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## Producing an English academic paper: Process, problems and solutions

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**Abstract:** This paper presents the process and the problems, as well as their solutions, of producing an English academic paper by an Indonesian graduate student. The study analyzes the student's self-reported experience by using some theories of academic writing. It is argued that there are few requirements for students to produce an appropriate English academic paper, such as: (1) exposure to related sources; (2) knowledge and skills of writing an academic paper that meets the international standard; (3) engagement in the production process; and (4) supports from her environments. Moreover, the study reveals that individual factors have significant influence on the successful paper production, whereas the solutions to the problems entail some positive and negative consequences. The study aims to describe a case that may inspire the participants of the English teaching and learning to see the process and problems of producing an academic paper more clearly. With a clear picture in mind, they may find better ways to solve the problems.

**Key words:** academic paper production; process; problems

### 1. Introduction

Writing has been the focus of academic discussions for quite a long time. The argument that "writing can be a means of learning" (Mayher, et al., 1983, p. 1) is supported at least by Russell (cited in Davis & Shadle, 2000), who states that "teachers/regulators saw poor writing as caused by poor thinking, and saw poor thinking as a threat to the academy" (p. 425). This statement is in line with the suggestion of The National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges (The NCWASC): "...if students are to learn, they must write" and "writing is learning" (2003, p. 13). The source (2003, p. 14) also indicates that most first-year college students in America are unable to produce appropriate academic papers. They still have difficulty in dealing with linguistic skills and knowledge, as well as with analyzing arguments and synthesizing information. This information implies that if no improvement is carried out, the students' poor competence in academic writing will seriously affect the quality of future graduates.

Another report concerning problems in academic writing is based on Geoghegan's large-scale research (Jordan, 1997, p. 44), which was conducted at Cambridge University in 1980, into the language difficulties of overseas students, both undergraduates and post-graduates, during their first term. This report shows that participating in seminars was the biggest problem and academic writing was the second biggest problem for those students. Predictably, the same condition is also true to undergraduate and postgraduate students in Indonesia, especially when the activities are in English.

In Indonesia, research on problems in producing an English academic paper does not seem to be noticeable. However, from observing what happens to some students when they are to produce an academic paper in English, it can be concluded that the process has never been without serious problems. Table 1 displays general Indonesian

students' activities and possible problems in producing an academic paper (see Table 1).

**Table 1** Activities and possible problems in producing an English academic paper

Activities	Possible problems
Choose topic	Time
Collect related sources	Finance
	Environments
Put ideas on required written form	Facilities
	Psychological conditions
	Knowledge & skills

The problems of academic paper production comprise the students' time, finance, environments, facilities, psychological conditions, knowledge and skills, mainly when they have to: (1) choose a topic; (2) collect, select and read related sources to support the topic they are to write; and (3) put their ideas on the required written form. With all of this background, this paper attempts to describe how a graduate student of an English education program in an Indonesian university produces an English academic paper. The study analyzes the student's self-reported experience by using some theories of L2 (Second Language) academic writing.

In this paper, the introduction is followed by a review on some previous relevant literature. Afterward, the discussion presents the student's paper production process formulated from her self-reported experience, some problems in the production of the paper, and some ways the student takes to solve the problems. The positive and negative aspects of the solutions are contrasted and then the activities in, along with the results of, the process of the paper production are exposed. Finally, the paper presents the conclusion and some suggestions for helping student writers produce an acceptable English academic paper.

## 2. Relevant literature

Brause (2000) advises doctoral students about how to write a dissertation. Her advice can apply to other forms of academic writing. In the part of "preparing for your study", she presents 5 essential characteristics of successful students: goal-directed, organizing time, assuring financial resources, appropriate scholarly attitude, and having a supportive setting (p. 81). The advice is useful for overcoming some non-linguistic problems of writing an academic paper, which are quite challenging for most students. Similarly, Paltridge and Starfield (2007, p. 1) write a book discussing non-linguistic issues commonly faced by all thesis and dissertation writers, and logically all academic paper writers, such as understanding:

- (1) The setting and purpose of the writing;
- (2) The place of audience in academic text writing;
- (3) Writer/reader relationships;
- (4) Issues of writer's identity;
- (5) The place of assumed background knowledge in academic text writing.

