Group	Most Problematic Items	Number of Students	Percentage	
			Within the same reearch type	Within All Researh types
Quantitative (QRG0 2)	Starting the Thesis (Idea)	15	21%	16%
	Writing in Correct Grammar	10	14%	11%
	Finding Sources	9	13%	10%
	Meeting with Lecturers	7	10%	7%
	Writing Background of the Research	4	6%	4%
	Finding Related Theories	3	4%	3%
	Managing Time	2	3%	2%
	Organizing Writing	2	3%	2%
	Determining Research Tittle	2	3%	2%
	Developing Ideas in Chapter 1	2	3%	2%
	Analyzing Data	1	1%	1%
	Describing Phenomena	1	1%	1%
	Writing Research Findings	1	1%	1%
	Feeling Bored	1	1%	1%
	Feeling Lazy to Start	1	1%	1%
	No Answer	10	14%	11%
	Total	71	100%	

The total number of respondents who answered the second question in the questionnaire was 94 respondents. It impacts validity of the data to be

68% from all 138 expected respondents. However, still, this percentage is acceptable. It reaches more than 50% of the population.

From Table 2, we can notice that the first group preferred finding sources as the most problematic item. It has 30% within the same group. Meanwhile, the second group preferred starting the thesis (idea)as the most problematic item. It has 21% within the same group. Furthermore, as we can see in the Items column, we notice ten most problematic items for the respondents in QRG-1 and fifteen most problematic items for the respondents in QRG-2.

Apparently, despite the number of respondents in each item is different, however, we could notice the name of each item in the Items list. By knowing these facts, we could figure out that the ten most problematic items in QRG-1 and fifteen most problematic items in QRG-2 need further attention from us. From these findings, we could arrange how to help students.

3.2.2 Problematic Items

Data that were collected from question 2 that are categorized into the problematic items are displayed in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 4. Problematic Items in QRG-1

group	Problematic items	Number of Students	Within the same research type	Within all research types
Quantitative (QRG-1)	Developing Ideas in Writing	3	17%	3%
	Typing in Wrong Spelling	3	17%	3%
	Analyzing Data	3	17%	3%
	Writing in Correct Grammar	2	11%	2%
	Developing Ideas in the Background	2	11%	2%
	Typing the Thesis	2	11%	2%
	Meeting with Lecturers	1	6%	1%
	Reviewing Experts in Chapter 2	1	6%	1%
	No Answer	1	6%	1%
	Total	18	100%	

The same notion had been noticed by researchers in the field. Herizi noticed that "most students seem to consider literature review as a product rather than a process of summarizing and synthesizing that should be well handled" (2017, p. 266). Meanwhile, Peng in China, also found out that composing the narrative of literature review and the lack of conceptual framework were problems in writing thesis for Chinese EFL students (2018, p. 93). Strauss stressed out that in terms of forums to discuss findings about

research in the discipline of English for academic purposes, "the less powerful voices of the EAP practitioners and the students will not be marginalized" (2012). On the other side, Wang noticed that EFL students, or international students, who composed thesis in Australia need careful attention from their research supervisors (2008), so that problems as in Table 4 and Table 5 can be very much avoided.

Table 5: Problematic Items in QRG-2

Group	Problematic Items	Number of Students	Percentage	
			Within the Same Research Type	Within All Research Types
Qualitative (QRG-2)	Finding Sources	14	20%	16%
	Writing in Correct Grammar	8	11%	9%
	Organizing Ideas in Writing	7	10%	8%
	Writing Sentences	4	6%	4%
	Meeting with Lecturers	4	6%	4%
	Paraphrasing Sources	4	6%	4%
	Finding Related Theories	3	4%	3%
	Writing Background and Data Analysis	3	4%	3%
	Writing Paragraph	2	3%	2%
	Arranging Research Design	2	3%	2%
	Creating Research Instrument: Video	2	3%	2%
	Analyzing Data	1	1%	1%
	Making Revision of Thesis	1	1%	1%
	Research Method	1	1%	1%
	Feeling Bored	1	1%	1%
	No Answer	14	20%	16%
	Total	71	100%	

