

Encouraging Scientific Writing: An Explorative Study on the Indonesian General Course Learned at Islamic Colleges in Cirebon Regency, West Java Province, Indonesia

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Abstract: *College students are expected to be able to develop scientific writing skills. One of the objectives of Indonesian General Course (MKU) is to encourage university students' competence in expressing ideas through scientific writing. This research seeks to describe and explain how the scientific writing is specifically learned at all Cirebon-based Islamic Colleges in West Java Province, Indonesia. The data were obtained from Indonesian lecturers and college students learning Indonesian General Course (MKU) at six Islamic Colleges namely Islamic College of Cirebon, Bunga Bangsa Islamic College, Fahmina Islamic Study Institute, State Islamic Institute of Syekh Nurjati, Al-Birun College of Religious Outreach Sciences and Ma'had Ali Islamic College. The results of observation show that the processes of learning Indonesian General Course have not been optimally undertaken resulting from the fact that every learning process is irrelevant to the college students' needs.*

Keywords: ability, scientific writing, learning, Indonesian General Course, university students' competence

1. Introduction

Scientific writing is a way of expressing ideas that requires critical thinking and reasoning. Suyanto and Sutinah (2011: 3) emphasize that reasoning is a person's mental process to obtain correct and accurate conclusions using certain principles and patterns. Therefore, writing can be an indicator used to know one's mindset.

The Indonesian Directorate General of Higher Education decree No. 152/E/T/2012 concerning the publication of scientific papers highlights that all Indonesia's higher education leaders should attempt to encourage the scientific papers pursuit particularly by requiring university students to produce and publish scientific papers. This academic practice encourages them to be able to write scientific papers.

The total number of scientific journals production in Indonesia is only one seventh of the scientific journals published by Malaysia. Muhammad Nuh (*Kompas*, 2012) states that scientific journals written by students are still very low and not comparable with the total number of students in Indonesia. Furqan (TT) adds that the culture of research or scholarly writing on campus is low considerably. This is evidenced by university students' low abilities in writing research proposals and reports.

SCImago Journal & Country Rank reported that, in terms of scientific papers publication, Indonesia ranked 11th out of 33 countries in Asia and it remained below Malaysia, Thailand, and Pakistan. The number of Indonesia's publications has only recorded 20.166 while China has as many as 2.680.395 publication. On March 1, 2013, only 9 of Indonesian

journals indexed SCOPUS. Of course, this number is not proportional to the number of universities in Indonesia.

Scientific writing skills are part of critical thinking skills (Bair and Cynthia, 2013). The characteristic of a critical thinker deals with awareness to find out information and resources that are true and credible (Zuchdi, 2009: 50; Munandar, 2012: 35). This characteristic can be developed through trainings conducted continually by taking into account various aspects to challenge critical thinking activities (Sutrisno, 2012: 69). In learning and teaching activities, teachers must be able to facilitate, demand, and mediate learners (Amir, 2013: 44).

Critical thinking skills can be an indicator of intelligence. Woolfolk (2009a: 168) defines intelligence as "the ability or the various capabilities in acquiring and using knowledge to solve problems and adapt to the world." Intelligence affects one's creativity (Munandar, 2012: 8). Critical thinking, intelligence, and creativity have a working relationship with brains. Given (2007: 54) states that there are five things associated with brains that work naturally, i.e. emotional, social, cognitive, physical, and reflective domains.

Indonesian is one of the college subjects that has a goal to help students hone skills in scientific writing. Law No. 12 2012, Article 34 Paragraph 3, requires colleges to load subjects namely (1) religion, (2) *Pancasila* (the five basic principles of the Republic of Indonesia: the belief in God Almighty, humanity that is just and civilized, the unity of Indonesia, democracy guided by the wisdom of representative deliberation, social justice for all Indonesians), (3) citizenship, and (4) Indonesian. Indonesian General Course aims to develop university students' abilities to organize ideas or concepts to be communicated to other parties.

