

A STUDY ON THE ABILITY OF THE SECOND SEMESTER STUDENTS OF FKIP UNIVERSITAS RIAU ENGLISH STUDY PROGRAM IN WRITING A PARAGRAPH

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Abstract: *This descriptive research is aim to find out the ability of the second semester students of English Study Program FKIP Universitas Riau in writing a paragraph. The sample of this research is one of the three classes of the first year students of English Study Program which are choose by using cluster random sampling technique. The number of the sample is 37 students. The data were collected by giving a written test to the student individually. The test asked the students to write a paragraph by choosing one of the given topics. The students' scores were analyzed by using Harris' scoring system which concerned with five aspects of writing, they are Grammar, Vocabulary, Mechanics, Fluency and Organization. The findings show that the students' average score for each aspect of writing was in "good" level where the students' ability in terms of Vocabulary was the highest among the other aspects with the average score 71,91, while Mechanics was the lowest one, with the average score 64,08. Based on the results obtained, it can be inferred that the students are able to write a paragraph and their level of ability is in "good" level with the average score 66,98. By looking to the aspect the students mostly weak, that is Mechanics, this study recommended the students to do the two important ways that probably can solve this problem. The students need to learn and practice more about Mechanics. The more students learn and practice, the more they know about Mechanics. It will make them better in Mechanics aspect.*

Key Words: *Study, Ability, Writing, Paragraph*

PENELITIAN TERHADAP KEMAMPUAN MAHASISWA SEMESTER DUA FKIP PROGRAM STUDI PENDIDIKAN BAHASA INGGRIS UNIVERSITAS RIAU DALAM MENULIS SEBUAH PARAGRAF

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui level kemampuan mahasiswa semester dua FKIP Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Riau dalam menulis sebuah paragraf. Sampel dari penelitian ini adalah satu dari tiga kelas oleh mahasiswa tahun pertama Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris yang dipilih menggunakan teknik pengambilan acak daerah. Jumlah sampel adalah 37 siswa. Data didapatkan dengan memberikan tes tertulis kepada mahasiswa secara individual. Tesnya meminta mahasiswa untuk menulis sebuah paragraf dengan memilih salah satu topik yang diberikan. Instrument yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah tes tertulis. Skor para mahasiswa dianalisa dengan menggunakan sistem penilaian Harris yang menyangkut kepada lima aspek menulis, seperti *Grammar* (tatabahasa), *Vocabulary* (kosakata), *Mechanics* (mekanik), *Organization* (organisasi) dan *Fluency* (kepasihan). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai rata-rata mahasiswa untuk masing-masing aspek menulis berada di level “bagus” dengan kemampuan mahasiswa pada aspek *Vocabulary* merupakan yang tertinggi dari semua aspek dengan nilai rata-rata 71,91, sedangkan *Mechanics* merupakan yang terendah, dengan nilai rata-rata 64,08. Berdasarkan hasil yang didapatkan, dapat disimpulkan bahwa mahasiswa mampu menulis sebuah paragraf dan kemampuan mereka berada pada level “bagus” dengan nilai rata-rata 66,98. Dengan melihat pada aspek mahasiswa yang terlemah, yaitu Mekanika, penelitian ini merekomendasikan mahasiswa untuk melakukan dua cara penting yang mungkin dapat menyelesaikan masalah ini. Para siswa perlu belajar dan berlatih lebih banyak tentang Mekanika. Semakin banyak siswa belajar dan berlatih, semakin mereka tahu tentang Mekanika. Itu akan membuat mereka lebih baik dalam aspek Mekanika.

Kata Kunci: Penelitian, Kemampuan, Menulis, Paragraf

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the language skill that the student have to master. According to Raimes, writing is a skill in which we express ideas, feelings, and thinking in which are arranged in words, sentence and paragraph by using eyes, brain and hand. In writing, the students can devote some ideas in their mind in a piece of paper. They can write something that they can't talk, so their idea can be understood. Thus, writing skill is one of the media to communicate with the others in which through writing the students can convey some information, express their ideas, thoughts, feelings and opinions in writing form. Writing a paragraph is one of the way to express all of it, so the writer has interest to make a study about it.

