

## Students Attitude Towards Writing Communication Skills

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### Abstract

*This study aims to know students' attitudes towards written communication skills in English learning, in the scope of cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects. This research used descriptive quantitative in the form of the cross-sectional survey design using a questionnaire at one point in time. The population of this study was 200 students who had taken an English course in the second semester, and the sample was 135 students (67.5%), specified by the Slovin formula. The sample of this research was chosen by probability sampling with random. The data were analyzed descriptively using the data presentation method, cross-tabulation, drawing conclusions, and T-score with the SPSS program. Based on the research, the students' attitudes regarding cognitive, affective dan behavioral aspects towards written communication skills in English learning showed that the students have a positive attitude in improving English writing skills. Many of them feel that English writing skills need to support their learning and quite relevant to the competence of education in agriculture and beneficial and valuable for them. Self-assignment for students that must be carried out outside of face-to-face hours is also the key to improve their writing skills. Therefore, the form and substance of self-assignment should be designed by lecturers in order to make students able to write English substance well. Students need to appreciate the fact that English is very beneficial for them, not only during their studies or when completing final assignments, but beyond that, it would also be valuable after they graduated from college.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In this modern, communicative, and technological era, English plays a prominent role in the development of global education and business. In communication, it is essential to keep everything uttered efficiently so that the person we are communicating with would not misinterpret the information we try to deliver. In recent years, one of the major problems related to English Language Learning (ELL) is to develop learners to use the language effectively and proficiently. Being able to communicate effectively is perhaps the most important of all life skills. It enables us to pass information to other people and understand what is said to us. Communication, at its simplest, is the act of transferring information from one place to another.

In the world of education, communication skills are needed to support effective learning activities. One of the writing skills that students must master in the modern era is writing communication skills. Writing communication skills is a transformation of thinking in language that requires not only physical creativity but also critical and systematic thinking in expressing communication in written form. According to Zainurrahman (2011), writing is one of the skills not mastered by everyone, let alone writing in an academic context, such as writing essays, scientific papers, and research reports.

Different reception and attitudes of each student might cause some problems to occur in the class. To overcome those problems, the teachers are suggested to make the classroom instruction strong and dynamic. Teachers are advised to carefully pay attention to students'

feelings, beliefs, needs, and attitudes before planning a learning program to maintain a positive attitude towards English and its alarms (Primadi, Setiyadi, & Kadaryanto, 2014). Classroom interaction must be encouraged because it is a valuable strategy to enhance learners' English writing communication skills.

The following are a form of positive, negative attitudes and form of attitudes. Attitude consists of three components, namely cognition, affection, and behavior. Zulfikar, Dahliana, and Sari (2019) found out that English department students showed a positive attitude in all cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects. The positive attitudes here mean that students think that learning English is considered necessary. Ali, Shamsan, Guduru, and Yemmela (2019) discovered that female students' attitude towards English learning is more positive than that of males. Attitude is a hypothetical construct used to explain the direction and persistence of human behavior. Furthermore, Shinned in Purbandari, Rachmawati, and Febriani (2018) assumed that attitude is often seen as a vital part affecting language accomplishment.

Jafre, Abidin, and Alzwari (2012) found out that the students showed negative attitudes towards learning English. The different results cannot be helped since the condition of the school, curriculum, and students vary from each research. Another research by Ahmed (2015) observed that most students had negative feelings or fear about classroom instructions in their learning experience. Students of different fields varied in attitudes towards English language learning regarding the domains of use and focus of learning skills which shows that a single curriculum or teaching methodology is not adequate.

Another research conducted by Ali, Shamsan, Guduru, and Yemmela (2019) discovered that male and female students do not differ in their attitude towards learning English as they become more aware of the growing importance of learning English. Based on these conditions, the attitude factor affects the tendency of students to participate in learning written English and the willingness to improve written communication skills in English. The attitude of a person towards a language attitude of his attitude towards speakers native to the language. Attitude language can be changeable, can be positive, can be negative, or neutral depending on the experience which is obtained (Chalak and Kassaian, 2010)

### **Significance of The Study**

The significance lies in two perspectives; theoretical and practical. Theoretically, the results of this study are expected to benefit English lecturers and teachers, Indonesian EFL students, and future researchers. For the English lecturers and teachers, it is expected that this study can provide insights about how they can increase the attitude towards written communication skills of students by giving them the best materials or way of teaching that is appropriate so that the result they gain from the learning process can be maximized. It is essential since the teachers are the frontiers of the education who deal directly with the students.

