

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

Reyan Adam, Eliwarti, Fadly Azhar

Email: reyan.adam3@gmail.com, eliwartieli@gmail.com, fadly.azhar@lecturer.unri.ac.id

Contact: +6285263968162

*Student of English Study Program
Language and Arts Department
Teachers Training and Education Faculty
Universitas Riau*

Abstract: This descriptive research designed to discover the ability of the third semester students of the English study program FKIP Universitas Riau in writing a paragraph. The population of this research was the third semester students of English study program FKIP Universitas Riau and consisted of 121 students. The sample was 38 students selected by using cluster random sampling technique and lottery technique in selecting the class. The instrument of the research was writing test in paragraph form. The students wrote a paragraph based on the topics provided by the researcher. The students' achievement in writing paragraph was analyzed especially their ability in five major writing aspects; grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, fluency, and organization. From data analysis, the average score is 65,70. The researcher found that the students' writing ability can be categorized as **good** in level which **vocabulary** is reaching **the highest** score (67,67) while **grammar** being **the lowest** score (63.33). The finding implied that the third semester students of English study program FKIP Universitas Riau should improve their writing ability.

Key Words: Students' Ability, Writing, Paragraph

STUDI KEMAMPUAN MAHASISWA SEMESTER KETIGA PROGRAM STUDI BAHASA INGGRIS FKIP UNIVERSITAS RIAU DALAM MENULIS PARAGRAF

Reyan Adam, Eliwarti, Fadly Azhar

Email: reyan.adam3@gmail.com, eliwartieli@gmail.com, fadly.azhar@lecturer.unri.ac.id

Nomor HP: 085263968162

*Mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris
Jurusan Ilmu Bahasa dan Seni
Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan
Universitas Riau*

Abstrak: Penelitian deskriptif ini dirancang untuk mengetahui kemampuan mahasiswa semester tiga program studi Bahasa Inggris FKIP Universitas Riau dalam menulis paragraf. Populasi dalam penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa semester III program studi Bahasa Inggris FKIP Universitas Riau yang berjumlah 121 mahasiswa. Sampel berjumlah 38 siswa yang dipilih dengan menggunakan teknik cluster random sampling dan teknik undian dalam pemilihan kelas. Instrumen penelitian ini adalah tes menulis berbentuk paragraf. Para siswa menulis paragraf berdasarkan topik yang diberikan oleh peneliti. Prestasi siswa dalam menulis paragraf dianalisis terutama kemampuan mereka dalam lima aspek utama menulis; tata bahasa, kosa kata, mekanika, kelancaran, dan organisasi. Dari analisis data, skor rata-rata adalah 65,70. Peneliti menemukan bahwa kemampuan menulis siswa dapat dikategorikan **baik** pada tingkat dimana **kosakata** mencapai skor **tertinggi** (67,67) sedangkan **tata bahasa** menjadi skor **terendah** (63,33). Temuan ini menyiratkan bahwa mahasiswa semester tiga program studi bahasa Inggris FKIP Universitas Riau harus meningkatkan kemampuan menulis mereka.

Kata Kunci: Kemampuan Mahasiswa, Menulis, Paragraf

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the four important language skills besides listening, speaking, and reading and these skills cannot be separated. Writing also can improve human's language skill especially for English and it can give humans a chance to work on their spelling, vocabulary and grammar skills. There are four main stages in writing process especially in academic writing according to Oshima and Hogue (1999:3). Those are prewriting, outlining, writing and revising drafts and writing the final copy.

Richards and Renandya (2002:303) also state that writing is the most difficult skill for L2 learners to master especially in generating, organizing ideas and in translating the ideas into readable text. People also need to master other English skills; listening, reading and speaking to understand the writing skill and they need to learn the differences between their native language rules and the language being learned.

Based on the researcher's experience in learning writing in writing classes, some of the students were still struggling in creating short writing on certain topics. They needed a long time to start the writing especially in prewriting stage (choosing and narrowing the topic and brainstorming) and they were also being struggled in generating their own ideas. They also have difficulties in arranging the idea into good order in order to create a good paragraph. From the researcher's experiences, we can conclude that in expressing the idea, the written form is a hard thing to do.

Furthermore, it is important to find out the view of students' ability in writing especially for ESL students. In order to get a view which describes the grade or level of students' ability in writing and to find out what problems they face the most, the researcher used paragraph as the writing test. Paragraph was chosen because it is suitable for the third semester students of English study program.