During this time, the Indonesian learning at college, especially at Islamic Colleges (PTAI) has not shown maximum results. It is evidently proved by the lack of scientific writings produced by academics or academicians, not to mention a minimum number of accredited scientific journals at Islamic Colleges (PTAI). This glaring fact happens to other universities as well. Hanum's research results (2004: 2) indicate that learning Indonesian General Course (MKU) at University of Lampung (UNILA) has demonstrated ineffectiveness. One reason behind this failure is the lack of effective learning methods used. Likewise, Alwasilah's Research (2005: 6) reports that Indonesian General Course (MKU) lectures have not instrumentally increased the maximum academic writing skills, even some faculties have failed to administer them. Referring to the statement, this study is set to describe and explicate scientific writing skills in learning and teaching activities of Indonesian General Course (MKU) at Islamic College throughout Cirebon Regency, West Java, Indonesia.

2. Literature Review

Problems of scientific writing are common to university students in Indonesia. Meanwhile, university students in other countries such as Malaysia, Pakistan, India, Africa, and America are facing the same problems. Several studies from different countries can be references, among others, as follows.

Nilsen (2009) conducted a research on enhancing students' writing abilities through motivation entitled *Influence on Student Academic Behavior through Motivation, Self-Efficacy and Value- Expectation: An Action Research Project to Improve Learning*. This research suggests that a success in writing is closely related to the motivation of students, lecturers, and students' self-confidence in learning. Students' motivation to learn and acquire knowledge will affect the completion of the task. Students' awareness of having the ability to write will also affect the ability of critical thinking. Similarly, lecturers' motivation in teaching is important to help students write scientific papers well. Lecturers who have teaching objectives will try to reach them. One of them is to select the appropriate teaching methods in accordance with students' factual conditions.

Gardiner and Hugh (2012) conducted a research on a good coaching that will affect the quality of students' writing entitled *The ABCDE of Writing: Coaching high-quality high-quantity writing*. This study shows that in order to produce quality writing, there needs to be a business coaching, that is, the lecturers as mentors should have a good understanding of the students' psychology in learning. They should be able to choose the appropriate learning methods. In addition, students should be motivated so that they can develop their abilities in writing. The more students have good abilities in writing, the better they will write, but the more they practice.

Motivation is an important factor in education that will affect whether or not a target learning is achieved. Williams and Caroline (2011) through the research paper entitled *Five key ingredients for improving student motivation* outlines five things to improve student's motivation namely 1) learners or students, 2) educators or teachers, 3) learning

materials, 4) methods of learning, and 5) learning environment. Factors that influence students' motivation can derive from themselves or from outside. Other factors that influence motivation, among others, are (a) the individual and social diversity, (b) compliance with requirements, (c) in accordance with what is perceived, (d) usefulness especially employment, (e) the ability to speak, and (f) continual learning.

Mahadi and Sepideh (2012) conducted a research on kinds and impacts of motivation in learning entitled *Motivation, Its Types, and Its Impacts in Language Learning*. This study concludes that motivation is one of the factors that influences university students' success in learning to write. Therefore, lecturers should be able to find, understand, and pay attention to students' learning motivation. At the time of learning, they should be able to deliver the materials and methods of learning relevant to students' motivation.

Lucas (2010) did a research on motivational factors in learning a second language entitled *A Study on the Intrinsic Motivation Factors in Second Language Learning Among Selected Freshman Students*. This study points out that students have a high motivation to continue learning the language. The motivation is important because university students are aware of the role of language in everyday life. In this context, they have the needs to learn the language because language is the primary means of communication, both verbal and written. Communication is the main thing that people as well as university students need to master. If someone does not master a language, you can bet there will be no communication. Thus, it is impossible for people to live without communication. This is a trigger for university students to learn the language particularly mastering scientific writing skills.

Lo and Fiona (2007) has conducted a research in Hong Kong related to university students motivation in writing. In their article entitled *Enhancing students' engagement and motivation in writing: The case of primary students in Hong Kong*, they state that increasing university students' motivation in writing has something to do with the theme in accordance with the socio-cultural aspects because university students have confidence and freedom. The themes of papers should be interesting and close to their life so writing becomes easier.

Lucas et al (2010) conducted a research on motivation in the second language learning in the Philippines. The study entitled *A Study on the Intrinsic Motivation Factors in Second Language Learning Among Selected Freshman Students* concludes that the university students will be motivated to learn if the material studied has future benefits.

Hasegawa (2013) specifically examines the ability of writing essays for university academic interest in Japan. The study entitled *Students' Perceptions and Performances in Academic Essay Writing in Higher Education* concludes that three factors influence students' success in essay writing derived from (1) students as learners, (2) lecturers as instructors, and (3) language as learning materials. Hasegawa suggests that it is necessary to re-design writing

instructions. In other words, there needs to be a redesign of learning materials that focus on students' writing.