For the Indonesian EFL students, it is expected that the results of the study can provide insights related to the importance of communication skills as an integral part of their learning development. By understanding what learning strategies can benefit their communication skills, they can more consciously consider how they will approach English learning in communication, especially in writing, and explore what strategies suit their personal needs and learning styles. In this globalization era where the world keeps developing, having good communication skills in English is essential, primarily when they work later in the future.

Practically, for future researchers who are interested in this topic, this study is expected to provide information that can help their research. Moreover, it is expected that they can use the findings of this study to explore further factors contributing to the student's attitude towards their communication skills.

### **Scope and Limitation of the Study**

This study investigates the Polbangtan Malang student's attitudes towards written communication skills and how their attitude affects their English written communication skills learning. This study also examines the student's attitudes towards written communication skills in English learning at Polbangtan Malang. From this research results, it is expected that

appropriate learning methods can be obtained to improve student positive attitudes and it is expected to have implications on the improvement of English written skills for students. The research participants are the second-semester students at Polbangtan Malang who take an English course.

The determination of research subjects is based on the writer's experience when teaching in the previous semester by analyzing the English scores acquired from the middle semester test (mid-term). The participants are not chosen by their GPA but by their English score. Anyone who scores b+ in writing and willingly wants to take part could be the participant.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

### Design of the Study

The research applied a descriptive quantitative research design in the form of a cross-sectional survey. With this design, the data are collected using a questionnaire at one point in time. The aim is to obtain information about some respondents representing a particular population (Krisyanto, 2008). The survey method is used to obtain data from certain natural places to make it easier to obtain data to be processed with an objective to solve the research problems (Sugiyono, 2009).

This research was intended to investigate the Polbangtan students' attitude towards written communication skills. The research investigated cognitive, affective and behavior patterns of the students' attitudes towards written communication skills. The research results are intended to enhance students' communication skills and help the teachers formulate a more appropriate educational program and improve their teaching quality.

### Population, Sample, and Sampling Technique

#### 1. Research Setting

The population of this study was students of Polbangtan Malang College. Polbangtan Malang is an Agriculture College previously named STPP. It is an official tertiary institution established in 2002 in Malang, East Java, under the Agency for Agricultural Extension and Human Resources Development (BPPSDMP) Ministry of Agriculture, The Republic of Indonesia, which organizes vocational programs in various applied sciences to support agricultural development in Indonesia. This college primarily focuses on teaching agriculture-related courses. English has not been the main focus. Hence, English for General Purposes (EGP) is given without considering their needs to learn English for their specific agricultural major. However, English taught at this college has been changed into English for Specific Purpose (ESP), and students learn English according to the needs of their respective majors in the hope of helping their career later.

#### 2. Population and Sample

The target population of this study was all the students who had taken the English course at Polbangtan with a number of 200 students. The sample was the 135 students (67.5%) who took the English course in the second semester. The sample of this research was chosen by probability sampling with the random sampling method. The sample was selected randomly in which each student in the population has the same opportunity to be sampled. The sample was selected using a lottery technique. The name that appeared in the lottery would be as the sample. The determination of the size of the sample was based on the *Slovin* formula, as

### Data Collection Procedure

The data of research were collected by using a questionnaire. The questionnaire used was a closed ended (fixed alternative) by using *Liekert* scale, where the respondents answered the statements questions (items) provided by the researcher. The respondents answered by choosing the options of *strongly agree*, *agree*, *disagree* and *strongly disagree*. The items included positive statements (*favorable*) and negative statements (*unfavorable*). The questionnaire grid is presented as follows.

**Table 1. Questionnaire Grid**

Variable	Sub Variable	Indicator
Attitudes	Receive	Students attend learning to write English
	Responds	Students agree to improve their English writing skills
	Appreciate	Students' assumption in learning to write English
	Organize	Students develop English writing skills
	Characterization	Students show evidence of receiving English learning
Cognitive	Perception	Students' interpretation of English writing skills
	Trust	Students' confidence in writing English
	Stereotypes	Students' assessment of their English writing skills
Affective	Feeling	The feelings students feel when writing English
	Emotions	Students' reactions when learning to write English
Behavior	Tendency to behave positively	Positive behavior of students in writing English
	Tendency to behave negatively	Negative behavior of students in writing English