The purpose of the research is to find out the writing ability of the third semester students of English study program FKIP Universitas Riau especially in writing paragraph. The researcher took the third semester students as a sample because they already learned the first writing class in the second semester where they are expected to be able to write paragraph, understanding the process of academic writing and the writing skills. Because of these matters, the researcher wanted to find out the ability of the third semester students of English study program FKIP Universitas Riau in writing a paragraph.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employs a quantitative approach. The research was conducted to the third semester students of English study program FKIP Universitas Riau. The population of third semester students of English study program FKIP Universitas Riau, there were 121 students which consisted of three classes there were A, B, and C. This research used clustering random sampling. The sample of this research was class A using lottery technique and the total students were 38. The data were collected by giving test to the sample. The test was a paragraph writing test which asked the sample to write a paragraph. Because the Indonesian Government had stated that there were no meetings in every educational institution because of the COVID-19, the researcher used Google Meeting in order to collect the data.

In collecting the data, a writing test was used as the instrument in paragraph form. The students wrote a paragraph based on the topic given by the researcher. There were three topics

which were provided for the students (The video games can cause violence; Smartphone applications lead to addiction; COVID-19 makes some impacts on education). Then, the students chose one of the topics and wrote it into a paragraph. The time for the students to did their test was 100 minutes. The researcher calculated the students' score by the three raters' scores. Three raters were in master degree with at least 5 years experiences of teaching writing. The researcher analyzed and scored every writing aspects of the students' paragraph writing by using the analytical rubric adopted from Hughes (1989:91-93) that contains five aspects of writing; grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, fluency and organization. The student's level of writing ability can be concluded by using the standard adapted from Harris (1969):

Table 1. The Level of Writing Ability

Test Score	Level of Ability
81-100	Excellent
61-80	Good
41-60	Average
21-40	Fair
0-20	Poor

RESEARCH FINDINGS

To find out the result of the research, especially the ability of the third semester students of English study program FKIP Universitas Riau in writing a paragraph (opinion paragraph). The writing of the students was scored based on analytical rubrics adopted from Hughes (1989:91-93) and grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, fluency and organization (Brown 2004:243) as the five major aspects of writing which were evaluated in this study. The researcher used Hughes categories of the writing components which the students' scores start from 1 up to 6 for each aspect of writing. Score 1 is the lowest and score 6 is the highest one.

In the result, from 38 students, 26 students belong to good level, with the lowest score is 61,11 and the highest score is 78,88. In detail, these 26 students consist of 20 students who got the scores in the range of 61-70 and 6 students got the scores in the range of 71-80. There are 9 students who belong to average level. It was found that these students consisted of 3 students who got score of 60,00 and 6 students got the score below 60,00. For excellent level, from 38 students, only 3 students who got score above 80,00. The highest score that student could achieve is 83.33 while the lowest is 48.88. Furthermore, the writer found out the percentage of the students as in the following table:

Table 2. The Percentage of the Students' Ability Level

No	Classification		Frequency	Percentage
	Test Score	Level of Ability		
1	81-100	Excellent	3	8%
2	61-80	Good	26	68%

3	41-60	Average	9	24%
4	21-40	Fair	0	0%
5	0-20	Poor	0	0%
Total			38	100%

Table 2 shows that in 38 students, they got 3 levels of writing ability; excellent, good and average level where 26 students got score in good level for the most or about 68% of the population. Then, there are 9 students who got average level in writing paragraph or about 24% of the population. Lastly, only 3 students who achieved excellent level and that makes 8% of the total population. It can be concluded that in overall, the writing ability of the third semester students of English Study Program FKIP Universitas Riau especially in writing a paragraph is good.

In addition, the final score of the students in each writing aspects can be seen in the following table:

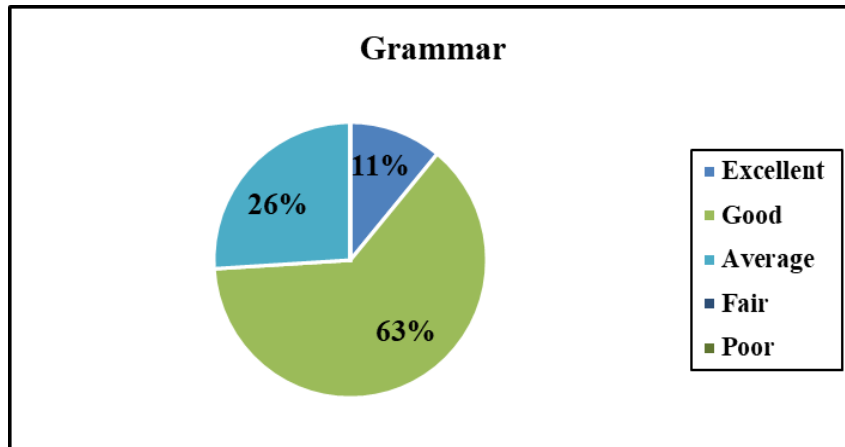
Table 3. The Students' Ability for Each Aspect of Writing

