A STUDY ON THE ABILITY OF THE SECOND SEMESTER ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS IN WRITING A PARAGRAPH

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Abstract*: This study aims to find out the students' ability in writing a paragraph by the second semester English Department students of Universitas Riau. The population was the second semester English Department students of Universitas Riau, they consisted of three classes: class A, class B, and class C. From 117 students of the population, class A was taken as the sample of this research consist of 39 students. Cluster random sampling was used to choose the sample. The instrument used written test in which students wrote a paragraph. Three topics were provided for students that they can choose to write a paragraph. In analyzing the data,it had been done by calculating the scores of students individually and looking for the mean scores. Based on the result, it was found that the ability of the second semester English Department students in writing a paragraph is in good category with the mean score of 68,3. However, eventhough the students writing scores is in good level, the actual of this score is not that high. This score is considered still low compare to the range from in this level (66-79). There are seven aspects of paragraph writing such as complete sentence, topic sentence, relevant details/supporting sentences, transition word&vocabulary, closing sentence, grammar, and mechanics. After analyzed the data, it was found that two aspects of paragraph writing get in high score in writng a paragraph, they are topic sentence with the mean score of 3,2 and relevant details/supporting sentence with the mean score of 3,1. On the other hand, mechanic aspect of paragraph writing have low score with the mean score of 2,6. Based on this result, it is suggested for students to improve the students' skill in writing especially for writing paragraph and the students should do more exposure in writing a paragraph. As for the lecturers, it is better to provide more exposure student skill in writing skill by using relevant approaches and techniques to improve students' ability in writing paragraph.*

Key Words*: Writing Paragraph, Study, Ability*

SEBUAH STUDI TENTANG KEMAMPUAN MAHASISWA SEMESTER DUA PENDIDIKAN BAHASA INGGRIS DALAM MENULIS SEBUAH PARAGRAF

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui kemampuan mahasiswa semester dua pendidikan bahasa inggris Universitas Riau dalam menulis sebuah paragraf. Teknik sampel acak digunakan dalam menentukan sampel. Populasi terdiri dari 117 mahasiswa yang terdiri dari tiga kelas A,B, dan C dan sample yang terpilih adalah kelas A yang terdiri dari 39 mahasiswa. Instrumen yang digunakan adalah tes tertulis dimana mahasiswa menulis sebuah paragraf. Tiga topik disediakan untuk mahasiswa yang dapat dipilih untuk menulis sebuah paragraf. Dalam menganalisis data dilakukan cara menghitung nilai mahasiswa secara individu dan mencari nilai rata-rata. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian diketahui bahwa kemampuan mahasiswa semester dua pendidikan bahasa inggris Universitas Riau dalam menulis sebuah paragraf berada pada kategori bagus dengan nilai rata-rata 68,3. Namun, meskipun nilai mahasiswa termasuk dalam kategori bagus, nilai sebenarnya tidak terlalu tinggi. Nilai maksimal dalam kategori bagus adalah 79 sehingga nilai mahasiswa ini dianggap rendah dari nilai maksimal dalam kategori bagus. Ada tujuh aspek penulisan paragraf terdiri dari complete sentence, topic sentence, supporting sentences/ relevant details , transition words and vocabulary, closing sentence, grammar dan mechanics. Setelah menganalisis data, di peroleh data bahwa dua aspek penulisan paragraf mendapatkan skor tertinggi yaitu topic sentence dengan nilai rata-rata 3,2 dan supporting sentences dengan nilai rata-rata 3,1. Sedangkan aspek mekanik dalam penulisan paragraf mendapatkan nilai terendah dengan nilai rata-rata 2,6. Berdasarkan hasil tersebut, disaranakan bagi mahasiswa untuk meningkatkan kemampuan mahasiswa dalam menulis khususnya dalam menulis paragraf dan mahasiswa dianjurkan untuk memperbanyak latihan dalam menulis paragraf.Adapun bagi dosen sebaiknya memberikan banyak latihan menulis dengan menggunakan pendekatan dan teknik yang relevan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan mahasiswa dalam menulis paragraf.

Kata Kunci: *Menulis Paragraf, Kajian, Kemampuan*

INTRODUCTION

Language is a primary instrument for communication to extend information to others. By using language people can express their ideas, emotions, and desires. Language interacts with every aspect of life in society, and it can be understood only if it is considered in about to society. English is one of the international languages, which is used throughout the world and also is used in many fields of life such as: politics, laws, economics, society, education, and many others. As an international, English is the only language used by each country to communicate with other nations.