Through an article entitled *Academic Writing at the Graduate Level: Improving the Curriculum through the Faculty Collaboration*, Bair and Cynthia (2013) implies that many university students are experiencing difficulties in academic writing. This research focuses on curriculum development factors in universities. Based on the research results, five suggestions are worth considering namely (1) give the highest priority to synthesizing theory and research, (2) the material associated with academic writing should be taken or given at the beginning of the semester, (3) the students should have prepared from the outset of the semester before they plan to carry out research proposals, (4) increase the time allocation from one semester to two semesters, and (5) the curriculum should give a priority to the problems dealing with theory, research, and academic writing skills.

Harris (2006) mentions three steps that can be done in teaching abstract and criticism writing. An article entitled *Three Steps to Teaching Abstract and Critique Writing* suggests a learning model principle that can be used to resolve the problem. The first step is *laying the Foundation*, the compatibility between the material and the learning objectives. The second step is *communicating expectations and evaluation criteria*, that is, the assessment standards as expected. The third step is *scaffolding for success* which assists and guides the learners to be able to have the ability to write an abstract and criticism.

Kellogg (2008) has conducted a research that has been published under the title *Training writing skills: A cognitive developmental perspective*. He concludes that the teaching of writing should involve learners actively. This research also highlights the memory limitations that will hamper the development of learning skills. The learners should deliberately practise and use the knowledge to continue practicing.

Giridharan and Alison (2011) identifies university students' different abilities to write a scientific papers. Their research entitled *Identifying Gaps in Academic Writing of ESL Students* suggests that, despite the students know the applicable rules of grammar, the article they have written has not been in line with expectations. This is related to their awareness of writing competence. Most of all, university students are not trying to use and practise the writing skills that they have already possessed. This study suggests four criteria that can determine one's success in academic writing, namely (1) attitudes toward academic writing task itself, (2) good planning, (3) compose a paragraph or an essay, and (4) evaluate or revise papers they have written.

To minimize the learning boredom, innovation is very important to apply. Nation (2007) delivers learning principles that can be used as guidance for the teacher. In his article entitled *The Four Strands*, he coins ten learning principles namely (1) integrate listening and reading skills, (2) adding the material based on the needs of learners, (3) encourage and support learners to be active orally or verbally, (4) work in group or collaborate, (5) give the materials concerning the language based on the rules, (6)

select and use learning strategies appropriately, (7) improve the four language skills, (8) adjust to *the input and output* of the language learning and development, (9) careful planning, and (10) use the analysis, monitoring, and assessment to help learners.

Sharples (2012) in his article entitled *Innovating Pedagogy 2012: Open University Innovation Report 1* mentions 10 innovations that can be applied in learning namely: (1) new pedagogy for e-books, (2) publisher-led short courses, (3) assessment for learning, (4) badges to accredit learning, (5) massive open online courses are attempts, (6) rebirth of academic publishing, (7) seamless learning, (8) learning analytics, (9) personal inquiry learning, and (10) rhizomatic learning.

Technological developments have impacted the world of education. Sharples more likely uses information technology in learning innovations. One of the developments of science is obtained from sharing knowledge through books along with the ease of using information technology as a means to an *e-book* or electronic book. Another innovation that can be done is to publish a wide range of activities that has been carried out. Further innovations are associated with the assessment of learning and learning plans that can be the next innovations. Since the beginning of learning plans, the learners have already programmed and planned studies that will be conducted. These plans have certain targets to be achieved.

3. Research Method

Type of Research

This is a descriptive explanatory research because the data were collected in the form of words, pictures, and not numbers (Moleong, 2010: 11). The researcher gathered information related to (1) learning and teaching activities of Indonesian General Course (MKU) at Cirebon-based Islamic Colleges, and (2) a form of learning appropriate to the needs of college students and lecturers at the Cirebon-based Islamic Colleges, West Java, Indonesia.

Subject of Research

The research involved 12 Indonesian lecturers and 250 students taking the Indonesian General Course (MKU) at six Islamic Colleges in Cirebon Regency, West Java, Indonesia. The purposive sampling technique (Sutopo, 1996: 53) was used to signify that the sampling was a series of strategic choices about with whom, where and how the research was conducted.