Writing is important to be learned. Writing is learnt by EFL students because according to Huy (2015), firstly, writing is a good way to help to develop student ability of using vocabulary and grammar, increasing the ability of using language. Writing well is a major cognitive challenge, because it is at once a test of memory, language, and thinking ability. Secondly, writing is an essential tool to support other skills. If a student has good writing ability, they can speak and read the text more effectively.

Writing is the foundation of all essay writing. It is a building block of essay development which develops the thesis of a paper. In writing process the students have to compose their writing by using their own choice of sentence structure and organize their own ideas in such a way that the reader can understand them. If students can write a good paragraph that is an intelligent, well-organized paragraph, they will be able to write any other great writing from stories to essays to research reports. Therefore, development and organization of ideas into paragraph is one of the important skills must be learn.

Paragraphs do more than what we think. Paragraphs can contain many different kinds of information. It might describe a place, character, or process; narrate a series of events; compare or contrast two or more things; classify items into categories; or describe causes and effects. Because writing a paragraph is important in learning writing.

Whether the second semester students of FKIP Universitas Riau English Study Program have problems in writing a paragraph is not known yet because so far there has not been research about that. This is the first year of the second semester English department students learn English especially writing in university level. Learning English in junior high school and senior high school level is different with what they learn in university. However, writing a paragraph in English is not a simple matter. Most of the students felt overwhelmed when they were required to write on a certain topic. They do not know how to start, how to develop their ideas or how to conclude the essay. They also lacked the technical skills of writing acceptable compositions in English. They often repeated their ideas, reported few if any valid points, made serious mistakes in grammar and punctuation, and included irrelevant information. Many students cannot get and generate their own idea. Some students have idea but cannot express it in their own sentences. They also have difficulties in arranging the idea into good order to form a good writing. They also lack of vocabularies related to the idea that they want to write. So, it means that expressing the idea in the written form is not an easy thing to do.

In conclusion, based on these reasons, the writer has interest in conducting a research on English writing teaching-learning process at FKIP Universitas Riau English

Department Study and it will focus on writing a paragraph. It is important to find out the view of students' ability in writing; to get a view which describes the grade or level of students' ability in writing a paragraph and also tells what problems they face at most. Therefore, the goal of this study is to find out the ability of the second semester students of FKIP Universitas Riau English study program in writing a paragraph.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is conducted by using descriptive research. The variable is the students ability in writing a paragraph. According to Gay (2000) descriptive research involves collecting data in order to test hypothesis or to answer question concerning the current status of the subject or study. According to Russefendi (1994) descriptive research is conducted to explain a condition in the present time including case, survey, development and correlation research which are done by observing or interviewing. So based on theory, the writer concluded that the descriptive research is the research in which the writer need to collect the data in order to give the description about the problem based on the collected data.

The populations of this research were the second semester students of FKIP Universitas Riau English Study Program that consisted of three classes (A, B and C). A class was chosen as the sample by using Cluster Random Sampling Technique.

The data collection was held on April 30th, 2019. The instrument used in this study was a written test. The test was adapted from Oshima and Hogue (1991) book. The students were asked to write a paragraph based on the given topics. There are three topics which are provided for the students. Then, the students were asked to choose one of the topics to be written to be a paragraph. The writing steps of write a paragraph are also apply on the instrument to remind the students. The time for students to do the test is 100 minutes. The students' writing were analyzed and scored by three raters in order to have valid data. Then, the writer calculated the score of each student.

The writer use five common formulas to analyze the students' ability.