No	Aspect of Writing	Average Score	Score	Level of Ability
1	Grammar	3,80	63,33 %	Good
2	Vocabulary	4,06	67,67 %	Good
3	Mechanic	3,93	65,50 %	Good
4	Organization	4,04	67,33 %	Good
5	Fluency	3,88	64,67 %	Good
Average		3,94	65,70 %	Good

Table 3 shows that the students' scores for each writing aspect can be considered as good level due to their average in range 61 to 80. Despite being at a good level, the students' scores are still around 61 to 66. There are also several students who get score in average level (41-60) and this is located in two aspects of writing, grammar and fluency for being the most. For excellent level, vocabulary is being the most writing aspect that students can achieve (6 people) while 1 student who achieves a fair level and this is located in fluency aspect. It can be stated that the students' scores for each aspect of writing tend to be in good level with the lowest score is 33,33 in fluency and the highest is 88,8 in 4 writing aspects; grammar, vocabulary, organization and fluency which fluency being the most students who can achieve 88,83 (3 people).

For presentation of the students' ability for each aspect of writing, the researcher has provided 5 pie charts according to 5 writing aspects, grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, fluency and organization

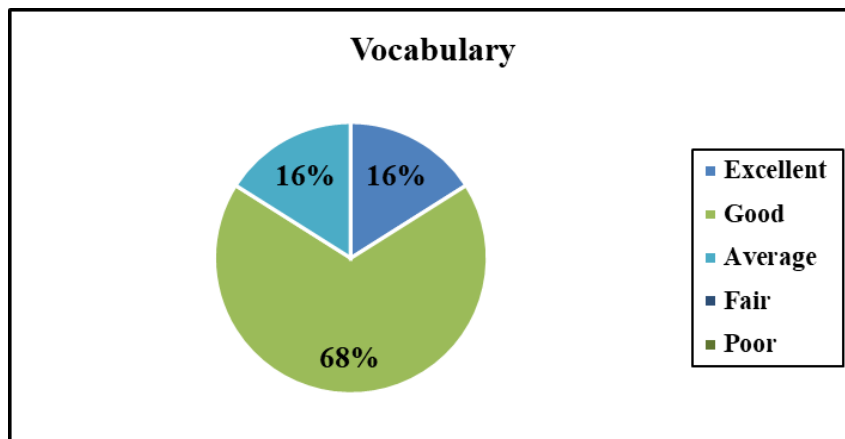
Figure 1. the Students' Writing Ability in Terms of Grammar



According to the figure 1. of the grammar chart above, it can be seen that there are 63% students who achieve good ability levels in grammar or about 24 students from a total of 38 students. Followed by average level, 26% or about 10 students and 11% for excellent level or about 4 students. Furthermore, there is no student who achieves a fair and poor level. According to Table 4.2, the mean score of this writing aspect is 63,33 and it can be concluded that the students' writing ability in the grammar aspect is at good level.

From the value of the mean score and the percentage, it can be concluded that the average of the students or about three quarters of them face this as not difficult aspect but also not an easy one. We can observe this in the table 3. where the students' mean score for grammar is the lowest if we compare with other writing aspects. Furthermore, the percentage of students who achieve good level is about 24 students (63%) and there are 4 students who achieve excellent level (11%) which makes grammar become the second difficult writing aspects for the students.