Nevertheless, there are more non-linguistic problems than the ones previously discussed. In fact, the student's individual and environmental problems will also affect the product because in general, producing an English academic paper is a complex job.

In arguing for the power of writing to solve problems as well as to create and develop new ideas, Wells (1999, p. 289) proposes 4 very general requirements which apply to all occasions of making meaning with text:

- (1) The writing should play a significant role in the related community;

(2) The topic should be interesting for the writer, who believes that there is more to discover about it;

(3) The writer must care about the aesthetic quality of the text s/he writes;

(4) The community should give help in accessing relevant resources and providing support and guidance.

Besides Wells, other scholars, such as Dudley-Evans, Hewings, Swales, Paltridge and Cortazzi (cited in Jordan, 1997, p. 234) have contributed ideas to problem solving in academic writing. However, little has been discussed about whole activities in which students are engaged during the production of their academic papers. Previous investigations mainly focus on the linguistic analysis of academic writing, e.g. writing titles, drawing conclusions, citing behavior and building narrative structure. Thus, a description of a student's process of preparing her academic text could be valuable for the teaching of English for academic purposes.

### **3. Production process of an English academic paper**

Even if books, articles and papers focusing on academic writing have devoted a substantial amount of space to problem solving in producing an English academic paper, not all solutions are feasible because of some cultural and individual limitations of the writer. Besides, the solutions, which vary depending on different factors, have their positive and negative aspects. For that reason, in solving the problems of a paper production, the writer has to select the solutions which are the most appropriate. To describe the activities, results, problems and solutions in the process of how an Indonesian graduate student produces an English academic paper, the following self-reported experience of an Indonesian doctoral student is used as the data source.

### **4. An Indonesian doctoral student's self-reported experience**

The reporter is an English teacher at an English Department of a university in Bandung. She is over 50, married with 3 children, has a Master degree in linguistics, and now she is a part-time student of an English education doctoral program, as she still has to teach some classes at her work place.

During the first term, she and her classmates have a number of assignments, which she can accomplish successfully. However, the last one is exceptional for her as it has little to do with her linguistics background. The instruction is: Write an academic paper of 6000-7000 words on reading, or writing, or reading writing connection in education. The allotted time is one month.

Soon after she gets the instruction, she starts thinking about the topic to choose, the appropriate way to present the topic with the right background knowledge to support it. This stage of thinking takes a couple of days, but finally she is able to start working. She prepares related sources and necessary equipment to do the job. She has not decided what the topic is, but intuitively she tends to choose a topic about writing because she is convinced that writing can become the umbrella for some interesting topics.

While working at this stage, she examines the collected material to discover the parts that may build a certain topic. As the material is written in academic English, very often she has difficulty when interpreting specific terminologies and understanding unusual sentence patterns. When she realizes that the material she has collected is inadequate, she tries to search for more information from the Internet. She keeps browsing in the Internet until finally she can find no more relevant information. In fact, the information she has obtained from the Internet is not sufficient because she does not subscribe to any online publication, which could help her find more information faster.

Having stopped hunting for relevant information, she starts reading more intensively. Sometimes she marks the expressions that show interesting ideas, and then write them down on index cards. She arranges the cards on

the basis of the alphabetical initial word of each subject. When, after several days' working, she finishes with browsing the material and making notes of necessary information, she pauses as she does not know what to do next. She tries to seek for help from others and gets some responses that may inspire her to find the topic and start her writing.

The writing process of the draft is still full of problems: She has to write tentative outlines and titles before starting to write the introduction. Now the problems of presenting others' texts and ideas need specific solutions. She needs a citing manual that is suitable for her field of study. After having the manual, she starts learning the conventions of citing from sources and then applies them to her own writing. The next writing process makes her consult her dictionaries a lot of times, look back at the index cards, and frequently reread several kinds of material in order to confirm her ideas. She finds that the most helpful information about language expressions and structure come from the academic papers and journal articles she reads.