- a) The data from each student were scored by three raters to make the result objective. The writer analyzed and scored every writing aspect of the students' writing by using the analytical rubric adopted from Hughes (1989). It contains of five components of writing; grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, fluency and form. From the rubric, to know the total score of students' writing, the writer uses this following formula:

$$S = G + V + M + O + F$$

Where:

S = Students' score
G = Students' ability in Grammar
V = Students' ability in Vocabulary
M = Students' ability in Mechanic
O = Students' ability in Organization
F = Students' ability in Fluency

- b) To make the score easier to be classify, the student's score is converted to the scale of 0 to 100. This convert score is call as the numerical data or the real score

of the students. This score is in line with the scale of classification of students' writing table by Harris (1974) in the theoretical framework. So that, it is easier to know the position of a student in the level. To know the numerical data or the real score of the students, the writer will use the following formula:

$$RS = \frac{S}{30} \times 100$$

Where:

RS : real score of each individual

S : Total score of student's writing components, from the formulation in point one.

- c) Since there are three raters, every student has three RS. Then all of RS of each student is being totalized. So that, the total of RS from each rater was one student's score, the following is:

$$RS = \frac{RS_1 + RS_2 + RS_3}{3}$$

Where:

RS : Total real score

RS1 : Real score from rater 1

RS2 : Real score from rater 2

RS3 : Real score from rater 3

- d) After getting the real score of the students in writing a paragraph, the writer found out the mean score of all students' real score (RS). To know the mean score of the students, the following Heaton's formula was used as follows:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum x}{n}$$

In which:

\bar{X} : The mean score of the test

$\sum x$: The total score of the students; that is the all of the students' real score

n : The total numbers of the students

- e) After all, in order to conclude the students' ability in writing a paragraph the writer found out the percentage of the classification of the students' ability, the writer used the following formula:

$$P = \frac{f}{N} \times 100$$

In which:

P : Percentage

F : Frequency

N : The total number of the students

(Hatch and Farhady, 1982)

From the percentage the classification can be determined. The classification is based on the table 2.1 which has been discussed in chapter II (Harris, 1974).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data were collected by giving a written test to the students individually. The test asked the students to write a paragraph by choosing one of the given topics. The writing of the students was scored by three raters based on analytical rubrics adopted from Hughes writing assessment (1989).

The Presentation and Interpretation of the data

After the students did the test, the writer asked three raters to score the students writing. Then, the writer calculated and analyzed the data by using the formulations that have been discussed in the data analysis technique in chapter IV. It was found out that generally the students writing ability is in good level.

The Percentage of the Students' Ability Level				
No.	Classification		Frequency	Percentage
	Test Score	Level of Ability		
1	81-100	Excellent	0	0%
2	61-80	Good	29	78%
3	41-60	Mediocre	8	22%
4	21-40	Poor	0	0%
5	0-20	Very Poor	0	0%
Total			37	100%

Adapted from Harris (1974)

From the table, it shows the percentage of the students in every level of ability. It can be seen that almost all of the students are in good level. There are 29 students (78%) in that level, while below the good level, it's 8 students (22%) are in mediocre level and none of the students is in excellent, poor and very poor. So, from the percentage of students, it can be inferred that overall, the ability of second semester students of FKIP Universitas Riau English Study Program in writing a paragraph is in good level with the mean score 66,98. Next, it is important to find out the students level in writing ability for each aspects of writing to know the detail view of students ability.

In terms of Grammar, it can be seen that more than half of the total number of students have good ability in Grammar. They are 32 students (86%). There are 4 students (11%) who are in mediocre level and 1 students (3%) who are in excellent level. In addition there is no student in poor and very poor level. In line with the mean score of students in this aspect, that is 66,20; it can be concluded that the students' writing ability in Grammar aspect is in good level.

In terms of Vocabulary, it can be seen that in Vocabulary aspect, have more students who are in excellent level than other aspects in this study. They are 8 students (14%) who achieve the excellent level. Most of the students are in good level (78%). Then, the rest are 3 students (8%) who are in mediocre level. Similar with Grammar,

Vocabulary aspect have no student who are in poor or very poor level. The total number of the students in good and excellent level is much more than those in average level. It means that most of the students have a lot of English words. So, they can express their ideas by using appropriate and various Vocabularies. From the presentation, it can already be concluded that the students ability in Vocabulary is in good level, with the mean score 71,91.

