

**EXPLORING REFERENCE ACCURACY ON UNDERGRADUATE
THESIS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE PROGRAM****Ari Mulyadi**Institut Pendidikan dan Bahasa Invada (IPB Cirebon)
mlyd.ari@gmail.com**ABSTRACT**

This study specifically reports on the referencing accuracy to examine the breached APA sixth edition formatting references rules produced by English language and literature undergraduate students. This study was frame in Aronsky et.al (2005) employed a qualitative descriptive method to describe the breaches and the most breached rules. The selection of data samples was obtained from undergraduate thesis of nine students in English language and literature program in a private college in Bandung. The results showed that the students breached six formatting general rules: 1) not on a new page (3.23%), 2) incorrect formation of the section name (29.03%), 3) spacing errors (22.58%), 4) not listed alphabetically (19.35%), 5) indentation errors (16.13%), and 6) incorrect recording of the entries (9.68%). While based on the type of source, 20 rules in total were breached, which spread in six types of sources i.e., 1) periodicals, 2) books, reference books, and book chapters, 3) technical and research reports, 4) doctoral dissertation/master's thesis, 5) document from web site, and 6) unclear sources. Furthermore, the most breached APA sixth edition formatting references rules are incorrect formation of the section name (29.03%), incorrect formation of book, reference books, and book chapters (17.44%). The result tracks well with Aronsky et.al (2005) that formatting a paper in APA style can be tricky.

Keywords: APA style, reference accuracy, writing

INTRODUCTION

Practitioners and academicians are required to be responsible for managing accurate referencing in order to avoid violations of publication ethics. The goal of undergraduate thesis is to present and justify the need to study a research problem and to present the practical ways in which the proposed study should be conducted. The design elements and procedures for conducting the research are governed by standards within the predominant discipline in which the problem resides, so guidelines for research papers are more exacting and less formal than a general project paper. Research papers contain extensive literature reviews. They must provide persuasive evidence that a need exists for the proposed study

(Krathwohl & Smith, 2005). Thus, students are prompted to think independently about particular issues and subjects by performing assignments and research papers. At the same time, students also learn how to access, select and evaluate information from different sources and to formulate ideas (Anderson & Poole, 2001).

Several studies on the students' problem in writing a research report have been explored such as students' problem in academic writing (Amiri & Puteh, 2017), comparison of error rates in social science journals (Wilks, Geiger, Bates, & Wright, 2017), students brief impression in writing accuracy (Iskandar & Patak, 2019), their impact in shaping evidence (Rivkin, 2020). While some other focus on a particular section, e.g. volume(s) and issue(s) (Basak, 2015), bibliometric (Lazonder & Janssen, 2022), and error ascertainment (Jergas & Baethge, 2015). Also, other studies on citation practices and paraphrasing strategies that analyzed the linguistic aspects have been conducted (Guiang, 2017). Although many previous studies as mentioned above have investigated the students' problem in academic writing areas, little in-depth research had explored the references accuracy that is necessary. Therefore, the reference data must be correct and complete, because one purpose of listing references is to enable readers to retrieve and use the sources. Thus, it can be concluded that listing references correctly and completely is extremely crucial in a research paper to prove that the research is logical, reliable and credible.

In general, there are a number of different referencing styles which are commonly used for a research. For instance, APA (American Psychological Association) is used by education, psychology, and sciences; MLA (Modern Language Association) style is used by the humanities; Chicago style is generally used by business, history, and the fine arts; and so on. Moreover, Paiz et al. (2013) on the Purdue Online Writing Lab of Purdue University stated that American Psychological Association (APA) style appears to be the most widely used to cite sources in social science. The emphasis given to referencing practice at an early stage in their studies will be of wider benefit and the ability to pay attention to detail and follow instructions accurately should be particularly important for all