Shortly speaking, now the first draft is final and the next stages are revising and editing. Revising has to do with the content of the paper, whereas editing is improving the grammar and the graphology of the writing. The processes are almost similar to the previous ones and the problems mostly lie on the structuring, phrasing, choosing appropriate vocabulary and linking ideas. To improve the draft, she rereads and rethinks of what she has written. Sometimes after doing so, she gets some inspiration to do big or small changes to her draft. The revising and editing processes are not linear and have to be done several times until she is sure that she can do no more to improve her paper. Finally, after referencing all the cited sources, she begins writing the abstract, which she revises several times to meet the required content, structure and number of words.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 Activities and results

It can be deduced from the illustration above that the student has done various activities that result in different things. Her activities are grouped according to different stages of writing process: percolating, drafting, revising and editing (Mayher, et al., 1983, p. 5). The publishing stage is not included as this paper is not to be published but to be submitted to the lecturer. Several questions arise:

- (1) Are those activities appropriate for getting good results?
- (2) What necessary activities has not she done?
- (3) Why has not she done those activities?

The following is the discussion. Firstly, after getting the instruction, the student thinks hard to interpret it. This activity is natural but the result depends on the quality of the thinking activities. She gets ready to start working because she has thought the right things: topic, interest, confidence, back-ground knowledge, experience and related material. The thinking process in practice not only happens for a couple of days, but also through the whole writing process. Theoretically, at the initial stage the student is required to do some more activities. According to Jordan, "By means of discussion, tasks, drafting, feedback, revisions and informed choices, students can make clearer decisions about the direction of their writing" (1997, p. 167). If she did some discussions with her peers or colleagues, she might obtain feedbacks, revisions and choices to improve her own ideas. These things she does not do because everybody seems busy with their almost overloaded jobs prior to the university vacation time.

Secondly, at the percolating stage, the student compiles some material related to the instruction. She is able to collect some material of various topics after she hunts in her own book collection, goes to the library and borrows

from her colleagues. For preliminary reading, the material is sufficient because the topic is not decided yet. However, in choosing the material, she remembers Gibaldi's words (1999, pp. 25-26):

In reading and evaluating potential sources, you should not assume that something is truthful or trustworthy just because it appears in print or on the Internet. Some material may be based on incorrect or outdated information or on poor logic, and the author's knowledge or view of the subject may be too limited. Weigh what you read against your own knowledge and intelligence as well as against other treatments of the subject.

When classifying the material into different topics, she glances rapidly through them so that she can identify each topic. After this, she decides to find more material of similar topics in the Internet, but the result is rather disappointing as she does not subscribe to any online publication. For most Indonesian graduate students, using the Internet from home telephone line is regarded as costly, let alone subscribing to an online publication. To come to the fixed topic, the student does more things: rereads the material to get more information, takes notes of what she has read and puts them in index cards, selects the texts and contacts some people to ask for help. This has fulfilled the required activities for topic searching so that she is able to choose a particular topic.

In note taking, the student refers to Gibaldi's three methods (1999, p. 29): summary, paraphrase and quotation, and then she puts the notes in the index cards. Summary is for recording the general idea, paraphrase is for recording detailed notes without exact wording, and quotation is for recording the original words which might make an effective addition to the paper. Gibaldi also reminds the paper writer to quote "only words, phrases, lines and passages that are particularly interesting, vivid, unusual or apt, and keep all quotations as brief as possible" (p. 80).

Thirdly, after the topic is fixed, at the stage of drafting and revising the paper, the student starts with outlining, choosing a title, and writing the first draft. Then she revises the outline, the title and the draft several times. The revising process follows the steps suggested by Oshima and Hogue (1991, pp. 12-13), who use the term "final proofreading" to refer to post-editing stage:

- (1) After writing the first draft, revise only the content and organization.
- (2) After proofreading the second draft, check the grammar and mechanics of the writing.
- (3) Eventually, do the final proofreading.

