

VOLUME 43, NO.2, NOVEMBER 2021

**The EFL Learners' English Writing Productions:
Competence, Difficulty, and Alternative Solution**

Kristina Wasiyati

**Pengaruh Pelayanan Jasa Pendidikan terhadap Kepuasan Mahasiswa
ASMI Santa Maria Yogyakarta dengan Metode *Path Analysis***

Maria A Susi Hermawanti

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**Interrelatedness of Lecturer's Written Feedback on Structure Accuracy in
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Nasionalisme dan Ketahanan Nasional

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Edisi ini memuat beberapa macam topik hasil pemikiran sesuai perhatian dan minat penulis. Penulis telah berpikir mencari solusi teoritis agar sekiranya dapat dipergunakan sebagai dasar pertimbangan solusi praktis dan dasar pengembangan kebijakan serta praktek kehidupan untuk kemajuan sosial, ekonomi, organisasi, perusahaan, kantor dan pendidikan di Indonesia.

Pemikiran kecil atas berbagai masalah sosial ini diharapkan dapat menjadi nyala lilin yang bermanfaat sebagai alat penerang atas masalah sosial di sekitar kita.

Salam,

Redaksi CPS

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THE ELF LEARNER'S ENGLISH WRITING PRODUCTIONS: COMPETENCE, DIFFICULTY, AND ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION

Kristina Wasiyati

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan mengetahui kemampuan menulis surat mahasiswa program studi Administrasi Perkantoran yang akan lulus. Sejumlah tiga puluh dua mahasiswa mengikuti ujian dengan membuat surat keluhan. Dari jumlah itu, 17 mahasiswa atau 53, 13% termasuk dalam kategori kompeten karena skor mereka 75 atau lebih. Dari analisis sepuluh aspek yang dievaluasi, kesulitan yang dihadapi mahasiswa terkait dengan isi, grammar, diksi, tanda baca, tata letak, penulisan bagian-bagian surat, dan bentuk surat. Sementara itu, keaslian cenderung sulit dibuktikan karena ujian dilakukan secara daring sehingga pengawasan sulit dilakukan. Kecepatan kerja juga cenderung lebih longgar karena alokasi waktu pengerjaan cukup panjang sebagai antisipasi terjadinya kendala jaringan. Untuk kerapian, tampilan surat dipengaruhi oleh bentuk surat, penulisan bagian surat, spasi antarbagian dan antarpagraf, serta margin. Kesulitan-kesulitan itu dapat diminimalisasi dengan menyediakan lebih banyak kesempatan mahasiswa untuk mendapatkan input serta penggunaan bahasa. Selain itu, mahasiswa perlu lebih menguasai ungkapan atau frasa yang sudah baku sehingga mereka mampu menyusun surat dengan baik.

Kata kunci: kompeten, kesulitan, input, ungkapan baku

A. Introduction

English ability whether orally or in written is a must for everyone who wants to survive in the increasingly tight competition for getting a good job. Moreover, 21st century's skills require students to master four important skills, namely critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication (Chiruguru, 2020). This implies that educational institutions need to equip the students with those four skills.

Related to communication, students have to be able to speak fluently and write well-constructed writings. In reality, however, students

still find difficulties in mastering those two productive skills; and comparing between the two, writing is more difficult. Even, Richards and Renandya (2002: 313) stated that writing is the most difficult English skill students need to master. The difficulty is not only in generating and organizing ideas, but also in translating them into readable text. Students need to pay attention to higher level skills of planning and organizing and also lower level of spelling, punctuation, word choice, etc. In his research, Weir (1983; 244) found out that the students' writing defects included grammatical error, lack of variety in

grammatical structure employed, use of inappropriate grammatical structure, use of inappropriate vocabulary, limited range of vocabulary, inadequate understanding of the subject, inability to express clearly, poor arrangement and development of writing works, poor spelling, poor punctuation, poor handwriting, and untidiness.