Technique of Data Collection

The data at this stage were collected by using observations, interviews, and documents analysis (Cohen, 2000: 271; Moleong, 2010: 9). Observations were carried out in a planned and controlled way. The researcher observed the Indonesian learning courses in class directly. At the time of observations, researcher also prepared a form to be filled out by some informants. In-depth interviews were conducted involving Indonesian lecturers and students who were taking Indonesian courses. The questions were general and open ended. This is a means to bring the views and opinions of the informants (Creswell, 2012: 267). The data collected

would focus on the analysis, study, and review of the LectureSession Plan (SAP) used in the research.

Validity of Data

The validity of the data was measured by using a triangulation method, the researcher's triangulation, and triangulation theory (Creswell, 2012: 286-289; Moleong, 2000: 178; 2010: 330).

Techniques of Data Analysis

The data were analyzed by using an interactive model. Therefore, the researcher started it with the data collection. Implications of data reduction depended on simplifying the activities data that obtained from field notes. This process would reinforce, shorten, and throw away things that are not important and organize the data in such a way, so that the conclusions of research could be drawn. This process was ongoing until the research report was completed. Reduced data would be presented. The presentation of data was in the form of a series of sentences arranged logically and systematically, so it was easy to understand when people read and allowed it to be made an action based on this understanding (Miles and Huberman, 1992: 15-21; McDonough & McDonough in Cohen, et al, 2000: 108) .

Drawing a conclusion and verification started from a temporary conclusion. The application of a temporary conclusion was done by tracing back the data presented. The motion of repetitions should be done quickly because it deals with the possible emergence of new ideas at the time of writing while looking back at the data presented. A final verification was done by a more thorough discussion with the informant or informants. The verification flow was relevant to the meaning of data that could used to test its validity, so that the conclusions of research become more robust and meaningful (Creswell, 2012: 276-283). The interactive analysis process can be described as follows.

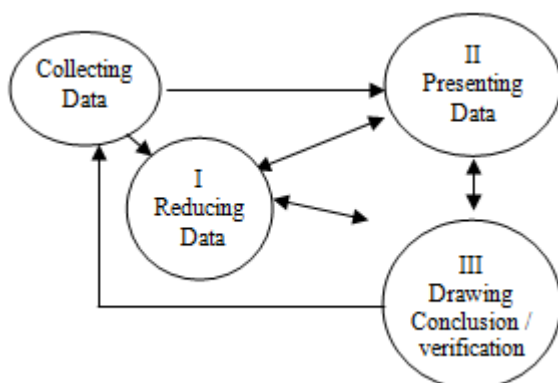


Chart 1. Interactive Analysis Process
(Source: Miles and Huberman, 1992: 20)

Place and Time of Research

This research took place in Islamic Colleges namely: 1) namely Islamic College of Cirebon (STAIC), located at the Islamic Center Complex Road Tuparev No. 111 Cirebon, West Java; 2) Bunga Bangsa Islamic College (STAIB) located at Widarasari Street No. III Tuparev, Cirebon; 3) Fahmina Islamic Study Institute (ISIF), located at Swasembada Street No. 15 Majasem, Karyamulya, Cirebon; 4) State Islamic Institute of Syekh Nurjati (IAIN SNJ),

located on Bypass Sunyaragi Street, Cirebon; 5) Al-Birun College of Religious Outreach Sciences (STIDB) located in Babakan, Ciwaringin, Cirebon and 6) Ma'had Ali Islamic College (STAIMA) adjacent to the Al-Birun. The research was carried out from February to May 2014.

4. Results

Observation results show that six Islamic Colleges did not use teaching methods that could help students write scientific papers skillfully. Basically these colleges had the same pattern of learning, namely the use of conventional learning models, lecturers gave students theories and provided them with tasks. In each lecture, lecturers gave students assignments based on the materials presented. There was a tendency that materials were not connected to each closely. Moreover, lecturers did not give concrete explanations. This indicates that the materials previously taught do not have a strong connection with today's materials or the ones studied tomorrow.

The classroom interactions occurred in a normal atmosphere. The lecturer came to class and greeted students. After that, he or she checked the students' attendance list, wrote materials and delivered them to students. A lecturer could ask some students to explain the materials. In addition, questions were posed to help students understand the materials followed by illustrating examples. Having collected some answers, a lecturer would summarize and explain the materials repeatedly. If the explanation was clear enough, he or she would terminate and provide an opportunity for students to ask questions. The lecturers explained and answered the questions until the class ended. Once the lecture was completed, there would be no more explanations and the lecturer dismissed the class.