**Table 2** Activities and results involved in producing an English academic paper

Stages	Activities	Results
Getting the instruction Percolating	Thinking, interpreting Compiling material Reading Trying the Internet Rereading Note taking Selecting interesting texts	Ready to start working Various topics Classified texts Few related texts More information Index cards One topic or two
Drafting	Seeking for help Establishing topic Outlining Choosing title Writing	New ideas One fixed topic One tentative outline One tentative title First draft
Revising	Improving	Better draft
Editing	Proof reading	Final result

After the editing stage, the student uses Gibaldi's (1999) guide for final proofreading: (1) "strive for more precise and economical wording"; (2) "try to vary the sentence patterns as well as the choices of words"; and (3)

“correct all technical errors by using a standard writing guide to check the punctuation, grammar and usage and by consulting a standard dictionary for the spelling and meaning of words” (p. 41). The proof-reading over, the paper production is now accomplished. Table 2 presents the student’s activities involved in the production process of her English academic paper.

To finish the discussion on the student’s activities and the results, this paper presents the answers to the three questions presented at the beginning of the discussion section: Are those activities appropriate for getting good results? What necessary activities has not she done? Why has not she done those activities?

Here are the answers to the questions:

- (1) According to the results, the student’s activities can be said to be appropriate but not excellent.
- (2) Some necessary activities she has not done, according to Hadaway, et al (2002, p. 161) are: (a) discussing the topic(s) prior to writing with peers and teachers; (b) asking teachers for a conference about her writing; and (c) asking teachers for assessment of prior writing. Moreover, she has not sufficiently improved her background knowledge and IT skills, either.
- (3) The student does not do (a)-(c) because it is coincidentally the university vacation time so it is hard for her to meet peers and teachers at the campus. Time and motivation seem to be the reasons for her underdeveloped background knowledge and IT skills.

### 5.2 Problems and solutions in producing the paper

In this section, the students’ problems do not include problems of finance, environments and psychological conditions because these problems tend to be individual. Their solutions will depend on individual factors, such as income, expense, culture, home, neighborhood and psychological stability. The problems other than those are classified by using Mayher, et al.’s stages (1983). When the instruction is given, the reporter starts thinking and preparing herself to do the job. But at the percolating stage, she starts realizing the problems that she has about her background knowledge, experience, facilities, reading skills, IT skills, resource persons and time. Percolating, the writing stage when “the writer begins to discover what she wants to say”, involves activities other than writing letters on paper and it includes thinking, talking, reading, doing observation, etc. related to the ideas to be expressed in one’s writing (Mayher, et al., 1983, p. 5).

The student’s first problem is her limited background knowledge on the topic, and the second is her insufficient experience in operating a computer and her poor IT knowledge and skills. To solve these, she reads and practices more, and asks others for help. Another problem is about the facilities. The student finds out that she needs more books, academic journals, papers, online publications, and print devices to produce her paper. She borrows some material from others, Xeroxes some, downloads online papers from free service providers and buys more print devices, but she does nothing in terms of subscribing to the on-line publication. In reading, the student’s problems lie mostly in interpreting new terminologies that cannot be found in her dictionaries. She can guess the word meanings after she reads more. She also checks the subject index in each of the books to find definitions or explanations of the terminologies. According to Cotterall (1990; cited in Cotterall & Cohen, 2003, p. 159), problems in reading can be scaffolded by:

- (1) exposure to extensive contextualized modeling of “expert” reading comprehension strategies;
- (2) cues to adopt new strategies;
- (3) opportunities to practice and discuss the new strategies;
- (4) feedback on the reader’s performance.

In the case of the doctoral student’s reading practice, she is expected to be more independent. In fact, the

most difficult problem for her to solve is the time. Social events, unexpected visitors, illness, and many other family matters are some of the cultural and unavoidable problems.