Figure 2. the Students' Writing Ability in Terms of Vocabulary

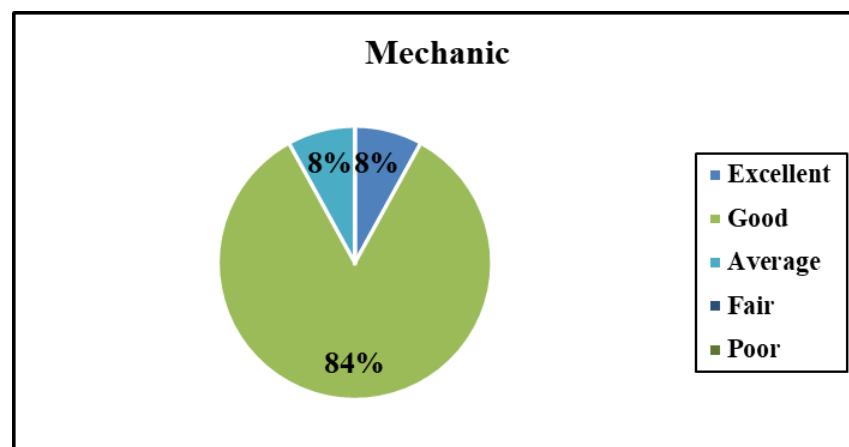


It can be seen from Figure 2. that vocabulary aspect has equal level for excellent level with average level, 16% or about 6 students. Good level has 26 students and that makes 68% from the total population. Vocabulary is similar to grammar which both aspects have no

students who are at fair or poor level. Because the total number of the students, especially in excellent and good level are much more than those in average level, the researcher concludes that most of the students have known lot of English words and know how or where to use it. Therefore, they can express their ideas by using proper and various English vocabularies.

From the value of the mean score and the percentage, it can be concluded that the most of the students or about 32 out of 38 of them face this as not difficult aspect. We can observe this in the table 3. where the students' mean score for vocabulary is higher than other writing aspects (67,67). This also makes vocabulary become the easiest writing aspects for the students alongside mechanics. But unfortunately, all of the average level students from this aspect only achieve 50 to 55 points and this make vocabulary is slightly below the mechanic aspect that only has 3 students who achieve 55 points.

Figure 3. the Students' Writing Ability in Terms of Mechanic

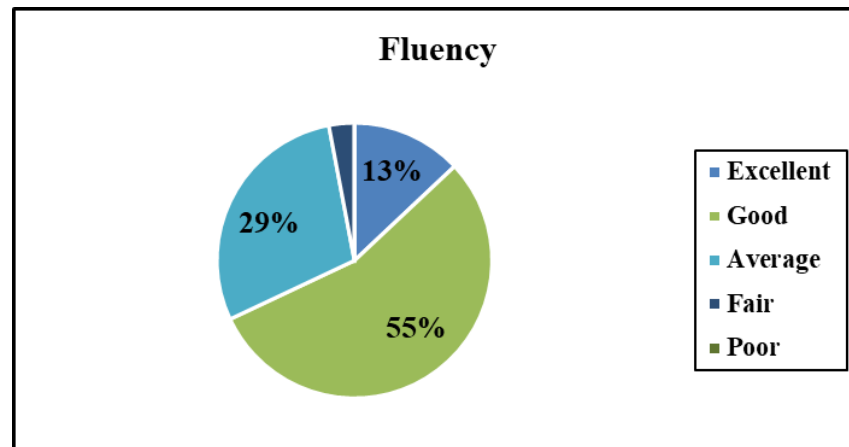


From the Mechanic Figure above, there are 32 students out of 38 and that makes 84% of the total population are in good level. Like the vocabulary aspect, in the mechanical aspect, students have the same level in excellent and average level; 8% or about 3 students from each level. Mechanics is similar with grammar and vocabulary which three of them have no students who are at the fair or poor level.

Because the total number of the students, especially in excellent and good level are much more than those in average level, the researcher concludes that most of the students have known the mechanical components of writing. That consists of handwriting, spelling, punctuation, and the well-formed sentences construction, paragraph and texts. That means that the students can be classified good in using the mechanical aspect in writing.

The mean score of Mechanics is 65,50 and it is below the vocabulary and organization. Nonetheless, because there are 35 students who are in excellent and good level, the researcher can assume that the mechanical aspect is easy for them.

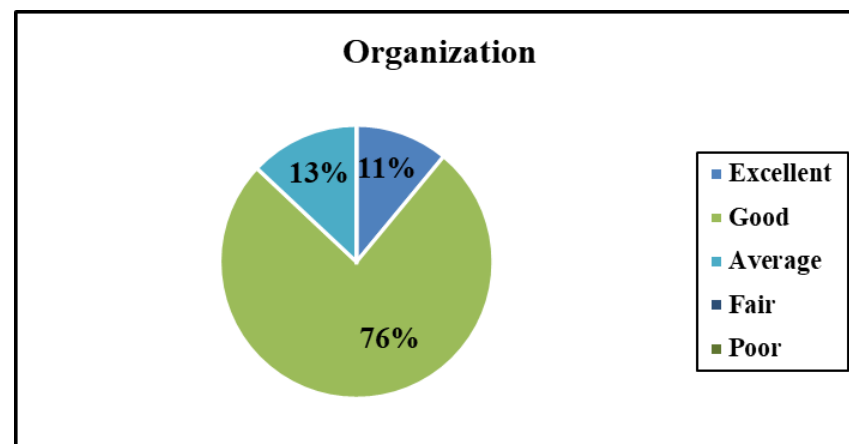
Figure 4. the Students' Writing Ability in Terms of Fluency