**Table 2. Assessment Item of Statement**

Category	Item of statement	
	Favorable	Unfavorable
Strongly disagree	1	5
Disagree	2	4
Neutral	3	3
Agree	4	2
Strongly disagree	5	1

**Transform Attitude Score**

The total score from the scale obtained from the respondents' answers was converted to a T score with SPSS program.

$$T\text{-score} = 50 + 10 (x - \bar{x})/SD$$

Were,

$x$ : respondent score

$\bar{x}$ : group mean score

SD: Standard Deviation (Azwar,2013)

According to Azwar (2013), the attitude score has changed being a T score would be categorized as follows;

- Supportive (positive) attitude, if the respondent's T score > mean T,
- Unsupportive (negative) attitude, if the respondent's T score < mean T

**Measuring Level of Achievement of Respondent**

The measurement of the respondents' level of achievement was carried out to determine the level of attitude shown by respondent toward English writing communication skills.

**Table 3. Level Achievement All of Aspect**

Score	Criteria
168 - 200	Very positive
136 - 167	Positive
104 - 135	Enough
72- 103	Negative
40- 71	Very negative

**Table 4. Level of Achievement Each Aspect**

Score	Criteria
42 - 50	Very positive
34 - 41	Positive
26 - 33	Enough
18 - 25	Negative
10 - 17	Very negative

This chapter presents the research findings based on the result of the analysis of the collected data. The discussion of the findings was also presented in this chapter by referring to the existing theories and previous research findings.

#### **The Learners' Attitude Toward Writing Communication Skill**

Analysis data to describe the Learners' Attitude towards Writing Communication Skills at the end of the questioner and interview data management is used to obtain evidence in answering research problems.

The following are presented descriptive statistical results on students' attitude towards writing communication skill in cognitive, affective, and behavior aspects.

**Table 5. The Frequency and Score**

	Score	Attitude		Cognitive		Affective		Behaviour	
		Freq	Score	Freq	Score	Freq	Score	Freq	Score
Valid	1.00	25	25	24	24	31	31	26	26
	2.00	54	108	67	134	76	152	15	30
	3.00	128	384	262	786	305	915	237	711
	4.00	680	2720	714	2856	645	2580	725	2900
	5.00	463	2315	283	1415	293	1465	347	1735
<b>Total</b>		1,350	5,552	1,350	5,215	1,350	5,143	1,350	5,402

**Table 6. The total score and mean**

Aspect	Score	Mean	Std deviation
Attitude	5,552	41.125	4.44776
Cognitive	5,215	38.629	5.00398
Affective	5,143	38.096	4.12889
Behavior	5,402	40.014	4.76145
All	21,312	157.866	16.12553

The results of attitude description obtained a mean score of 41.125, classified as positive criteria. The frequency of positive answers was 680 and this was supported by question no. 9, showing that they always finished their English assignment. At the same time, the frequency of respondents classified in negative criteria was 54. It was supported by question no. 7 on questionnaires showing they were agreed that it is not important to increase English skills.

The total score from the scale obtained from the respondent's score would be converted to a T score with the SPSS program.

**Table 7. Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std.Deviation
Attitude	135	30.00	50.00	41.1259	4.44776
Cognitive	135	27.00	50.00	38.5556	5.00398
Affective	135	26.00	50.00	38.0667	4.12889
Behavior	135	27.00	50.00	39.9852	4.76145
Total Attitude	135	117.00	197.00	157.7333	16.12553
Valid N (listwise)	135				

**Table 8. Attitude score t**

Attitude	$T\text{-score} > 41.1259$	Positive
	$T\text{-score} < 41.1259$	Negative
Cognitive	$T\text{-score} > 38.5556$	Positive
	$T\text{-score} < 38.5556$	Negative
Affective	$T\text{-score} > 38.0667$	Positive
	$T\text{-score} < 38.0667$	Negative
Behavior	$T\text{-score} > 39.9852$	Positive
	$T\text{-score} < 39.9852$	Negative

According the measuring level achievement to answer research problems about Learners' attitude toward writing communication skills. The commutative data analysis about attitude, cognitive, affective, behavior used  $t$  score that showed that in the table 10 as follows:

**Table 9. The mean t-score and mean respondents' score**

Aspect	Mean $T\text{-score}$	Mean $T$ respondents' score	Criteria
Attitude	41.1259	50.00067	Positive
Cognitive	38.5556	50.00007	Positive
Affective	38.0667	49.99904	Positive
Behavior	39.9852	49.99889	Positive
All Attitude	39.4333	50.00007	Positive

The attitude of the respondents is positive if their  $T > T$  mean, whereas their attitude is negative if their  $T < T$  mean (Azwar, 2011). All aspects of the students' achievement towards writing communication skills are categorized positive since the total mean  $T$  respondents' score of 50.00007 is bigger than the mean  $T\text{-score}$  of 39.4333. So, the general attitude of mean  $T$  respondents' score of 50.00067 is greater than the mean  $T\text{-score}$  of 41.125. The table above also shows that the  $t$  respondents' score for each aspect is greater than the mean  $T\text{-score}$ . So that students showed a positive attitude and positive response to the writing communication in English.