Students' writing difficulties are also found by some previous researchers; among others are 1) Ramadani (2014) who investigated 50 freshmen of the University of Indonesia found out that they found difficulty in organizing and developing ideas, and the influence of their L1 nature; 2) Al-Gharabally (2015) who found out that Arab learners of University level found difficulties in word order, mixed tenses, spelling, and punctuation; 3) Srikrai, Lin, Lakaisone, and Sirinthorn (2016) who investigated 85 non-native English postgraduate students and found out that their writing in an academic style was the highest difficulty and one of the cause was the insufficient English words, expressions, grammar knowledge; 4) Antara, Sedeng, and Putra (2016) who investigated the argumentative discourse of post intermediate level students of STIE Triatma Mulya and found out that types of discourse, grammar, and words choice hinders their competence; 5) Hasan and Marzuki (2017) who investigated 15 non-English students of intermediate level and found out that the students of Riau University found difficulties in grammar including the use of plural

forms, articles, verb forms, clauses, passive voice and prepositions; and in coherence and cohesion; 6) Husin and Nurbayani (2017) who investigated 14 English Department students' thesis and found out that their writing quality concerning the use of appropriate and acceptable structure is low.

From the findings of the previous researches, it proves that students, ranging from freshmen until post-graduate, still find writing difficult in organizing and developing ideas, understanding types of discourse, implementing the grammatical rules, and choosing appropriate words. Besides, their limited vocabulary adds their difficulty in writing.

This research also aims at finding out the problems or difficulties faced by the office administration students in writing English, especially English for specific purpose in the form of writing letters and the alternative solution to minimize them.

B. Methodology

The participants of this research were thirty two office administration students who will graduate. They took an online comprehensive test on 2 August 2021. One of the subjects assessed was business English correspondence. They were asked to write a complaint letter. Their writing products were then scored. The students getting the scores of 75 or more were considered competent. The students' written products were also analyzed to find out the difficulties they might have.

C. Research Findings

In 75 minutes, every student has to make a letter based on the illustration: “A few days ago, the hospital where you work for, order some medical equipment to an international supplier, Asia Medical Ltd, located in 44 Pandan Loop, Singapore, 128260. The equipment ordered consists of 3 units of Central monitor, 4 units of Patient Monitor, and 7 units of Diagnostic Sleep System. The order that should be received a week ago had just been received yesterday. Unfortunately, 1 unit of Patient Monitor is mistype and 2 units of Diagnostic Sleep System do not work well”. The letter should be written in full block style.

Basically, there are two basic approaches to scoring: holistic and analytic (Hughes, 2003: 94). Holistic scoring refers to the assignment of a single score to a piece of writing on the basis of an overall impression. Analytic scoring requires separate score for each of aspects of a task. In this research, the students’ writing products are rated using analytical scoring. The scripts are rated on several aspects or criteria of writing. The rubric adapted from Jacobs et.al. (in Weigle, 2002: 116) proposing criteria for scoring the students’ writing. They consist of content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. Lloyd-Jones (in Wiegler, 2002: 110) add another type of scoring, i.e. primary trait scoring. Its

philosophy is that it is important to understand how well students can write within a narrowly defined range of discourse. The scoring rubrics include the writing task, statement of the primary rhetorical trait (for example, complaint letter) elicited by the task, a hypothesis about the expected performance on the task, a statement of the relationship between the task and the primary trait, a rating scale which articulate levels of performance, sample script at each level, and explanations of why each script was scored as it was. Additionally, Curtis (<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/>) also proposes letter writing rubric consisting of four items: salutation and closing, sentences and paragraphs, grammar and spelling, and ideas. In this research, the criteria for scoring the students’ writing products are made more detail because the office administration graduates are expected to be able to write English letters well. Therefore, the criteria considered involve a) originality (score 10), b) speed of finishing the letter (score 10), c) appropriateness and completeness of the parts of the letter (score 10), d) content (score 20), e) grammar (score 10), f) punctuation (score 10), g) diction (score 10), h) neatness (score 5), i) style (score 5), and j) lay out (score 10). The total score is 100 and the passing grade is 75. The results are as follows.