The course material taught during the semester included 1) History of Indonesian; 2) Position and Function of Indonesian; 3) Varieties of Languages; 4) Essay; 5) Improved Spelling Guide (EYD); 6) Effective Sentences; 7) Paragraphs; 8) Papers; 9) Quotation; and 10) Literature.

The lecturer evaluated students' assignments consisting of individual assignments and group assignments, both structured and independent assignments. Based on the observations, the lecturer asked students to form small groups consisting of 5-6 members. Each group had a duty to write a paper that must be presented. The theme of paper depends on the material taught and discussed in class. In fact, 2-3 papers were presented in a lecture session. The course presentation was mechanically done through several steps. One of the group members became a moderator to lead the discussion, and four other members as speakers. After the papers were submitted, the moderator gave them a question and answer session. If it was sufficiently completed, the moderator would close the discussion and presentation. The lecturer provided students with feedbacks and additional explanations of questions that had less or inappropriate answers. Students who were active in giving opinions or in asking questions during the discussion got points or extra points.

Based on the observations, the learning model was insufficient to ensure students in writing scientific papers properly. Tasks performed by the group of students indicated collaborations as it can be seen from the students' acknowledgement and presentation ability. This learning model was less effective or ineffective in that some students did not really get involved in the presentations. Ineffectiveness was also related to the materials discussed. Students obtained theories from various books and they did not get them from practitioners or authors directly. It means that a variety of issues was related to scientific writing resolved theoretically, but impractically.

5. Discussion

Analysis of Lecturers' Need

Observations in six Cirebon-based Islamic Colleges show significant aspects related to lecturers as mentors or instructors.

1) Education Qualifications

The following table indicates lecturers teaching Indonesian General Course (MKU).

Table 1: Linearity of Lecturers

No	Islamic Colleges	Level		Linearity		Total
		Master degree	Doctoral degree	Linear	Not Linear	
1	State Islamic Institute of Syekh Nurjati (IAIN SNJ)	5	1	3	3	6
2	Islamic College of Cirebon (STAIC)	1	-	1	-	1
3	Bunga Bangsa Islamic College (STAIB)	2	-	1	1	2
4	Ma'had Ali Islamic College (STAIMA)	1	-	1	-	1
5	Al-Birun College of Religious Outreach Sciences (STIDB)	1	-	1	-	1
6	Fahmina Islamic Study Institute (ISIF)	1	-	-	1	1
Total		11	1	7	5	

Table 1 shows that lecturers teaching Indonesian General Course (MKU) have had a linear academic background. Although a lecturer did not fulfill background knowledge linearity, he proved that his papers were published in various printing media both local and national. Therefore, his qualification was not problematic.

Some things to note associated with the lecturer are that, according to the rules imposed by the Director General of Higher Education, lecturers are at least doctoral program graduates and master linear sciences. This is mainly related to the development of Indonesian language sciences. Therefore, professors are expected to have doctoral degrees linearly, and lecturers should set an example to the students in the form of scientific writings published both locally and nationally. The type of writing can be a scientific paper and a popular journal article. This, of course, will further motivate students. If the lecturer has not written a paper, he or she can provide students with examples of other lecturers' papers who are successful in writing scientific papers, or

students can learn from those who are economically successful. The lecturer can give examples to writers who are successful. Nevertheless, it would be nice if a lecturer teaching Indonesian General Course (MKU) becomes an example of success.

2) Curriculum and Syllabus

The total number of Indonesian General Course (MKU) lecturers from six Islamic Colleges is 12 people. Of 12 professors, only 5 designed a Lecture Session Plan (SAP) or a lesson plan. Based on the interviews, the lecturers argued that a Lecture Session Plan (SAP) was only an administrative requirement. Thus, it was not something to be designed or made to guide learning and teaching processes, but it could be made later. Of course, it is associated with an understanding of how useful is the Lecture Session Plan (SAP). The importance of a Lecture Session Plan (SAP) needs to be socialized. Islamic colleges should emphasize that lecturers are familiar with the use of a Lecture Session Plan (SAP) before teaching. Its true existence is able to provide a preliminary description of the study to be performed. In addition, it can also be an indicator of success or failure of a lecture or a lesson. That is why Indonesian General Course (MKU) lecturers at Islamic colleges must prepare a Lecture Session Plan (SAP) before teaching.