The total number of respondents who answered the second question in the questionnaire is 89 respondents. It impacts validity of the data to be 64% from all 138 expected respondents. However, still, this percentage is acceptable. It reaches more than 50% of the population. From Table 4, we can notice that the first group preferred developing ideas in writing as the most problematic item. It has 17% within the same group. Meanwhile, the second group finding sources as the most problematic item. It has 20% within the same group. Furthermore, as we can see in the Items column, we notice eight problematic items for the respondents in QRG-1 and fifteen problematic items for the respondents in QRG-2.

Seemingly, despite the number of respondents in each item is different, however, we could notice the name of each item in the Items list, as what we could see in Table 3 and Table 4. By knowing these facts, we could figure out that the eight problematic items in quantitative research and fifteen most problematic items in qualitative research are various among students. From these findings, we could probably need to arrange how to adjust our students' attention to tackle to problematic items that they faced during

thesis writing process. On the other side, we could also improve our supervision strategy for the students so that they can overcome all these problematic items.

3.2.3 Less Problematic Items

Data that were collected from question 2 that were categorized into the less problematic items are displayed in Table 6 and Table 7.

Table 6: Less Problematic Items for QRG-1

Group	Less Problematic Items	Number of Students	Percentage	
			Within the Same Research Type	Within All Research Types
Quantitative (QRG-1)	Organizing Ideas in Writing	5	22%	5%
	Feeling Bored	4	17%	4%
	Writing Sentences	2	9%	2%
	Writing with Correct Spelling	1	4%	1%
	Writing Research Background	1	4%	1%
	Writing with Correct Grammar	1	4%	1%
	Vocabulary	1	4%	1%
	No Answer	8	35%	9%
	Total	23	100%	

Table 7: Less Problematic Items in QRG-2

Group	Less Problematic Items	Number of Students	Percentage	
			Within the Same Research Type	Within All Research Types
Qualitative (QRG-2)	Writing in Correct Grammar	15	21%	16%
	Finding Sources	7	10%	7%
	Supervising Thesis from Lecturers	5	7%	5%
	Developing Ideas	5	7%	5%
	Adding Related Theories	4	6%	4%
	Vocabulary	3	4%	3%
	Writing and Revising the Thesis	2	3%	2%
	Feeling Lazy to Start	2	3%	2%
	Arranging Sequence of Sentences	2	3%	2%
	Typing in Low Speed	1	1%	1%
	Managing Time	1	1%	1%
	Writing with Correct Grammar and Idea	1	1%	1%
	Writing Research Background	1	1%	1%
	Dealing with Function	1	1%	1%
	Organing the Thesis	1	1%	1%
	No Answer	20	28%	21%
	Total	71	100%	

The total number of respondents who answered the second question in the questionnaire is 94 respondents. It impacts validity of the data to be 68.11% from all 138 expected respondents. However, this percentage is acceptable. It reaches more than 50% of the population.

From Table 5, we can notice that the first group preferred organizing ideas in writing as the less

problematic item. It has 22% within the same group. Meanwhile, the second group preferred writing in correct grammar as the most problematic item. It has 21% within the same group. Furthermore, as we can see in the Items column, we notice seven less problematic items for the respondents in QRG-1 and fifteen most problematic items for the respondents in QRG-2.

Responses that had been collected for this third question show that several items for some students become most problematic items for them. Meanwhile, for other students, the same items become problematic items and the rest of the students view the items as in the category of less problematic items. Data in this third category reflect that students who preferred quantitative research for their thesis considered that organizing ideas in writing was less problematic item for them. On that contrary, writing in correct grammar was common problematic item for students who preferred qualitative research for their thesis.