Table 1 The Students' Scores of the English Writing Test

St #	Origin.	Speed	Parts	Content	Gram.	Punct.	Diction	Neat.	Style	Lay out	Total
1.	6	10	5	10	5	7	6	4	5	7	65
2.	6	10	5	10	4	6	5	3	5	6	60
3.	7	10	8	15	7	7	7	5	5	7	78
4.	8	10	8	15	7	8	8	5	5	8	82
5.	7	10	8	12	5	6	5	4	5	8	70
6.	8	10	8	17	7	8	7	4	0	6	75
7.	8	10	8	12	6	6	7	5	5	8	75
8.	5	10	7	10	5	6	5	4	5	7	64
9.	7	10	7	15	7	6	6	5	5	8	76
10.	7	10	7	15	7	7	7	4	0	6	70
11.	5	10	5	15	5	5	6	4	5	7	67
12.	5	10	7	15	7	7	6	5	5	8	75
13.	7	10	9	15	8	8	8	4	0	6	75
14.	6	10	8	10	5	5	5	5	5	8	67
15.	6	10	6	10	6	7	5	4	0	6	60
16.	6	10	7	10	5	5	5	5	5	6	64
17.	5	10	7	10	6	7	6	5	5	7	68
18.	6	10	8	12	7	7	7	5	5	8	75
19.	5	10	8	10	8	8	8	5	5	8	75
20.	8	10	7	16	8	8	8	4	0	6	75
21.	8	10	7	15	7	7	7	5	5	7	78
22.	7	10	8	12	7	7	7	5	5	7	75
23.	8	10	8	15	6	7	7	5	5	7	78
24.	8	10	8	15	8	8	7	5	5	8	82
25.	6	10	8	10	6	6	6	5	5	8	70
26.	5	10	5	9	5	5	5	5	5	6	60

The data from Table 1 show that 17 of 32 students or 53 percent of the students pass the test or are competent because their scores are 75

or more. More clearly, the data showing the students who are considered competent and who are not is presented in the following chart.

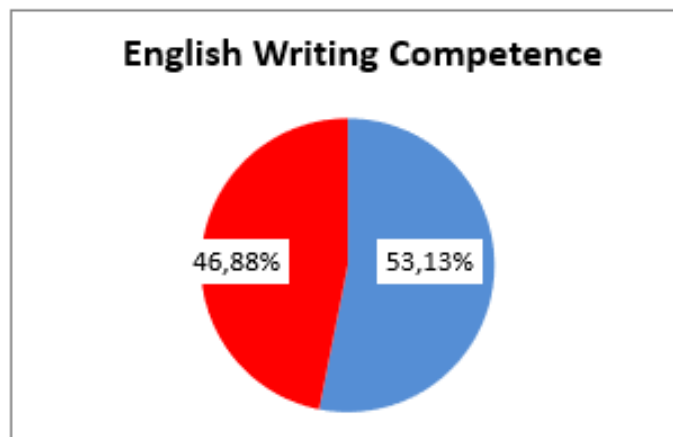


Figure 1 The Students' English Writing Competence

This can be the recommendation to the English teachers to pay more attention to any attempts to increase the students' English writing competence. They include evaluating and improving the teaching methods, the teaching materials, the teaching aids or

facilities, the classroom management, and the assessment.

Meanwhile, the following charts show the percentage and the ranks of the ten aspects assessed, starting from the most difficult to the least.

