

# Students' Issues with Writing Analytical Exposition Text in Vocational School

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**Abstract.** Writing is the most difficult productive skill to master when studying English. To assist students in improving their writing, teachers should be aware of their students' issues. The goal of the study was to highlight the issues that students at vocational schools have when producing analytical exposition texts. A case study with a qualitative design was used in this investigation. To take part in the study, a total of 25 eleventh graders from a vocational school in South Sumatra, Indonesia, were hand-selected. Data for this study were gathered using a closed-opened questionnaire and a writing exam. To assess the data from the writing exam and closed-ended questionnaire, this study used coding, category development, category description, and data interpretation based on Merriam's (2009) theories. They follow the same procedures as the thematic analysis. The findings revealed that, on average, 33.7% of students at vocational institutions found it challenging to create analytical exposition writings. The vocational school's students struggled with vocabulary, organization, mechanics, language use, and content. Their reading habits, low motivation, and low self-esteem regarding their writing abilities were other contributing factors to their writing problems. This discovery should contribute to addressing such issues by providing an efficient method that aids students in producing their analytical exposition texts.

**Keywords:** writing issues; writing; analytical exposition text; vocational school

## INTRODUCTION

Writing, along with listening, speaking, and reading, is one of the most crucial abilities in language learning. According to Nunan (2003), writing is the mental activity of developing ideas, deciding how to communicate them, and structuring them into statements and paragraphs that are understandable to a reader. According to Fitriati and Yonata (2017), writing can be used as a measure of how students' linguistic understanding is developing over time. Besides, students need to understand communication skills in addition to critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving (Pratama & Yuliati, 2016). Writing is essential for language learning because it combines the mental processes of idea formation, thinking organization, and reader communication. Tracking students' linguistic development and proficiency over time is a beneficial tool. The development of writing skills is also essential for enhancing critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving ability. To ensure students' total language proficiency and holistic development, it is crucial to provide them with the guidance and support they need to improve their writing skills.

Students still struggle with writing even though it is one of the most crucial abilities to master when learning a language. According to Byrne (1993), writing issues can be divided into three categories: linguistic issues, psychological

issues, and cognitive issues. Grammar, syntax, vocabulary, and spelling problems are among the language-related challenges. Writing clearly and successfully might be difficult for students who have linguistic issues. They could struggle with spelling, poor vocabulary choice, and grammatical and linguistic difficulties. Lack of exposure to various languages, a low level of language proficiency, or issues with language processing can all contribute to these linguistic issues. Psychological disorders are emotional or psychological factors that can harm a student's capacity to write effectively. Students with psychological problems could worry, feel unmotivated, or have low self-esteem, all of which might influence their writing. For instance, anxiety may lead pupils to avoid or postpone writing projects, but poor self-esteem may result in a lack of effort. Cognitive issues are problems with cognitive processes such as attention, memory, and planning. Students with cognitive issues may struggle to organize their thoughts, stay focused on the work at hand, or remember key information. A student with focus problems, for example, may struggle to maintain attention during the writing process, whereas a student with memory problems may struggle to recollect key information needed for their writing.

Writing in English can be particularly challenging, as students must not only master the mechanics of writing but also develop a strong command of vocabulary and grammar. As

supported by some researchers who had been undertaken to investigate the writing difficulties of high school students. Putri, Harha, and Roza (2013) explored the challenges that second-year students at SMA N 7 Padang had when producing hortatory exposition text. Following the findings of this study, students had no difficulty creating hortatory exposition text. However, they encountered challenges in two areas: drafting recommendations and utilizing simple present tense. As reported by Elfa (2020), students at XI IPA 2 SMAN I Ulakan Tapakis struggled with thesis arguments, reiteration, language elements (simple present, passive voice, and conjunction), vocabulary, and mechanics. Furthermore, Nurlatifah and Yusuf (2022) suggested that students confronted three primary issues while writing their analytical exposition: cognitive, linguistic, and psychological issues. Most students had limited knowledge of the topic, issues with the text's structure, the mechanism for capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, and difficulties conveying thoughts owing to insufficient English vocabulary. Students typically confront the two most difficult linguistic areas: vocabulary and grammar. Psychologically, students frequently experienced difficulties starting to write, as well as a lack of interest, laziness, and confusion in determining sentence forms. In conclusion, high school students encounter a variety of difficulties when it comes to English writing. In hortatory exposition texts, these difficulties include formulating recommendations and using the simple present tense; in thesis writing, they include dealing with reiteration, language elements, vocabulary, and mechanics; and in analytical exposition texts, they include dealing with cognitive, linguistic, and psychological difficulties. Language and grammar are particularly challenging for students, and psychological problems like boredom, laziness, and uncertainty make writing even more difficult for them. Teachers can assist students in overcoming these obstacles and developing their English writing skills by addressing these difficulties.