Table 8: Answers with High Frequency from QRG-1

The Highest Percentage from QRG-1	
	Items
Most Difficult Items	Finding Sources
Difficult Items	Developing Ideas in Writing
	Typing in Wrong Spelling
	Analyzing Data
Less Difficult Items	Organizing Ideas in Writing

Table 9: Answers with High Frequency from QRG-2

The Highest Percentage from QRG-1	
	Qualitiative (QRG-2)
Most Difficult Items	Starting the Thesis
Difficult Items	Finding Sources
Less Difficult Items	Writing in Correct Grammar

In brief, major findings for responses for question 2, or as they are displayed in Table 6, reflect that findings for question 2 show that research type at some points influence students' understanding on recognizing problems they encountered in the process of writing thesis. Most problematic item for QRG-1 is finding sources (30.43%) of all students, or respondents, who belong to this group. It implies that as lecturers of English, we need to provide students on technical matters on how to find relevant, reliable and readable sources that are useful for their research. On the other side, QRG-2 found that starting the thesis or idea (21.13%) was the most problematic item. It implies that the students who are classified into this group need to be trained on how to invent, find, or narrow their research topic.

Since qualitative research demands more information on the aspect of theory and conceptual understandings on the topic under study, therefore, aiming to help students to be more specific in the topic of their research might be useful. Besides, teaching them to find out topic that is most interesting for them is also crucial. Of course, the one who did the research is them, so they should be the people who are interested to the research topic, and then it is our job to decide whether the topic is within our field of research or beyond what we specify in our capacity as a thesis supervisor for our students.

The second category for responses in question 2 is known as problematic items. These items have lower degree compared to the most problematic items. For QRG-1, developing ideas in writing (16.67%) is the problematic item. For QRG-2, finding sources (19.72%) is problematic item. Findings of problematic items for these two types of research present insightful ideas to us that for QRG-1, finding sources become the most problematic item, while this item only becomes problematic item for QRG-2. Implicitly saying, both groups consider that finding sources become a problem when the respondents wrote a thesis. In other words, both groups need training on how to find related sources for their research.

The last category for response in question 2 is coded as less problematic items. QRG-1 preferred organizing ideas in writing (21.74%) as the less problematic item; while QRG-2 preferred writing in correct grammar (21.13%) as the less problematic item. Although this category has the meaning of *less,* compared to the first and second category, it still means a problem, but the degree is less than the other two types of problematic items. This third response reflects to us that writing is a less problematic item for both groups. The first group is related to writing and how the writing is organized. The second group is related to writing and how to write a well writing in grammatically correct sentences. Both of these responses are similar in meaning. Therefore, paying attention to our students in terms of the process of writing a thesis on the basis of organization and grammar is also needed. Statistical graph about this description is in Figure 2.

3.3 Findings for Question 3

Question 3 presents the hierarchy of problematic issues that were encountered by the respondents. Responses in question 3 were collected through all groups. In other words, data analysis toward responses on question 3 provided no classification of the responses on the basis of research type. All responses from both research groups were considered as one group. We categorized the responses for question 3 into five degree of difficulties: 1 – most difficult; 2 – more difficult; 3 – difficult; 4 – less difficult; 5 – not difficult. Context of responses for question 3 was finding out which aspect that was the most difficult one and which aspect that was not difficult for the respondents.

From Figure 3, we figure out five important findings. These findings are based on the highest number of respondents who preferred each hierarchy. The explanation is as the following description.