students (Lamprey & Atta-Obeng, 2013). Thus, this present study will fill the gap in formatting the references studies.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study were approached by qualitative descriptive entails to Aronsky et.al (2005) framework in order to generate study of reference accuracy. First, the references of each undergraduate thesis will be analyzed to find the breaches comparing to the APA sixth edition formatting references rules. Second, this study discovered which APA sixth edition formatting references rules the students' breaches in writing references. Third, categorized each breach provided by the students to find out the most frequently APA sixth edition formatting references rules breached by the students. Fourth, the results of the analysis of all students' references of their undergraduate thesis will be described by using descriptive statistic, especially distribution, and rate percentage. Each reference's such as publication title, writer name(s), year, volume, and issue were differentiated. In addition, other errors such as capitalization were not noted. Moreover, the analysis of references accuracy in undergraduate thesis would show the students' own performance in formatting references conform to the formatting references rules of the APA sixth.

Participant

In order to generate a specific characteristics that conform the issues, the participant of the study were selected only nine students undergraduate thesis according to third criteria: 1) Data involved in this study were accessible as offline resources and accessible for public; 2) The writer were available to contact; 3) Willing to be a participant in this study. The current study selected references from undergraduate thesis of English language and literature program from August 2021 – February 2022 in one of private college in Bandung. The data will be collected by collecting the references, critically selecting the breaches of them by comparing to the APA sixth edition general rules.

Data Collection

This study employed data collection technique, namely: the documentation. The data analyzed by investigating which APA sixth edition formatting references rules breached by the students were and what is the most APA sixth edition formatting references rule breached by the students.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

The study findings present the result of APA sixth edition formatting references rules that were breached by the students and the most APA sixth edition formatting references rule breached by the students. In this section, one table is provided to present the breaches of using general guidelines produced by the students of English language and literature program in their undergraduate thesis.

The following table presents the breaches of general guidelines produced by students of English language and literature program in the form of frequencies and percentages.

Table 1. Breaches by General Guidelines

No	Breaches	Frequencies	Percentages
1.	Not on a new page	1	3.23 %
2.	Incorrect formation of the section name	9	29.03 %
3.	Spacing errors	7	22.58 %
4.	Not listed alphabetically	6	19.35 %
5.	Indentation errors	5	16.13 %
6.	Incorrect recording of the entries	3	9.68 %
TOTAL		31	100 %

Table 1 shows that the highest percentage of the breach is 29.03% which means that the most general guidelines of APA sixth edition formatting references rules breached by the students of English language and literature program in their undergraduate thesis is incorrect formation of the section name.

The following table presents the breaches based on the type of source produced by students of English language and literature program in the form of frequencies and percentages.

Table 2. Breaches by Type of Sources

A. Periodicals			
No.	Breaches	Frequencies	Percentages
1.	Incorrect recording of the entries	1	0.58%
2.	Incorrect formation	25	14.53%
3.	Provision of insufficient details	22	12.79%
4.	Unnecessary details	3	1.74%
B. Books, Reference Books, and Book Chapters			
5.	Incorrect recording of the entries	19	11.05%
6.	Incorrect formation	30	17.44%
7.	Provision of insufficient details	6	3.49%
8.	Provision of unnecessary details	3	1.74%
9.	Punctuation and spacing errors	9	5.23%
C. Technical and research reports			
10.	Incorrect formation	3	1.74%
11.	Provision of insufficient details	2	1.16%
12.	Provision of unnecessary details	4	2.33%
D. Doctoral dissertation/ master's thesis			
13.	Incorrect recording of the entries	1	0.58%
14.	Incorrect formation	12	6.98%
15.	Provision of insufficient details	9	5.23%
E. Document from web site			
16.	Incorrect recording of the entries	4	2.33%
17.	Incorrect formation	12	6.98%
18.	Provision of insufficient details	4	2.33%
19.	Provision of unnecessary details	1	0.58%
F. Unclear Sources			
20.	Provision of insufficient details	2	1.16%
TOTAL		172	100%

Table 2 shows that the highest percentage of the breach is 17.44% which means that based on the type of source, the most APA sixth edition formatting references rules breached by the students of English language and literature program is incorrect formation of book, reference books, and book chapters. Besides, this study discovered that the most APA sixth edition formatting

references rules breached by the students in their undergraduate thesis are incorrect formation of the section name (29.03%) and incorrect formation of book, reference books, and book chapters (17.44%).