At the drafting stage, the problems consist of collecting and documenting ideas, choosing a topic, writing an outline, choosing a title and writing the whole draft. These problems are solved by consulting various sources, making index cards and brainstorming. The student does the brainstorming by following Oshima and Hogue's instruction (1991, pp. 4-9):

- (1) list whatever words or phrases coming to your head to produce as many ideas as possible;
- (2) write freely about a topic to look for a specific focus;
- (3) and cluster ideas around a central one.

She also uses dictionaries, model papers and writing guides to prepare the outline and the draft. Model papers written by authors belonging to the intended audience have been most useful to provide "a guide to conventional forms of texts" (Dudley-Evans, 1997; cited in Paltridge & Starfield, 2007, p. 77). They will help the form of a paper fulfill the intended audience's requirements. Moreover, in order to produce a good draft, the student follows Flowerdew's suggestions (2000, pp. 373-374):

- (1) present information from general to specific;
- (2) use a variety of examples to avoid using genres as a rigid model for reproduction;
- (3) identify content to examine the type and ordering of information;
- (4) relate content in different sections;
- (5) identify the problem solution pattern;
- (6) create a discussion topic;
- (7) and focus on language.

In fact, these seven points are useful not only for producing the first draft, but also for revising it. To overcome the problems in revising the draft, she uses some model papers and writing guides. Shaw (1991; cited in Jordan, 1997, p. 169) recommends using appropriate reading as a model for appropriate style. He calls this "critical imitation of models", which helps learners to assimilate the conventions of the genre and the register of their subject. The critical imitation is also meant to avoid plagiarism.

The revising stage involves two essential activities. The first is writing effective forms, which means preventing the paper from having unnecessary repetition of forms and ideas or having a gap between paragraphs. At the revising stage, the student does some check and recheck to achieve an accurate presentation of the content, paragraph development, and order of ideas within each paragraph and each table. She pays attention mainly to the content and organization, and leaves the grammar and mechanics of the writing to the editing stage. The second is presenting a logical order in the draft. This activity needs rereading the draft several times to check whether or not the ideas are presented appropriately, with no gap between paragraphs and no wrong order of presenting the paragraphs.

In theory, the student should ask for feedback from her peers and professor, and if possible she should also ask for a conference, which she does not do because of the university vacation time. Feed-back is very important in paper revision, as Ferris notes (1995; cited in Jordan, 1997, p. 172), "There is some evidence that students, do, in fact, find their teacher's feedback useful in helping them to improve their writing". Musthafa and Huda (1994, p. 11) also suggest that students should be supported with empowering feedback, which encourages them to consciously identify and solve their composing problems, and which stimulates practice and encourages them to transfer their skills to new writing projects. Nevertheless, the graduate student in this paper is not supposed to rely too much to others' help. In Table 3, the student's specific problems and the solutions are tabulated.



**Table 3** Specific problems encountered, and solutions found in producing an English academic paper

Problems	Solutions
Percolating stage 1. background knowledge, experience 2. facilities 3. reading skills 4. IT skills 5. resource persons 6. time	1. read more, ask for help 2. buy, borrow, Xerox 3. consult dictionaries, read more 4. learn more, ask for help 5. contact experts, colleagues, peers 6. sacrifice other activities
Drafting stage 1. collecting ideas 2. documenting ideas 3. choosing topic 4. writing outline 5. choosing title 6. writing whole draft	1. use various sources 2. make index cards 3. do brainstorming 4. use model outlines 5. do brainstorming 6. use dictionaries and model papers
Revising stage 1. effective form 2. logical order 3. accurate presentation (of quotations, etc.) 4. correct abstract	1. use model papers, writing guides 2. use model papers, writing guides 3. check and recheck, use dictionaries 4. use model abstracts, writing guides
Editing stage 1. clear message 2. form and organization 3. language and print	1. look at outline, index cards 2. use model papers, writing guides 3. use model papers, writing guides, dictionaries

Finally, at the editing stage, the student has problems to ensure that the messages in her paper are presented clearly, the form and organization are appropriate, and the language is free of mistakes. Grabe and Kaplan (1996) emphasize careful editing and appropriate formatting when they say that, "Academic writers are careful about formats, conventions, and error-free texts because they know that other academics view such carefully produced text as a sign of respect and, for better or worse, a mark of careful scholarship" (p. 374).