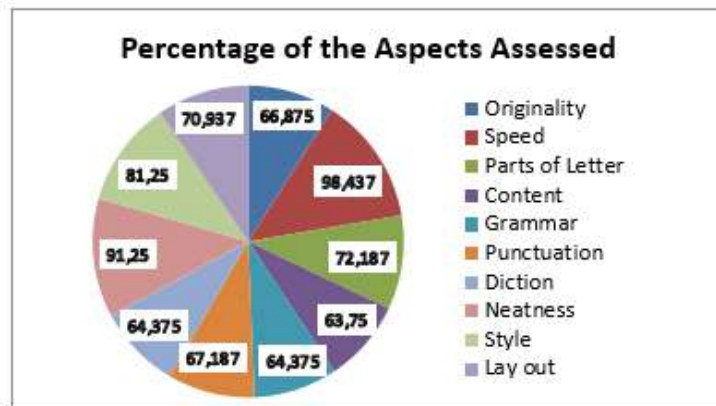


Figure 2 Percentage of the Ten Aspects Assessed

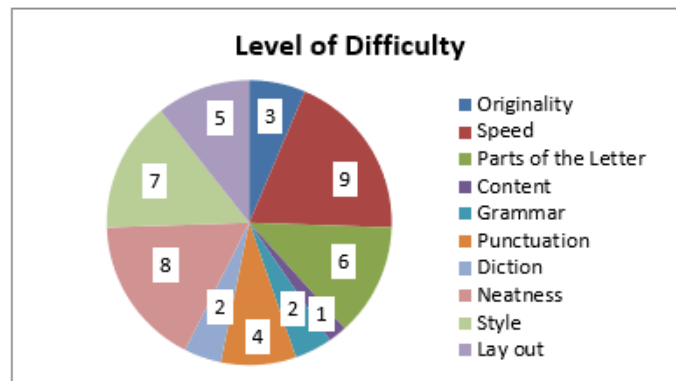


Figure 3 Level of Difficulty

Figure 2 and Figure 3 show the percentage or the level of difficulty of the ten aspects evaluated. The smallest shows the most difficult aspect faced by the students. From the figures, it can be seen that content is the lowest (63.75%), followed by grammar and diction (64.375%), originality (66.875%), punctuation (67.187%), lay out (70.937%), parts of the letter (72.187%), style (81.25%), neatness (91.25%), and the speed/time needed to finish the task (98.437%).

The detailed analysis of the ten items evaluated is as follows.

1. Originality

The data show that the students' originality is 66.875%. To measure the originality of the students' work is not easy. In an online test like this, it is hard to avoid the students not to cheat whether by taking some parts of the letter from the module or other sources or by using applications for translating the whole parts of the letter.

2. Work speed

The data show that the students' work speed is 98.437%. The time allocated is long enough for them to finish one letter so that almost all of them get high scores because they are able to submit in or on time. Only one of them submitted late because of internet connection problem. This is, in fact, meant to anticipate the trouble that may happen during the process of writing test conducted online.

3. Parts of the letter

The data show that the students' ability in putting the parts of the letters is 72.187%. Most of them are good enough in putting the parts of the letter in which some of them are in different positions from those of Indonesian, for example the position of enclosure and subject. In Indonesian letter, those two are put above the inside address. In English, however, they are placed differently. The fact, however, some students still put them as they are in Indonesian, for example.



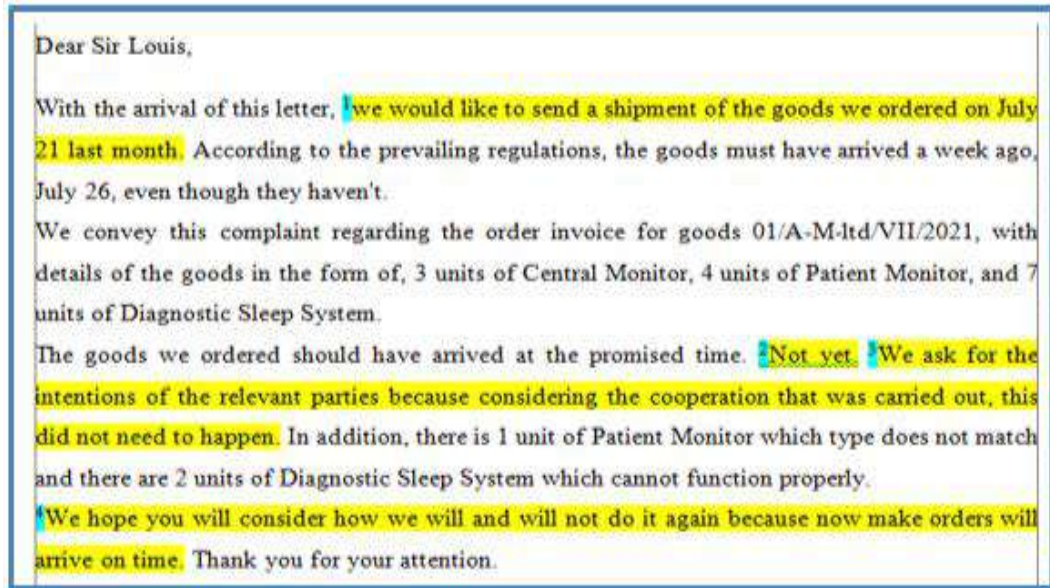
Besides, some students still write the name of the city when they write the date, for example.



4. Content of the letter

The data show that students still find difficulty in conveying the message. It is reflected in the content of the letters they

composed. Compared to the other items evaluated, its score is the lowest, that is 63.75%. Students tend to write unclearly, for example.



