

**The Teacher Education and Higher Education Studies (EDiTE)
Doctoral Program of ELTE Conference**

**Challenges in English Academic Writing:
Indonesian Graduate Students' Experiences in
Hungarian Higher Education**



**Dedy Subandowo
Pázmány Péter Catholic University
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 ENGLISH MEDIUM INSTRUCTION (EMI) IN HIGHER EDUCATION

▪ **Definition**

The use of the English language to teach academic subjects (other than English itself) in countries where the first language of the majority of the population is not English (Macaro et al., 2018)

▪ **Various labels** → *English as a medium of instruction, English medium education, parallel-language education, English as a lingua franca, English content-based instruction*

▪ **Growing global** → *Internationalization, prestige, International students attraction, research publication, the status of English as an International language*

(Coleman et al., 2017)

▪ **Non-native English students**

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Some Definitions of L2 Academic Writers

- Anyone who is writing or learning to write in a language other than native language including ***second or foreign languages, third*** and so forth (Matsuda & Silva, 2020)
- ***Non-native speakers of English*** at English-speaking universities (Langum & Sullivan, 2017)
- ***International students*** pursuing their studies in ***English-medium universities*** overseas and writing thesis in English (Xu & Zhang, 2019)

2.2 Issues in L2 English Academic Writing

Perspectives (Hyland, 2016) :

L2 TPublication, Teaching Methods
eachers :

L2 graduate students :

2000-5000 words of essay, publication for a PhD student

Faculty support (AlZubaidi, 2012) :

Academic integration (e.g. advanced academic training/English academic writing course)

social integration (e.g. supportive interaction inside and outside the department)

Written Academic Genre (Hyland, 2008) :

Article abstract, scientific letters, acknowledgments, theses, book reviews, conference abstracts, student essays, article submission letters, grant proposals, editors' responses to journal submissions

2.3 Challenges for L2 English Academic Writers

- **The task of lecturers**
- **Linguistic constraints**
(e.g. *vocabulary and syntax errors mainly grammatical issues*)
- **Writing culture**
(e.g. *style, and referencing formats*)
- **Time limit and help to cope the required standards of academic writing**
- **Critical thinking**
(e.g. *knowledge of research skills, read complex texts, understanding of key disciplinary concepts*)
- **strategies to analyse and respond to new information**

(Singh, 2015); (Al-Zubaidi , 2012)

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Aims and Research Questions

Aims:

- 1) Piloting PhD research project
- 2) English academic writing experiences and challenges of Indonesian graduate students in Hungary

Research Questions:

- 1) What challenges do Indonesian graduate students face in English academic writing situation?
- 2) How do they tackle these challenges?
- 3) What attitudes do they have regarding these challenges?

3.2. Participants

- 1) 3 females and 1 male master students
- 2) Third semester
- 3) 28 -30 years old
- 4) Social sciences faculty in three different universities in Hungary
- 5) International relations, Regional and Environmental Economics
- 6) Selection database → Indonesian student association (*PPI Hongaria*)

3.3 Data Collection Method

- Semi-structured interview (30 minutes)
- 24 questions :
 - Academic background
 - English as medium instruction (EMI)
 - Writing assignment
 - Self-consciousness toward English academic writing
 - Strategies to face the obstacles
 - Writing development
 - Lecturers' feedback

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

- Contact the representative of PPI Hongaria
- Select the participants from the database (university/faculty/program)
- Send the proposal to the participants
- Accept the response
- Describe the research consent
- Arrange the schedule of interview
- L1 audio-recorded interview

3.5. Data Analysis Technique

- Listening to the recorded audio
- Transcribing and taking notes
- Tabulating and classifying → university /name
- Coding → anonymity
- Translating
- Categorizing finding data

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results:

- 1) Time Management
- 2) Linguistic Issues
- 3) Plagiarism
- 4) Learning Platform
- 5) Writing Processes
- 6) Writing Strategies
- 7) Attitudes towards English Academic Writing in A Non-native English Speaking Country and Teachers' Feedback

Discussion

4.1 Time Management

Example 1:

*“The time given by the professor **doesn't seem to be enough**. In two weeks, we need to apply our article. I assume **my paper quality would be impacted by this short time** because I have to work in hurry and writing is not an easy task to do”.*

(Student 1)

4.2 Linguistic issues

Example 2:

*“My paper writing difficulties are due to **poor vocabulary and grammar**. I can't distinguish between academic terms or general words. The grade of the article would be influenced by the use of complicated technical terminology. Last semester, I applied some academic words to a paper and I got a great score”. (Student 4)*

Example 3 :

*“I usually have a problem with **simple sentence patterns** with **missing -s** in the last word, particularly dealing with **singular nouns**, one of the major issues in my writing. Another problem is that I often find it hard to apply **nouns or adjectives** in a sentence”. (Student 1)*

Example 4:

*“I don't know how **the logical concept** between sentences can be connected to another sentence. What I normally do is I use my intuition, but often I use **conjunction**, “in addition”, “furthermore”, or “however””. (Student 3)*

Example 5:

*“We were so sad that our teacher gave us 4 for our paper because of **the lack of our grammar** for our middle test assignment. He said that your writing is outstanding, but you deserved to earn that score because your grammatical problems made your grade 5 to 4”. (Student 1)*

4.3 Plagiarism

Example 6:

*“We have to avoid using direct quotation. This seems to be plagiarism in our device program, since the **Urkund** may classify this as plagiarism”.* (Student 2)

4.4 Learning Platform

Example 7:

*“Our department offers **Moodle**, a web-based learning platform for teachers and students to help students send their assignments”.*

(Student 3)

4.5 Writing Processes

Example 8:

*“I typically **make a draft** before I start writing and choose which one is the best draft and begin writing. (Student 2)*

Example 9:

*“First of all, what I do to begin writing is do **literature review**”. (Student 4)*

4.6 Writing Strategies

Example 10:

*“I usually use **Google Translate** as well as **Grammarly** to enhance my writing”.*

*“I always read **stories from the BBC, CNN, Aljazeera, News and Politics**. They create benefits with updates and word improvement that I can use in my writing”.* (Student 1)

Example 11:

*“I typically write in **long sentences so many ideas** can be covered and the paper requirement will be met shortly”.* (Student 2)

Example 12:

*“What I can do to better my writing is to **read earlier research articles** on the subject I'm going to write. The more papers I read, the more I learn about **new vocabulary**. This method has been a way for my academic writing to develop. I also mention some new words from **the teachers and the presentation** of the group in the class”. (Student 4)*

4.7 Attitudes towards English Academic Writing in A Non-native English Speaking Country and Teachers' Feedback

Example 13:

*"I haven't had any special issues with my English here in Hungary so far. Since we use English as our foreign language to carry out our lecturer's writing assignment, it **helps me improve** my English, especially in writing". (Student 4)*

Example 14:

*"I feel confident with my class in English because I understand that other international students are also struggling with English, particularly in writing, in the same situation. I know that I feel anxious about my writing sometimes. In fact, I realized that I had received a good score after my paper was written. This means **my paper isn't that bad**". (Student 3)*

Example 15:

*In the second semester, we had **English academic writing**, which I think this subject **should be given at the beginning of our studies**. So we have the fundamental knowledge to write an article. (Student 1)*

Example 16:

*“Unfortunately, **no courses** related to academic writing are offered by our curriculum. I believe **this course is important for us** and it should be offered by our program to help us improve our writing, especially in writing our thesis at the end of our study”. (Student 4)*

4.8 Teachers' feedback

Example 17:

*“For my paper assignment, **my teacher did not provide feedback.** We can however, request feedback and our professor will have special time to provide feedback. This is **a face-to-face consultation** given by our teacher. Instead of grammar, the **feedback normally puts more emphasis on the content.** The most important point is that the related elements of the subject we wrote are included in our article”. (Student 4)*

Example 18:

*“To improve our writing, **the feedback provided by our teachers is helpful.** We received a lot of feedback as in English academic course, including grammar, citation and construction of logical ideas among sentences”. (Student 1)*

5. CONCLUSION

- Interview study to answer proposed research questions
- **Challenges and experiences** : time management, linguistic difficulties, plagiarism, learning platform
- **To tackle the challenge** : making draft, reading research articles as well as social media or web-based information platforms, teachers and groups' presentations
- **Attitudes** : studying in Hungary and teachers' feedback help improve their academic writing

6. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- 1) Research instrument improvement
- 2) Extend the participants
- 3) Detailed interview phases (pre-middle-post studies)
- 4) English and subject/content teachers cross-examination

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Thank you !