The things she does to overcome the problems are (1) look back at the outline and index cards; and (2) use model papers, writing guides and dictionaries again and again, especially to check whether or not she has written correct quotes, expressions, names, titles, etc. Those solutions work only to produce the final draft, which is not yet the real paper she will submit to her professor. There are more to do to have the best result, like checking the printing device. Sometimes the computer produces printouts that are different from her expectation, e.g. concerning the paper and the ink quality. All in all, the final product should be able to represent her hard and careful work.

### 5.3 Positive and negative sides of the solutions

To solve the problems in the process of producing her paper, the student has taken several ways. It can be seen in the illustration and the discussion that her solutions have their positive and negative sides and not all of them are really advantageous. The two sides are discussed as follows. The solutions to the reporter's problems are classified into five groups, which also show the 5 positive sides of the solutions:

- (1) correct/better product;
- (2) more knowledge/ideas;
- (3) more equipments/some assistance/clues;
- (4) correct forms and ideas/organized documents;
- (5) more time to work.

The solutions that result in a correct/better product include consulting some dictionaries, using model abstracts,

model papers, writing guides and doing check and recheck. The results appear to be more correct language and also an abstract and a paper which are better than before. However, the solutions have also some negative sides. To do all those things, the student needs a lot of time. She needs days to collect the model abstracts and model papers. She needs hours to read the writing guides, and many more hours for note taking the necessary information. The check and recheck activities need a lot of time, too. Besides, not all terminologies can be found in common dictionaries, whereas using models uncritically can cause a rigid reproduction, which she should avoid.

The second group of solutions, which results in more knowledge/ideas, consists of reading more, learning more, and using various sources. Using this group of solutions, the student finds her background knowledge and her IT skills improved, although relatively not much, and her ideas get developed. The negative sides of these solutions vary: She gets very exhausted after spending much more time than she has expected, and neglects many other things she ought to do, particularly things concerning her family. The positive and negative sides of the solutions are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4** Positive and negative sides of the solutions

Solutions	Positive sides	Negative sides
Use models, writing guides, dictionaries; check and recheck	Correct language; better product	Time consuming; incomplete information; inflexible reproduction
Read and learn more; use various sources	More knowledge and ideas	Exhausting; time consuming
Buy and borrow things; ask for help; contact others	More equipments; lent hands; clues	More expense; disturbing
Brainstorming; making index cards	Correct forms and ideas	Exhausting; time consuming
Sacrifice other activities	More time to write	Health and family problems

More equipment, some assistance and some clues are resulted from the third group of solutions, which consists of buying and borrowing things, asking for help or contacting others for information. When she needs more kinds of material, the student tries to buy them first, but if they are not available at the shops or too expensive for her, she tries to borrow them from others. She also asks for helps from her spouse and some other people, especially when having difficulties in operating a computer or hunting information in the Internet. Contacting others via e-mail, phone or SMS is the last effort she does when she needs information. However, besides the positive results, this group of solutions has some negative sides: She has to spend much more money and she has to disturb others.

She does the solutions of the fourth group, namely brainstorming and making index cards, to get correct forms and ideas and to organize the documents. By brainstorming she can make a correct outline and write a correct title of her paper. In addition, by making index cards she can keep a file of organized documents, which substantially supports her writing process. These solutions also have negative side: They are exhausting and time consuming. Because she needs more time to finish her paper, frequently she sacrifices her leisure and sleeping time. This kind of solution helps her solve the problem, but other problems seem to approach: She may get ill and her family may miss her.

## 6. Conclusion

This paper has described the process and the problems with their solutions in producing an English academic paper by an Indonesian graduate student. From the description and the discussion, some conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, the student has not equipped herself with current knowledge relevant to the topic of her academic paper. As she has limited knowledge background, she is expected to learn more from various sources. Subscribing online

publications will help a lot in obtaining current information more easily. Also, she may try to ask her professor for a conference, as trying is better than doing nothing. There is a possibility that the professor still has time to provide some supports.