The sentence ¹“we would like to send a shipment of the goods we ordered on July 21 last month” is confusing because the letter is from the buyer, not from the seller. The incomplete sentence ²“Not yet” is also confusing. Also, the sentence ³“We ask for the intentions of the relevant parties because considering the cooperation that was carried out, this did not need to happen” is not clear, who are the relevant parties the writer mean. The sentence ⁴“We hope you will consider how we will and will not do it again because now make orders will arrive on time” makes the letter even more confusing because the incomplete clause “... you will consider how

we will...” and “... because now we make orders will arrive on time.” This reflects that the student does not know what she really wants to write or is confused how to write. She maybe just take some parts from the sources without understand them so that she cuts the sentence and combines it with another sentence without understanding the meaning. These phenomena happen to some students taking the test.

5. Grammar

Grammar becomes another difficulty faced by the students. Its score is 63.75%. It is the second lowest score. Grammar is difficult for Indonesian learners because there are so many rules which are

different from those of Indonesian.
The grammar difficulty is shown in

the student's task below.

Dear Mrs. Angelina,
We **are** apologize to report our disappointment as the goods we ordered was supposed to come on July 20th, 2021 but only came last week and the goods that came were not in accordance with our request.
The goods we received were ***** good packaging. Orders ***** in the form of 3 units of Central Monitor, 4 units Patient Monitor, and 7 units Diagnostic Sleep System **there** are not appropriate, such as 2 units of 7 units ***** Diagnostic Sleep System that can't function properly. Other than that, there **are** 1 **units** of 4 units ***** patient monitor ***** **do** not match the type we ordered and ***** different from others.

The right grammar should be:

Dear Mrs. Angelina,
We **apologize** to report our disappointment as the goods we ordered was supposed to come on July 20th, 2021 but only came last week and the goods that came were not in accordance with our request.
The goods we received were **in** good packaging. Orders **are** in the form of 3 units of Central Monitor, 4 units Patient Monitor, and 7 units Diagnostic Sleep System. **Some** are not appropriate, such as 2 units of 7 units **of** Diagnostic Sleep System that can't function properly. Other than that, there **is** 1 **unit** of 4 units **of** patient monitor **which does** not match the type we ordered and **are** different from others.

Grammar is related to agreement among the elements of the sentence, such as verbs, plural form of the noun, appropriate preposition

6. Punctuation

The score of punctuation is 67.187%. This means that the

students' carefulness in using punctuation needs to be improved. Some students are still not consistent in using comma or full stop. This can be seen, for example, from the students' tasks below.

RUMAH SAKIT MITRA MEDIKA
Jalan Jenderal Sudirman 140-145, Yogyakarta
Telepon (0274) 777999, Faksimile (0274) 333999
E-mail: mitramedika@gmail.com

Ref. 11/RSM/VIII/2021 2nd August, 2021

The letter date should be written: 2nd August 2021 (without comma).

Dear Mr. Andrew

The salutation should be written: Dear Mr. Andrew, (added by comma)

Dear, Mrs Friska Siska Lan,

This salutation should be written: Dear Mrs. Friska Siska Lan, (omit the comma after “Dear” and add full stop after the title “Mrs.”)

Some students also need to be more careful in their spelling, for example

We hope your company can replace the wrong and **demaged** goods because we have also paid in full.

We will wait for **there** days for your company to replace it and send it to our company.

The student needs to write “damaged” instead of “demaged” and “three” instead of “there”.

7. Diction

As it is with grammar, some students also find difficulty in choosing appropriate words for example.

We should be grateful if you solve this problem and immediately **send** our inappropriate goods as soon as possible.

The word “send” should be “replacement”

As proof, we will send back the goods that are not in accordance with our order and the goods that cannot function to be checked again by your company. We hope that in the future, we will not **accept** goods that do not match our order and we hope that we will receive a replacement for the type of goods that do not match and goods that cannot function.

The word “accept” should be replaced by “receive”.

8. Neatness

The neatness of students' letters is good. Its score is 91.25%. An example of the neatness is shown in the following sample letter.