Additionally, a study by Rahmatunisa (2014) found that a variety of psychological, linguistic, and cognitive problems were connected to learners' writing abilities. The difficulties that learners encounter when it comes to grammar proficiency have been noted in several studies (Ariyanti & Fitriana, 2017; Astrini et al., 2020; Emilia et al., 2018; Tambunan et al., 2022). These studies showed that learners had

issues with sentence structures and grammar errors in their writing. Another big issue with learners' writing that has been noticed is vocabulary (Astrini et al., 2020; Elfa, 2020; Mahmudah et al., 2017). The research reviewed highlighted that choosing an appropriate language and properly employing it in written expressions were challenges that learners frequently encountered. The results of this research collectively give insight into the major linguistic difficulties that students have while trying to write.

Students in vocational schools are required to study an analytical exposition text. Writing analytical exposition texts, a common genre used in academic and professional settings is necessary for success in many disciplines. Students in vocational schools may experience problems when it comes to creating analytical exposition texts because they may have less exposure to English-language resources or less experience with academic writing than students in other schools. The study attempted to identify vocational school students' problems in writing analytical exposition text among students in vocational schools.

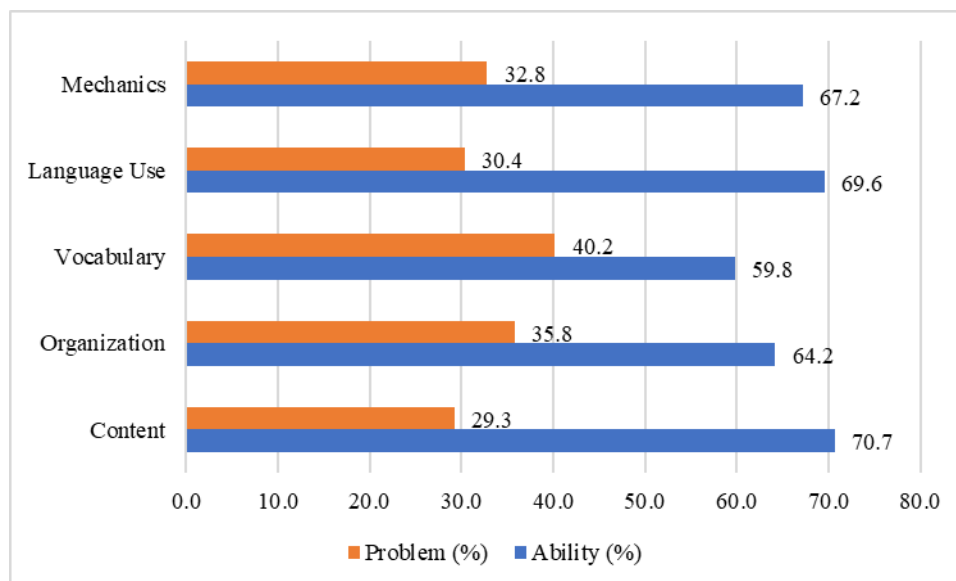
## METHODS

The study is a qualitative case study. The present research recruited 25 eleventh-grade students in public vocational school students at South Sumatera, Indonesia, to examine the issues in writing analytical exposition text. A writing exam and a closed questionnaire were used to gather the data. First, the students had to compose an analytical exposition text, and their work was evaluated using a grading rubric for writing that was taken from Heaton's (1998) work. The learners were also required to complete a questionnaire about each component of writing to know their problem in writing analytical exposition text. This study utilized coding, category development, category description, and data interpretation based on theories of Merriam (2009) to analyze the data from the writing test and closed-ended questionnaire. These stages are consistent with the thematic analysis procedure, which enables us to methodically examine and decipher the data to find themes or patterns associated with the students' difficulties in producing analytical exposition texts.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of students' writing,

it revealed the students' issues in writing analytical exposition text were as follows.



**Figure 1.** Students' Writing Problem based on their Writing

From the results of the student's writing, the students' average proficiency in terms of content was 70.7%; their average proficiency in terms of the organization was 64.2%; their average proficiency in terms of vocabulary was 59.8%; their average proficiency in terms of language use was 69.6% and their average proficiency in terms of mechanics was 67.2%. The learners at the vocational schools had a 66.3% average writing competence for analytical exposition text. The students from the vocational school, however, had difficulties writing analytical exposition texts because of problems with the text's contents (29.3%), organization (35.8%), vocabulary (40.2%), language use (30.4%), and mechanics (32.8%). The percentage of students at the vocational schools who found it difficult to write analytical exposition texts was on average 33.7%.