Secondly, to meet the international standard of academic writing, the student needs to learn more related knowledge and skills. Current international writing manuals are necessary to guide her writing but she needs to learn from appropriate model papers, too. What is most important, she is supposed to understand the specific requirements of the intended audience, which in her case is her professor. To achieve the best result, she needs to learn to operate a computer better including learning to hunt for information in the Internet.

Thirdly, it is concluded that when the student is to write a good academic paper, her problems are not only in writing it. It has previously been described that at the percolating stage the student has to solve problems concerning other than the draft writing. They are about background knowledge, experience, facilities, skills, resource persons and time. However, the general solutions to those problems are not always applicable as individual factors also play important roles in overcoming them. Among the individual factors are age, sex, marital status, number and age of children, residence, equipment, and some unrelated activities. Consequently, the individual characteristics of the student in this study are not advantageous because in general:

- (1) Younger students are more enthusiastic than elderly ones;
- (2) Male graduate students have more opportunities to dedicate themselves to their studies than their female peers;
- (3) Married students have more responsibilities than single ones, especially if they have young children to attend to;
- (4) The place where the graduate students live may also influence their achievement: Do they live with their family in their own house? Or, do they leave their family in another town and live in a boarding house or a house of a relative's?
- (5) Graduate students should equip themselves with necessary but high-cost things for their studies, such as a computer and a printer;
- (6) Some graduate students may have many more activities than others; they may possess an important position in society that makes them very busy.

Besides all those things, it is commonly known that in Indonesia and many other Asian countries a woman has more responsibilities at home. This fact answers why the student in this paper cannot leave her tasks of a wife and mother. In addition, the student still has to work at least for a half week at the institution she works for, which may cause her to have less time to do her assignments. In summary, to produce a good writing, the student should (1) have sufficient exposure to current knowledge relevant to the writing; (2) use a writing manual that contains standard conventions of academic writing; (3) be engaged in various activities to support the writing production; and (4) get supports from her environments.

## **7. Suggestions**

Based on the conclusions above, some suggestions are offered to graduate students who are to write an English academic paper:

- (1) Prepare yourself for doing this job. Attempt to be healthy and fit by adopting a good life style. You will achieve nothing if you get ill.

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(2) Have systematic ways of thinking. Always realize what to do first and what next, and which things are more important than which. Thinking unsystematically may lead you to disappointing results.

(3) Allot your time wisely. You must know when to work and when to have a break. You must have responsibilities in matters other than your studies.

(4) Provide anything necessary for producing a good academic paper. This includes a computer, a printer, and paper and ink of good quality. Good content of an academic paper can be obscured by its poor appearance.

(5) Talk about the topic you choose with several people. They may have better ideas for your paper.

(6) Document your material in an organized way, e.g. by using index cards to document information. You will have less difficulty in getting necessary information from organized documents.

(7) Master the IT skills. Nowadays literacy in IT skills is indispensable, especially for academic paper or research report writers.

(8) Always make several backups of your draft to anticipate losing your writing file in your computer because of a certain virus or an accident.

(9) If necessary, subscribe an online publication. It can help you find more required information faster. Seeking free information from the Internet occasionally only wastes your time and energy as the result is minimal.

(10) Consult dictionaries and writing guides, including an appropriate citing manual, and use model papers critically in writing the draft. Uncritical use of model papers can result in rigid reproduction or even unconscious plagiarism.

(11) Check your draft several times in terms of the content, paragraph development, and order of ideas within each paragraph and each table. The improvement of the draft will be obvious if you do this.

(12) Do not hesitate to ask for help. Others may be willing to provide you with supports.

(13) Always do the best you can. Remember the proverb: if something is worth doing, it is worth doing well.

(14) If possible, ask a peer to read your last draft and ask for a feedback. You may have got too tired to thoroughly evaluate your own writing.

(15) Try to submit your paper in time. Late submission shows your lack of credibility.

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