This study divided the breaches found into two, i.e. the breaches in using general guidelines of APA sixth edition formatting references rules and the breaches by type of sources. It is in line with Aronsky et.al (2005) that analyzed the most common *APA* style mistakes done by students and divided it into: in general formatting of the paper; citing sources and formatting the reference list. But the differences were, he analyzed the whole paper, instead of specifically analyzed the references. However, with so many breaches found in this present study, it conforms Aronsky et.al (2005) that formatting a paper in *APA* style can be tricky.

Besides, this study discovered that the most *APA* sixth edition formatting references rules breached by the students in their research proposals are *incorrect formation of the section name* (29.03%) and *incorrect formation of book, reference books, and book chapters* (17.44%). It was in line with the Vasilev (2013) findings in formatting the reference list, the most common mistakes are: 77% of all authors did not format the “References” heading correctly or did not include one in the first place; 90.9% of all authors made three or more mistakes when formatting their references. The difference was only the percentages, since this present study did an in-depth study of references only, therefore the breaches presented in more specific. In general, the breaches found in this study was in line with Amiri & Puteh (2017) which found that the errors of bibliography list are: the listing does not follow the format, provision of insufficient details; inconsistency in referencing style, incorrect, and incomplete recording of the bibliographic entries committed by the students. The differences were: they used bibliographies in their analysis, instead of references.

The problem in academic writing areas, little in-depth research had explored the references that also very important in an academic writing. As Walliman (2011) asserted that the location of the cited work of others must be meticulously recorded in the references. It is not only does ensure that we could not be accused

of plagiarism but also demonstrates that we are aware of the latest thinking in the subject. In addition, the availability of textual material in electronic format has made plagiarism easier than ever. Copying and pasting of paragraphs or even entire essays can now be performed with just a few mouse clicks. Some fear that their writing ability is inadequate and would want to look for a superior product to make it as their own creation.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals two findings related to this study, i.e. the breach of APA sixth edition formatting references rules produced by the students in undergraduate thesis and the most breached rules. First, in using the general guidelines of APA sixth edition formatting references rules, the students breached six rules, i.e. 1) not on a new page, 2) incorrect formation of the section name, 3) spacing errors, 4) not listed alphabetically, 5) indentation errors, and 6) incorrect recording of the entries. While based on the type of source, 20 rules of APA sixth edition formatting references in total were breached by the participants, which spread in six types of source i.e. 1) periodicals: incorrect recording of the entries, incorrect formation, provision of insufficient details, and provision of unnecessary details; 2) books, reference books, and book chapters: incorrect recording of the entries, incorrect formation. provision of insufficient details, provision of unnecessary details, and punctuation and spacing errors; 3) technical and research reports: incorrect formation, provision of insufficient details, and provision of unnecessary detail; 4) doctoral dissertation/ master's thesis: incorrect recording of the entries, incorrect formation, and provision of insufficient details; 5) document from web site: incorrect recording of the entries, incorrect formation, provision of insufficient details, and provision of unnecessary details; and 6) unclear sources: provision of insufficient details. Second, the most general guidelines of APA sixth edition formatting references rules breached by the students in their undergraduate thesis is incorrect formation of the section name, while the most APA sixth edition formatting references rules breached by the students in their undergraduate thesis is incorrect formation of book, reference books, and book chapters. Based on the

findings, discussion, and conclusion of the research, it was recommended to do further research about another reference styles, or references on another work of academic writing, e.g. journal articles.

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