Based on the descriptive analysis, the attitude score value is 41.13 it shows that the student's attitude value is positive. In the cognitive aspect, the score was 38.56, indicating that the student's cognitive aspect was positive. In the affective aspect, the score is 38.07, indicating that the affective aspect of students is positive. In the behavior aspect, the affective

score is 39.99, indicating that the affective aspect of students is positive. The score analysis of the student's attitudes on attitude, positive, affective, and behavior shows the cumulative score of 157.73, suggesting positive values about the learner's attitude towards writing communication skills.

### Discussion

Based on the result of the survey design using *t*-Score, it could be concluded that the four aspects of attitude, cognitive, affective, and behavior, on average, show positive results towards improving English writing skills. In general, it shows that English learning, especially in writing skills, is still much needed by students. Furthermore, for further deepening, the following is outlined discussion on each component of attitude, including the results of deepening through short interviews and experience during teaching.

*First*, the analysis of students' attitudes towards English writing skills showed a *T-score* of 41.13, indicating positive attitudes. Overall, the positive attitudes that students showed were more than negative attitudes. Therefore, students' attitude showed a positive attitude towards learning in writing English skills, although many students still liked listening and reading better than writing. It is because the ability to write would be significantly influenced by various abilities that students must learn correctly, such as grammar, vocabulary, and accuracy in writing words and sentences. In addition, practical learning to do something is a thing that must be done for students' abilities to improve. Browker (2007) argued that writing, in particular, is a skill that is required in many contexts throughout life. For instance, you can write an email to friends, either local or overseas, or write essays for your homework. In school itself, writing is one of the requirements for students to pass the course; "without some ability to express yourself in writing, you don't pass the course" (Brown, 2000, p. 339). Students found that English writing skills beneficial and valuable for them, but more understanding is needed for writing. Students had positive attitudes towards writing when they came to School of Foreign Languages, and they agreed that writing skill is necessary for them in their academic and future life (Paker & Erarslan, 2015).

*Second*, the analysis of cognitive analysis showed a *T-score* of 38.56, indicating a positive attitude. Forty-eight students still showed hesitation to show their positive attitude as they found it challenging to follow English writing skills learning. Cognitive attitude in learning is the involvement of students' mental events in learning activities shown in reading and writing activities. The cognitive attitudes that appear are seen as mental drives regulated by the student's brain. Students' cognitive abilities are observed through the ability to receive, understanding, respond and solve problems in English learning material (Wenden, 1991). Students had a positive attitude in improving their writing skills by learning independently outside of learning hours, but they still felt hesitant. Students should do independent learning as, besides the face-to-face meeting both inside and outside the classroom, they also had self-assignments, both individually and in groups. On this occasion, lecturers should design a form of self-assignment that can improve students' capabilities in writing. Student's attitudes have a positive influence on their writing and writing performance, as well as the correlation between students writing comprehension and their writing performance (Ni'mah, Kadarisman, & Suryati, 2015)

*Third*, the analysis of the affective aspects showed a *T-score* of 38,07, indicating a positive attitude. The affective component refers to the individual's feelings and emotions towards an object, whether they like or dislike it. Attitude can help the learners to express whether they like or dislike the objects or surrounding situations. Overall, the positive affective aspects that students showed were discovered more frequently than the negative affective aspects. Students expressed a fondness for learning about writing skills in English. Students felt that learning writing skills were quite relevant to agriculture competency. As the demands for applied scholars that bridge the gap between science and farmers are rising, English mastery becomes a must-needed ability for Polbangtan Malang students. This must be embedded in students' minds as the next millennial generation of agriculture with better

competence than their predecessors. Good affection for English would affect their willingness to learn better. Building a positive attitude is the first step and knowing students' opinion or their view about English is very important before the lecturers decide to implement a particular learning strategy (Lubis, 2015)