The questionnaire was given to the students to match the data taken from students' writing to get more information on students' issues in writing analytical exposition text. Based on the closed-opened questionnaire that consisted of 10 questions. First, "Do you enjoy writing about certain subjects?" They answered that they were interested in writing about the effects of technology, education, and societal issues and liked to write fiction and personal experiences. However, they also answered that they had difficulty writing on any topic. Second, "How would you rate your ability to write?" 13 students thought that they had low ability in writing, 11

students thought that they had average ability, while 1 student thought that he has a good ability in writing. Third, "What aspects do you find challenging when writing?" 28% of students answered vocabulary, 24% of students answered organization, 21% of students answered mechanics, 17% of students answered language use, and 10% of students answered content. Fourth, "How frequently do you write in your free time?" 19 students said that they never wrote in their free time, 5 students said that they rarely wrote in their free time, and 1 student sometimes wrote in their free time. Fifth, "What are other problems that faced students in writing analytical exposition text?" They answered that they had difficulty of writing because of low self-esteem towards writing ability (36%), low motivation (34%), and lack of reading (30%). Sixth, "What problems do you have in terms of content aspect when writing an analytical exposition text?" The students responded that they were unable to come up with and develop a coherent thesis statement, produce meaningful content for each paragraph, provide evidence and examples to support their arguments, and come up with writing ideas. Seventh, "What problems do you have in terms of organization aspect when writing an analytical exposition text?" The students responded that they did not base the paragraph on the typical structure of analytical exposition text, did not employ transitions and connecting words to connect ideas and arguments and produce a

smooth flow across paragraphs, and did not organize ideas and arguments logically and cohesively. Finally, they argued that they did not clearly and succinctly synthesize the important elements and reiterate the thesis in the exposition's conclusion. Eighth, "What problems do you have in terms of language use aspect when writing an analytical exposition text?" The correct verb tense and agreement, prepositions, conjunctions, word order, grammar, and sentence structure were not used by the students, nor were the correct prepositions and conjunctions used. Ninth, "What problems do you have in terms of vocabulary aspect when writing an analytical exposition text?" They replied that they failed to utilize the right transitional words and phrases, the right academic vocabulary, and the right subject-specific vocabulary relevant to the topic of the exposition, and failed to employ the right words and expressions to communicate their intended meaning. Tenth, "What problems do you have in terms of mechanics aspect when writing an analytical exposition text?" The students said that they did not utilize proper capitalization, appropriate grammar, or spelling, nor did they proofread and edit for errors and mistakes.

Based on the results of the writing assignments and a closed ended questionnaire, students at vocational schools have difficulty composing analytical exposition writings that cover a variety of issues. The areas where students struggled the most are reflected in the student's average competence scores in content, organization, language and use, vocabulary, mechanics, and other factors.

*First*, it was discovered that 29.3% of the students had difficulty with this topic. The choice and development of relevant topics were the focus of these difficulties. Students had difficulties coming up with a concise and logical thesis statement, coming up with relevant content for each paragraph, supplying examples and evidence to back up their claims, and coming up with ideas for their writing. Students had difficulty choosing a topic and organizing their thoughts into a paragraph, as supported by Ilham et al (2020). In conclusion, the results showed that a sizable proportion of students encountered difficulties while producing analytical exposition texts that dealt with content, notably when choosing and developing pertinent themes, creating a precise thesis statement, and giving sufficient supporting evidence. These issues emphasize the necessity of focused interventions to improve students' capacity to construct cogent

and convincing arguments.

*Second*, 35.8% of the students said that the issue of organization was a significant concern for the students. This suggests that many students had difficulty organizing their analytical exposition readings. They had trouble following the prescribed structure for such texts, maintaining a logical and cogent arrangement of ideas and arguments, using the right transitions, and linking words to ensure smooth transitions between paragraphs, and writing succinct, understandable conclusions that efficiently summarized the main points and restated the thesis. It is in line with Habibi et al (2017), students face seven major writing-related issues, including a lack of order and illogical sequencing. The arrangement of their analytical exposition papers, including the appropriate structuring of concepts, transitions between paragraphs, and brief conclusions, is a significant area of struggle for pupils. Students' writing skills can be considerably enhanced by specific teaching in organizational frameworks and coherence as well as practice in these areas.