The letter is written in full block style. All the words are aligned to both left and right margin so that it looks clean and neat. The spaces among the paragraphs or different parts of the letter are also arranged well. Students' tasks that do not look neat are because of inconsistent use of the style. They

use full block style, but put the date and signature on the right side. Besides, students align text to the left only so that the right side does not look neat. Sometimes, neither do they consider the space differentiating one paragraph to the other ones.

. Style

The score of the style of the students' letters is 81.25%. Most of the students have known how to make a letter using full block style. However, there are 6 of 32 students who still write their letters using semi block style. Related to this, students need to be more careful in understanding the instruction of the test.

10. Lay out

The score of the lay-out of the students' letters is 70.937%. Related to the profession of the students later, that is becoming secretary of office staff, it seems that students need to improve their quality of work. One of them is paying attention to the lay out of the letters because it reflects the quality shows some of

them

of the writer of the letters and is the image of the organization or institution. Lay-out is related to the style of the letter, placement of the parts of the letter, and the space among the paragraphs. It shows the look of the letter.

Other than the 10 aspects, it was found out that in writing the letter, students experienced a negative language transfer or interference from their first language to the second or target language. It is negative transfer because the students' first language competence impedes the students' second language competence. Students fall back on old knowledge when they have not yet acquired enough the second language (Newmark in Krashen, 1981: 7). Students tend to transfer their knowledge of Indonesian letter to English. The following table

Table 3 Language Transfer

Indonesian	English
Yth	Dear
Dengan hormat,	Yours faithfully,
Sehubungan dengan surat ini kami informasikan bahwa pesanan kami seharusnya sampai seminggu yang lalu.	In connection with this letter we inform you that our order should have arrived a week ago.
Kami sampaikan surat ini ...	We submit this letter ...
Dengan datangnya surat ini,	With the arrival of this letter, ...
Demikian kami sampaikan surat ini dengan maksud bahwa di masa yang akan datang hal yang sama tidak akan terjadi.	Thus we convey this letter with the intention that in the future the same thing will not happen.
Demikian kami sampaikan gambaran ini.	Thus we convey this description,
Demikian semua yang dapat kami sampaikan kami membuat surat keluhan atas ...	That is all that we can say we made this claim letter of ...
Demikian surat dari kami, atas perhatian Saudara, kami ucapkan terima kasih.	Thus letter from us, for your attention, we thank you.

The data show that students tend to translate word by word. Meanwhile, those expressions are not commonly used in constructing English letter. In opening the letter, students can directly write the following sentences.

- *The goods we ordered from you on ... have not yet been delivered.*
- *We regret having to report that we have not yet received the goods we ordered on*
- *We are sorry to report that one unit of ... we received last week was badly damaged.*
- *We are writing to let you know that two units of ... were badly damaged when received.*
- *We would like to tell you that the goods we received yesterday were badly damaged.*

Meanwhile, to close the letter, students can use the expressions such as:

- *We shall be glad if you look into the matter as soon as possible and let us know the reason.*
- *We feel there must be some explanation of the delay.*
- *We shall be glad to learn that you are prepared to make some replacement for the damage.*
- *We should be obliged if you could investigate these matters soon.*
- *Thank you for your attention. We look forward to receiving your replacement by return.*

First language influence becomes an indicator of low acquisition. This can be minimized by natural intake and language use. Students get enough opportunity for acquiring the language naturally and

for having real communication. For writing, students need to have many more input sources, for example: samples of English letters. Then, they have enough opportunity to practice writing letters, to get feedback whether from their peer or teacher, and revise the letter. Based on the researcher's experience, related to writing teaching and learning process, sometimes, the teacher finds dilemma. In one semester, students need to learn some letters but each needs long enough time to acquire. As a result, the teacher does not have enough time to teach one topic until the students really acquire it and he or she has to move to another topic. Sometimes, teacher relies on the students to learn more or deeper by themselves but not all of them are able or willing to be autonomous learners.