3) Selection of Learning Materials

The absence of a Lecture Session Plan (SAP) determines the learning materials. As the interviews indicated, professors said that Indonesian General Course (MKU) learning materials were common. It means that the materials presented were not much different from those taught in senior high school. The materials include EYD (Improved Spelling Guide), paragraphs, essays, and essay development patterns. The teachers did not know much about Indonesian General Course (MKU) priorities concerning the ability of expressing ideas in writing either scientific or popular papers. Through this model of learning Indonesian General Course (MKU), students are expected to be able to convey ideas orally in scientific forums. Nevertheless, the existence of the vision and mission of Islamic colleges influences the selection of lecturers in teaching materials as it happened at Fahmina Islamic Study Institute (ISIF). Indonesian General Course (MKU) lecturers in this institute encouraged students more on developing the ability to be able to write popular articles. Students were required to be able to express ideas in writing in a variety of media related to the social problems around them. Therefore, the selection of learning materials are prioritized in developing popular writing skills.

In addition, courses on scientific writing techniques are useful for students to write research proposals. Therefore, in teaching the Indonesian General Course (MKU), professors should prioritize the development of scientific writing skills. Some things associated with the selection of learning materials are worth considering: a) the lecturer needs to encourage students to write using Indonesian because learning Indonesian theories has been acquired when learning in the previous education level; b) learning materials can be either scientific or popular writing skills. Popular publications need to be studied to help students find fresh and original ideas. Basically, scientific and popular

writings are not much different. Both use the same language media. The difference between the two lies in the rules that can be applied contextually. Popular publications are not merely attached to the applicable rules or systematics, while the scientific literature strongly adheres to them; c) students are trained to express their opinions through popular writings more flexibly. However, it would be better if the two can go hand in hand.

4) Learning Methods

As previously mentioned, learning methods used are conventional. Conventional means that 50% of learning time is used by lecturers. Within early minutes, the lecturer checked students' attendance list. After that, he or she reviewed the materials slightly taught in the previous week, for example, giving students the opportunity to ask about things they do not understand. If it was done well, the lecturer would begin new materials. Lecturers delivered materials, posed question and students answered them. If the students were not eager to ask, the lecturer would continue to deliver the materials. Then he or she would give tasks to students, individual or group tasks in the class. Because of the time limit, students brought the same tasks home to continue doing them and they presented them in the ensuing lectures.

Some important things need further attentions: a) lecturers should confine themselves to learning to write. It is possible to give students more time to write by involving them actively and productively; b) involving well-experienced practitioners or writers to let students learn directly from them and demonstrating to students that learning is not just done through theories; c) give students a challenge. It helps them produce an article that can be published in both local and national media; and d) the lecturer gives tasks to students, so that they read and learn to write. Thus, tasks encourage them to write consistently.

5) Availability and Use of Media

It is inevitable that all six Cirebon-based Islamic colleges do not have adequate facilities and infrastructure. It means that these institutions do not have their own facilities and infrastructure related to multimedia. Even State Islamic Institute of Syekh Nurjati (IAIN SNJ) as a state-owned campus has limited multimedia infrastructure. This limitation impacts the accessibility to multimedia usage. The only teaching media commonly used are LCDs and whiteboards. The computer laboratory is not used optimally. Therefore, the use of instructional media is still very limited.

The use of media is closely related to three aspects: a) focus on learning objectives. Limited facilities and infrastructure should not hinder the learning goals or learning achievement. Lecturers should be creative and innovative in using various media; b) explore students' potentials. If students are actively involved in the learning and teaching processes, they will find and create their own media based on their own circumstances; c) initiate outdoor learning activities. Using things outside the classroom such as a library, computer lab, bookstore, mass media offices and mass media editors.