*Third*, in terms of language use, language use was a difficulty for 30.9% of students. They struggled with verb tense and agreement, prepositions, conjunctions, word order, grammar, and sentence structure. Additionally, students had difficulties with the appropriate use of prepositions and conjunctions. It is consistent with Hasan and Marzuki's (2017) assertion that Indonesian EFL students experienced grammar mistakes in their work involving the use of plural forms, articles, verb tenses, clauses, passive voice, and prepositions. The research shows that a large proportion of students had difficulty using language, especially when it came to grammar, sentence structure, and the appropriate use of conjunctions and prepositions. These results highlight the importance of specialized language skill education and practice to improve students' competency and accuracy in their analytical exposition writing.

*Fourth*, a challenge for 40.2% of students was vocabulary. This included failing to employ academic terminology, subject-specific vocabulary pertinent to the topic, acceptable transitional words and phrases, and the right words and expressions to convey their intended meaning. Furthermore, students' limited vocabulary is the primary challenge students encounter when learning the English language (Misbah, et al., 2017). To sum up, the research shows that a sizable portion of students had

trouble with terminology when writing analytical expositions. The ineffective use of academic and subject-specific vocabulary and the insufficient use of suitable transitional words and phrases highlight the significance of vocabulary development strategies in language instruction to increase students' lexical range and precision in their writing.

*Fifth*, grammar, spelling, and other aspects of mechanics were difficult for 32.8% of students. Many students neglected to check and edit for typos, which led to problems with capitalization, spelling, and punctuation. In line with this, punctuation, spelling, and handwriting issues are also found in students' writing (Nasser, 2019). In summary, the results show that many students had difficulties with grammar, spelling, and other mechanical components of writing. The failure to edit and proofread student writing, which resulted in capitalization, spelling, and punctuation issues, highlights the significance of teaching students to be precise and pay attention to detail early in the writing process. This will improve the overall clarity and accuracy of their written work.

*Sixth*, additional factors, following the questionnaire, students' challenges can be caused by low self-esteem in their writing abilities, a lack of drive, and poor reading habits. Although some students enjoy the writing of specific topics, they still had challenges with vocabulary, organization, mechanics, language use, and content presents in the analytical exposition texts. Additionally, the students struggled because of other factors like low self-esteem, insufficient motivation, and inadequate reading practices. As stated by Byrne (1993), students with psychological problems could worry, feel unmotivated, or have low self-esteem, all of which might influence their writing. Writing projects may be avoided or postponed by anxious students, while those who are low on self-esteem may lack confidence in their writing skills. Additionally, Yohana et al (2021) stated that there was a correlation between reading habits and writing skills. Besides, the students who read extensively will acquire more vocabulary which leads them to have greater proficiency in writing. In conclusion, a variety of variables, including low self-esteem, a lack of enthusiasm, bad reading habits, and issues with vocabulary, organization, mechanics, language use, and content, can be blamed for the student's difficulty in creating analytical exposition written works. Students' writing ability and competence can be greatly improved by addressing these elements,

creating self-confidence, motivating students, and encouraging thorough reading.

Briefly, the students encountered some problems in writing analytical exposition text such as vocabulary, organization, mechanics, language use, content, and other factors (low self-esteem, lack of motivation, and poor reading habits. As Smith (2019) discovered in his research students frequently struggle with developing persuasive arguments and offering enough evidence to back up their views in analytical writing. This is consistent with the results of the current investigation, highlighting the importance of this typical challenge. Johnson (2020) also highlighted how crucial to educate analytical exposition writing's organizational structures and coherence. To ensure a clear and logical sequence of ideas, students require explicit guidance and practice in structuring their writings and organizing their thoughts. Furthermore, Martinez (2018) emphasized the need for students to expand their vocabulary and increase their grammatical precision to communicate their views effectively. This is consistent with the study's findings and emphasizes how crucial it is to deal with language use issues while creating analytical exposition writings. Besides, Thompson (2021) advised adding specific teaching in grammar, punctuation, and spelling to improve mechanics. Additionally, giving students the time to practice editing and proofreading their work can enhance the technical components of their writing.

## CONCLUSION

This study identified students' issues with writing analytical exposition texts at vocational schools. Students of vocational high school have six issues in their writing; vocabulary issues, organization challenges, mechanics concerns, language use problems, content, and other factors such as low self-esteem towards writing ability, lack of motivation, and inadequate reading habits. Taking into consideration the findings of this study, the researcher should attempt to resolve those issues by putting in place a successful strategy or procedures that aid students in developing their analytical exposition texts.

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