According to the figure 4. of fluency chart above, it can be seen that there are 55% students who achieve good ability levels or about 21 students. Followed by average level, 29% or about 11 students, 13% for excellent level or about 5 students, 1 student who achieve fair level (3% from total of 100%) and there is no student who achieve poor level.

According to Table 3, the mean score of this writing aspect is 64,67 and it can be concluded that the students' writing ability in the fluency aspect is at good level. Nevertheless, despite being at good level, fluency is still difficult for several students (11 students in average level) and one of them achieves a fair level (33.33 in score). This makes fluency being the most difficult for students to learn even the mean score is higher than the grammar.

Figure 5. the Students' Writing Ability in Terms of Organization



It can be seen from Figure 5. that in organization, 11% or about 4 students are in excellent level, followed by 5 students (13%) in average level and good level makes the number of the students being the most or about 29 people (76%). There are also no students who are in fair or poor level like previous writing aspects; grammar, vocabulary, mechanics and fluency.

Because the total number of the students who achieve excellent and good level are much more than those in average level, the researcher concludes that most of the students have known the organization of writing; unity and coherence. From the percentage, it can be concluded that the students' writing level ability in term of organization can be classified as good level. But unfortunately, even the mean score is 67,33 (second highest mean score after vocabulary) and the majority of the students are already good in organization, there are also those who achieve score below 50 points.

DISCUSSION

The researcher has found out that the students' level in writing ability is good with the score of 65,70. It is based on the percentage of students in which the number of students who have real score in good level (61-80 in range) for being the most average level in this finding. There are 26 students (68%) from total of 38 students.

In addition, this result was specifically equal with the result of students writing ability level that all aspects of writing are good. The previous figures (writing pie charts for each writing aspects) showed the percentage of students' level, most students had real score in good level in each aspect of writing; grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, organization, and fluency. Furthermore, all of the five aspects' score is also in the range of good level which the students score in terms of vocabulary is being the highest score (67,67) then followed by organization (67,33), mechanic (65,50), and fluency (64,67) while grammar is the lowest one (63,33).

This result is in-line with Abdul's findings, where his result of writing ability is also in good level but there are some differences. The highest average score of the research is in the organization while the lowest aspect is vocabulary. Unlike the Abdul's, in the researcher's findings, the highest score is in the vocabulary while grammar is the lowest aspect. Another research conducted by Sempa in Politeknik MBP Medan, the sample of the research is also similar with the researcher's research which also included the third semester students as the sample and also used writing ability for the research. There are some differences from Dra. Sempa's research where the students got low scores in using present tense, mechanics especially in using punctuation, and organization. In researcher's findings, students get good score in all writing aspects.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

With the score is 65,70, the researcher found that the students' writing ability can be categorized as good in level from the result of this study. For detail, 26 students from total of 38 or about 68% from 100% are in good level in the range of 61-80 for the mean score, 9 students (24%) are in average level with the mean score spread out in the range of 41-60 and only 3 students or about 8% are in excellent level. Since writing skill is very important to be mastered along-side with other language skills; reading, speaking, and listening by every semester students of English study program FKIP Universitas Riau, the researcher can classify that they are in good level because most of the students have good ability in writing a paragraph and know how to use proper grammar, rich vocabularies, good mechanics, good fluency and well-formed organization. Only a few students need to be evaluated more because their ability is not high enough.

Recommendations

Based on the result of the research, the researcher would like to give two recommendations. First, because of grammar is being the lowest, the students must study more about the grammar; how to make a good English grammar, how to use it and how to implement it in writing. According to Zemach and Rumisek (2004:85), learning grammars can also help students to improve their writing. Learning English grammar can be done by exposing ourselves to English: reading English books, listening to English songs, watching English movies or news, and also having conversations in English. Second, since this study is about writing a paragraph, students must be able to organize their own paragraph by keeping focused on the structures of the paragraph; topic sentence, supporting sentences and conclusion. Not only for paragraph, they also must learn more about the writing process and this also must be done carefully and need more practice.

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