Another strategy students may use to improve their English acquisition is by understanding prefabricated routines and prefabricated patterns (Krashen, 1981: 83). The first refer to memorized whole utterances or phrases, for example "How are you?" Students may them without any knowledge at all of their internal structure. Meanwhile, the later refers to partly creative and partly memorized wholes. They contain sentence frames with an open slot for words or phrase, for example "That's a ..." (Hakuta in Krashen, 1981: 83). Automatic speech such as conventional greetings, overused and overlearned expressions, pause fillers, certain idioms, swearing, and other emotional languages appears to share some of the characteristics of

routine and patterns (Krashen, 1981: 84). Wood (2002: 3) uses this term formulaic language units referring to multiword or multiform strings produced and recalled as a chunk, like a single lexical item, rather than being generated from individual items and rules. Further, Nattinger and DeCarrico (in Wood, 2002: 3) provide the most comprehensive taxonomy and description of formulaic language units referring to as lexical phrased, consisting of specific lexical items such as “what on earth” and generalized frames, such as “a year ago”.

D. Conclusion

The analysis results show that some office administration students' English writing ability needs to be improved. From 32 students, 17 of them pass the test. It means 15 of them or 46.875% fail. The difficulties in writing a letter are in the content, grammar, diction, originality, punctuation, lay out, parts of the letter, style, neatness, and the speed/time needed to finish the task. Besides, students undergo negative transfer or interference from first language to second language by translating word-to-word.

Students' difficulties can be minimized by providing more opportunity for natural intake and language use. Also, they have to understand prefabricated routines and patterns so that they are able to write natural and common English expressions in composing English letters.

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PETUNJUK BAGI PENULIS

JURNAL ILMU SOSIAL CARITAS PRO SERVIAM

1. Naskah merupakan suatu kajian masalah bidang Ilmu Ekonomi, Sosial dan Humaniora baik hasil penelitian maupun hasil pemikiran yang belum pernah dipublikasikan. Naskah ditulis berdasarkan kaidah penulisan Bahasa Indonesia yang baik dan benar Pedoman Umum Ejaan Bahasa Indonesia (PUEBI). Naskah diketik dengan huruf Times News Roman, ukuran 12, spasi ganda, dicetak di atas kertas HVS ukuran kwarto sebanyak 10-30 halaman.
2. Judul tidak lebih 12 kata, ditulis dengan huruf kapital 14, spasi tengah
3. Nama penulis dicantumkan tanpa gelar
4. Abstrak ditulis dalam satu paragraph, maksimum 200 kata, dengan ketikan spasi 1 dan dicetak miring. Abstrak ditulis dalam bahasa Inggris bagi naskah Bahasa Indonesia dan ditulis dalam Bahasa Indonesia bagi naskah Bahasa Inggris. Abstrak disertai kata-kata kunci (*key words*)
5. Sistematika naskah hasil penelitian:
 - a. Judul
 - b. Abstrak
 - c. Pendahuluan
 - d. Metode Penelitian
 - e. Hasil dan Pembahasan
 - f. Kesimpulan dan Saran
 - g. Daftar Pustaka
6. Sistematika naskah hasil Pemikiran:
 - a. Judul
 - b. Abstrak
 - c. Pendahuluan
 - d. Pembahasan
 - e. Penutup atau Kesimpulan
 - f. Daftar Pustaka
7. Ketentuan Penulisan Daftar Pustaka
 - a. Penulis diurutkan berdasarkan alfabetis, nama akhir/ keluarga sebagai urutan pertama atau nama institusi yang bertanggung jawab atas tulisan. Nama penulis diakhiri tanda titik (.)
 - b. Tuliskan tahun terbit karya pustaka dan diakhiri tanda titik (.)
 - c. Tuliskan judul karya pustaka dari seorang penulis lebih dari satu, penulisan diurutkan secara kronologis waktu penerbitan
 - d. Penulisan referensi dari internet terdiri: judul, penulis, alamat *website* dan keterangan akses/ *down load*
8. Gambar, grafik, dan tabel disajikan dengan diberi nomor urut dan sumber
9. Biodata ditulis dalam bentuk narasi memuat nama lengkap, tanggal dan tempat lahir, keterangan selesai pendidikan S1/S2/S3, pekerjaan, alamat e mail, bidang kerja/ bidang ajar dan karya ilmiah yang pernah ditulis
10. Naskah yang dikirim dapat:
 - a. Diterima tanpa perbaikan

- b. Diterima dengan perbaikan dari redaksi
- c. Diperbaiki oleh penulis dan dipertimbangkan dalam rapat dewan redaksi
- d. Ditolak karena kurang memenuhi syarat