6) Assessment

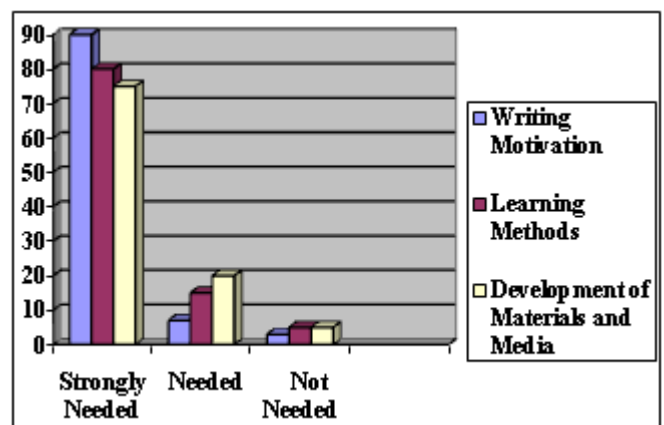
In general, the assessment administered by Indonesian General Course (MKU) lecturers is still common, namely 5% of attendance, 15% of the individual tasks and structured tasks, 25% of Mid-term Exam (UTS), and 40% of the Final Semester Exam (UAS). The attendance is a part of active involvements in the class. Individual tasks consisting of a) writing papers, b) creating paragraphs, and c) composing free essays. Papers on individual tasks are not presented. Meanwhile, the structured tasks are usually in the form of papers presented in the class. The test items for either mid-term exam (UTS) or final semester exam (UAS) may take different forms depending on each lecturer. Every exam is in the form of theory, practice and product-oriented achievements.

Other important things to concern are: a) assessment that can be carried out based on the process. In this sense, students' tasks are monitored and corrected together that can be used as a learning tool for other students; b) assessment can also be done based on the results. When students are able to write and their articles are published in media, lecturers do not hesitate to give students high grades or rewards.

Analysis of Students' Needs

Interviews and questionnaires answered by the students show that 1) lecturers need to motivate students to write either scientific papers or popular articles, 2) selection of learning methods is needed to help students achieve learning objectives, and 3) development of learning materials and instructional media is necessary to overcome students' boredom in learning, so it can proceed as expected.

Students were given three alternatives, namely 1) strongly needed, 2) needed and not needed in terms of changing the three aspects. Two hundred and twenty (220) students involved in filling out the questionnaires. They came from six Islamic colleges: 70 students from State Islamic Institute of Syekh Nurjati (IAIN SNJ), 30 students from Islamic College of Cirebon (STAIC), 35 students from Bunga Bangsa Islamic College (STAIB), 25 students from Ma'had Ali Islamic College (STAIMA), 30 students from Al-Birun College of Religious Outreach Sciences (STIDB), and 30 students from Fahmina Islamic Study Institute (ISIF). The results of the questionnaire can be seen in the following chart.



Graphic 1: Indonesian learning needs according to college students

Students think that lecturers strongly need to motivate students to develop writing ability (90%), while 7% of students want to meet the need of being motivated by lecturers, and 3% of them think that motivation is not needed. This happens because during the learning processes of writing, lecturers tend to give them more assignments. Motivation is importantly done by giving a good grade based on the students' true writing competence, but it also provides material or non-material benefits for students in a way that they try to write well.

During this time, students only understand that they solely write to carry out an obligation. Students are not aware of the importance of writing. Even worse, they do not have an adequate understanding of the advantages of writing. Therefore, lecturers are expected to motivate students to write.

Students think that a learning method is strongly needed to be re-examined (80%), while 15% of them state it is need, and the remaining 5% think it is unnecessary. Learning has been done to explore the capabilities of each student. It means that each student's ability to write individually has not been monitored. Lecturers only take heed of writing ability in general. Thus, it is necessary to have a learning method that determines the ability of individual students to write.

Students assume that the materials and instructional media are extremely needed (75%), while 20% of them think that it needs to be developed, and the remaining 5% think it is not needed. During this time, Indonesian General Course (MKU) learning is more precisely concerned with studying Indonesian theories, yet the ability to write is ignored. Although more theories need to be studied, it would be better if both theory and practice go hand in hand. Therefore, it is necessary to develop materials that can enhance students' writing competence. In addition, it is urgent to seek a solution for the limited availability of instructional media. Lecturers are expected to be more creative and innovative. Moreover, learning may happen in the class, or outside the classroom. It is not only done by the lecturer, but also by a practitioner or an author.

6. Conclusion

Learning to write scientifically through Indonesian General Course (MKU) has not been pursued optimally. The learning objectives of this course consider failed because the selection of learning models are less suitable with students' needs.

7. Suggestion

Based on the analysis of students' needs, it is necessary to improve existing teaching methods. Indonesian General Course (MKU) learning model should be able to motivate students to be willing and be able to write scientific papers.

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