Lastly, the analysis of student's attitudes in general showed a *T-score* of 39.99, indicating a positive attitude. Four students' doubtful scores were higher than the positive and negative attitudes. Fifty-four students felt that they had not been able to improve their writing skills by doing exercises independently. The students' attitude could have a moderate impact on their writing skills. In sum, knowing students' attitude helps the teacher to achieve learning goals (Zahroh, R., Mujiyanto, J & Saleh, M., 2019). Most students cooperated in completing English writing skills assignments, but those with a positive attitude always tried more to improve their English writing skills. When having writing classes, they tended to bring their cultural aspects and, according to Jabali (2018), this may influence foreign or second language writing learning, either positively or negatively.

Browner (2007) argued that writing, in particular, is a skill that is required in many contexts throughout life. It is a critical communication tool for students to convey thoughts and opinions, describe ideas and events, and analyze information. In a school context, writing is one of the requirements for students to pass the course; without some abilities to express ideas in writing, students do not pass the course (Brown, 2000, p. 339). In Indonesia, assessment is mainly done in a written form. Moreover, writing is also the most used skill in evaluating students' performance in almost all levels of education (Afrin, 2016).

The T-score analysis of students' attitudes towards attitude, cognitive, affective and behavior shows a cumulative score of 157.73, indicating positive values about the learner's attitude towards writing communication skills. Since attitude is one of the predominant factors for success in language learning, numerous studies have already been conducted to know the learners' attitude towards English learning (Zulfikar, Dahliana, & Sari, 2019; Ahmed, 2015; Jafre, Abidin & Alzwari, 2012). It could be concluded that these students had a positive attitude without any doubt about English writing skills. Tilahun (2018) asserted that the English learners share six fundamental difficulties about writing skills, and the most frequent one is vocabulary, followed by grammar and the fear of negative comments. Other difficulties such as the lack of motivation, insufficient time and teacher's role are the least problematic. However, this research discovered that many students felt the need for English writing skills to support their learning. They also strived to improve these skills to increase their vocabulary. To compensate for students' positive attitude and struggle to learn English, the lecturers need to make serious efforts to create fun and engaging English learning.

Improvisation of learning is an important thing to do, not only in the content of learning but also in the use of media and methods that vary, all down to one goal: to improve students' competence in English, especially in the aspect of writing. This is in line with Elyas, Bayan, and Fang (2020) who stated that it is highly recommended to take mixed-method languages teaching approaches, such as eclecticism and differentiated instruction, into consideration when planning teachers' training programs and when setting the criteria based on which teacher's performance will be later assessed.

### 3. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

#### Conclusion

Communication skills aids in all aspects of life – from professional life to personal life and everything that falls in between. Good communication skills are essential to allow users to understand information more accurately and quickly.

Based on the results of the study, it could be concluded as follows:

1. The students' attitudes regarding the cognitive aspect towards written communication skills in English learning showed that the students had a positive attitude to improve their English writing skills by learning independently outside school hours, but they still feel hesitant.



2. The students' attitudes regarding the affective aspect of English written communication skills showed that their positive affective aspects were discovered more frequently than the negative affective ones. They felt that the writing skills learning is quite relevant to agriculture competency.
3. The students' attitudes regarding behavioral aspects showed that the students had a positive attitude without any doubt about English writing skills. Many of them felt the need for English writing skills to support their learning.

It is expected that the research results could be used as one of the inputs in determining the steps to encourage and increase writing communication skills since Polbangtan students find English writing skills beneficial and valuable for them.

### Suggestion

Based on the study results, it is recommended that lecturers pay attention to each student's cognitive ability, affective and behavior in the implementation of learning, including the selection of methods and learning media. The variety of learning media that adapts to various learning methods for a specific purpose is expected not only to attract students to learn English but also to answer the challenges to improve their competence, especially in writing. Self-assignment for students that must be carried out outside of face-to-face meeting hours is also a key to improve their writing skills. Therefore, the lecturers should design self-assignments that could spark students' interest in learning writing.

Students need to realize that English is very beneficial for them, not only during their studies, especially when completing final assignments, but it is more than that. It would also be helpful when they have graduated from college. It is commonly found that some people with verbal skills have no decent writing abilities. Therefore, students must hone their English writing skills from the beginning.

Based on some of the above conditions, it is necessary to conduct further research to deepen the relationship between the variation of media use and learning methods with improved English writing skills for Polbangtan Malang students.

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