First, the most difficult aspect of writing a thesis is writing research title. This aspect is the most difficult aspect for the students. From this finding, we could imply that Indonesian EFL students need to be informed how to frame their research through the title. On the surface, title represents the topic of research that they will carry out throughout the stages of studying in the last senior-year. It indirectly impacts the students' comforts in conducting a research. It might be true to say that title can change during research takes place; however, for these types of students, changing a title means changing all aspects of a thesis. Otherwise, they would not decide this aspect as the most difficult aspect of writing a thesis.
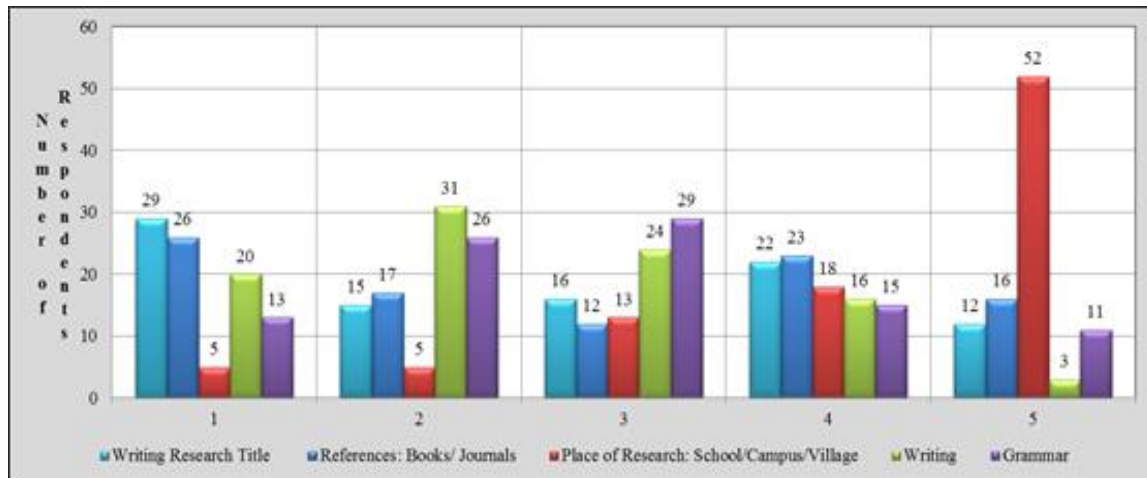
Figure 3: Findings for Question 3

Then, the more difficult aspect is writing the thesis itself. It makes sense to us to see that after the students knew which topic and variables that they would research, then writing became the next challenging aspect. Very different from writing a thesis in their native language, which has more familiar rules and, of course, they already comprehend the deep structure of the language. In terms of writing a thesis in English, writing the thesis is actually difficult for them. Then, at this point, we can judge that, indeed, we should limit levels of challenges that we give to them. In the field of English Education, the thesis must be written in formal Standard English. The question is, is it possible for us to supervise them only after a few meetings with them? Or, should we prolong the length of time for them to be supervised by us? Should we consider their time and other needs when we supervise them? Until which level of writing a thesis that we should demand them to write? All these questions provoke our thoughts to know that writing a thesis is more difficult for Indonesian EFL students than, *perhaps*, speaking about the thesis in English, for a few of them.

Third, the difficult aspect of writing a thesis is the grammar. How interesting! We usually notice that Indonesian students often claimed that grammar is the nightmare for them. Knowing that grammar become the difficult aspect in writing a thesis is indeed an interesting finding, but at the same it also leads us to ask for further rhetorical questions pedagogically. Have we trained the students well on grammar before we judge them as liable to write a thesis in English?

How far we should evaluate and judge them in terms of grammar in their thesis? Is grammar a crucial aspect to be seen from an Indonesian EFL student's thesis? At last, the not difficult aspect of writing a thesis is place of research, such as school, campus, or village. This aspect, as we predicted before conducting this research, was not difficult. It only plays out as technical aspect of conducting a research in the field of English Education in Indonesia.

4 CONCLUSION

Implication from this research emphasizes that constructivist model in supervising students' activity on writing thesis is crucial. This model claims that "learners actively construct their own understanding" and it highlights the notion that it focuses on "the processes of thinking, recognizes the place of students' life experiences and cultural schemata" (Au, 1993, p. 48). We could emphasize that paying attention more on the process of writing a thesis in the field of English Education is much more important than paying attention to the product, or the thesis, solely. Process approach is important for supervising and evaluating a thesis. In that way, we could help our students to avoid wasting their time and money by submitting plagiarized work, which may lead them to failure. A thesis is a thesis, but the core value of a thesis lies in the mind of the writer. Either quantitative or qualitative research method that an Indonesian EFL student prefers; he or she basically will face challenges after challenges

in writing a thesis. Have we prepared ourselves to *guide* them or we simply become *a thesis supervisor and examiner*? Which role we decide, we should take responsibility, afterwards.

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