In terms of Mechanics, it can be seen that in Mechanics aspect, similar with the number in Vocabulary aspect, there are 29 students (78%) who are in good level. Then, the number of the students who are in mediocre level are 8 students (22%). There is no student who is in excellent, poor and very poor level. The mean score in Mechanics aspect is 64,08. In conclusion, the students' ability in Mechanics aspect is also in good level.

In terms of Organization, it can be seen that in Organization, the number of the students in good level is the most. It is 33 students (89%) who are in this level. Next, there are 3 students (8%) in mediocre level; while in excellent level, there are only 1 students (3%). After that, there is no any students (0%) who is in poor and very poor level just like Vocabulary and Mechanic. From the percentage, it can be concluded that the students' writing level ability in Organization is also in good level. The mean score of this aspect is 67,28. It is the second highest mean score among the other aspects after Vocabulary. So that, from the mean score; it can be inferred that this aspect is quite easier for the students.

In terms of Fluency, it can be seen that in Fluency aspects, there are 28 students (76%) in this level. The rest is 9 students (24%) are in mediocre level. Similar with other aspects, there is also no student (0%) in poor level and very poor level. The mean score of this aspect is 65,43. From the percentage and the mean score, it can be concluded that the students' writing ability in Fluency is also in good level.

In summary, the writer found out that the students' level in writing ability is good with the mean score of 66,98. It was based on the percentage of students in which the number of students who has RS in the range of 61-80 or in good level is the most. They were 29 students (78%). Besides, this result was also in line with the result of students writing ability level in each aspect of writing. From the previous figures that showed the percentage of students level in each aspect of writing (Grammar, Vocabulary, Mechanic, Organization, and Fluency), most number of the students had RS in good level. Moreover, all of the various mean score of each aspect was also in the range of good level (61-80) in which the students mean score in terms of Vocabulary was the highest among the other aspects (71,91), while Mechanics terms is the lowest one (64,08).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Based on the result of this study, the writer found out that the students writing ability was in good level with the mean score 66,98. In detail, 29 students (78%) were in good level with the mean scores in the range of 61-80, and 8 students (22%) were in mediocre level with the mean score spread out in the range of 41-60. Since writing skill

is very important to be mastered by the students of FKIP Universitas Riau English Study Program, it is a nice result that most of the students (more than 50%) have good ability in writing a paragraph and only a few of the students need to be evaluated more since their ability does not reach a good level.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of this study, the students writing ability level is already been in good level. Although the students writing ability level is good, they should keep improve their ability because of two reasons. First, since the students' ability in is in good level, it means that there are few mistakes that are found in some of students writing. Second, since there is no any limitation in developing the ability, the students need to keep improved their ability. To improve their writing ability, the writer would like to propose some recommendations related to this study.

First, it is recommended to the students to pay attention more to every aspect of writing, because by mastering each aspect of writing can improve the writing ability.

Second, by looking to the aspect the students mostly weak, that is Mechanics. It is better for the students to do the two important ways that probably can solve this problem. First, the students need to learn more about Mechanics. It can be done by diligently opening back the book about Mechanics, or searching it on the internet and or asking the people who are reputed as a master. Second, after learn more, they need to practice more. Specially, in Mechanics, it doesn't only need to learn, but also practice. The more students practice, the more they know about Mechanics. It will make them better in Mechanics aspect.

Third, to improve a writing ability, besides doing a lot of practice, the students should also need to read more, especially a kind of academic or scientific reading, because writing ability is closely related with reading ability. Harmer (1998) says that reading helps the students good in their writing. Reading is a best way to help the students to use appropriate and various vocabulary better. So the more they read, the more they vocabulary they will get. By reading, the students will have a lot of background knowledge and information as their ingredients before they start to write, so that they can produce a good content. Besides vocabulary and organization, reading also provides the students more opportunities to learn grammar, punctuation, constructing the sentence, which help them to write better.

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