English is a subject at university. It is not only to give skills to the students but also to help students to find good jobs after they graduate later. The skill in English is very important for the students because they are as an academic person needs more knowledge to face the globalization era. English has many important parts. They are skills and language components of English. The skills of English are speaking, reading, writing, and listening. Language components of English are vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and spelling. Skills and language components are supported by each other. They also cannot be separated from each other.

Writing is one of the four aspects of language skills. It is one of the four fundamental language skills in the language learning process (Alkhair 2007). Writing skills can be related to other skill such as; listening, reading, and speaking. Writing skill has a role to help students in developing their English. Therefore, writing skill is included in the curriculum of English subjects, starting from students at the junior level until the university level.

The next concept of writing is also said by (Meer 2016). He states that writing is way to produce language when do you speak. He explained writing is a way to shape language which we do naturally when we speak. Writing is communicating in a verbal way. Writing is also an action- a process of finding and organizing our ideas, establishing them on paper, reshaping and revising them. From several definition above, it can be concluded that writing is a process of verbal communication that shape a skill in a paper by using some ideas, consideration, feeling, knowledge and etc.

In other source, McDonough and Shaw (2003) write that writing is a process of encoding or putting message into words bring out with the reader in mind. To be a good writer, it is not easy because a writer must pay attention to the aspects of writing in his writing. Boardman and Frydenberg (2002) stated that writing is process of thinking and organizing, rethinking and recognizing. Flower (1989) writes that writing is a social act that can only occur within specific situation.

Writing a paragraph is a basic unit of organization in writing in which a group of related sentences develops one main idea. A paragraph can be as short as one sentence or as long as ten sentences. The number of sentences is unimportant; however, the paragraph should be long enough to develop the main idea clearly (Oshima and Hogue, 1983). Paragraph is a conventional from which writers find useful to help their readers follow a sequence of ideas or thoughts (William, 1985). According to Owl (2009), a paragraph as a group closely- related sentences which deal with and develop one idea.

Saraka (1988) stated that a paragraph can be subdivided into two main types; there are physical paragraph and conceptual paragraph. A physical paragraph is a paragraph which is marked by spacing or identification during the course of writing to show that new idea will come. A conceptual paragraph is one in which a writer construct limits to one single idea, one topic sentence plus supporting details.

Writing is not an easy subject to be followed by the students. The students potentially have more difficulties in writing a paragraph in terms of aspects of paragraph such as topic sentence, grammar, mechanics, supporting sentences, vocabulary, etc. In addition, the students also difficult to organize ideas, choose the right words, and form sentences in writing paragraphs. Students are required to learn writing because writing is one of the English skills. In good writing paragraphs, the students need many requirements and complex skills such as how they can determine the aspects of paragraph, there are topic sentence, supporting sentences, closing sentences, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. Therefore, those components or indicators must be mastered by students.

According to some statements above, the writer is interested in conducting the research on the students' ability in the second semester English Department students in writing a paragraph. The purpose of this research to find out the ability of the second semester English Department students in writing a paragraph.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is descriptive quantitave research. As cited by Aliaga and Gunderson (2005) quantitative research is explaining phenomena by collecting the data by numerical data that are analyzed by using mathematically based methods (in particular statistics) while qualitative research is the research that seeks and answer question about why and how people behave in the way that they do or process something. Quantitative research in this research was use to analyze the students' ability in writing paragraph and the data was presented by number and use some mathematics formula to calculate the data. The location of this research was at English study program of Universitas Riau.

According to Arikunto (2002) population is the entire subject is being researched that have one or more attributes of interest. Population is the total subject of the research, whether it is humans, animals, plants, and things that are homogenous, Musfiqon (2012).

The population of this study is the second semester students English Department of Universitas Riau in the academic year 2020/2021. The number of population is 117 which consist of three classes A,B,and C.

According to Arikunto (2002) sample is a small part of the population that will be researched. Russefendi (1994) said that sample is a small part of the population that presents the population as a whole. Febliza and Afdal (2015) stated that the process or technique of selecting sample is called sampling.

To get the samples, cluster random sampling was used. According to Cohen (2007 in Thahirah 2015), the selection of groups or clusters of subjects rather than individuals is known as cluster random sampling. Cluster random sampling is a technique where the entire population is divided into groups, or clusters and a random sample of these clusters are selected. In this research, class A is the sample consist of 39 students.

In collecting the data, the writer used a written test to find out the ability of the second semester students in writing a paragraph. The writer uses an online writing test by Google Forms based on the topics in the instructions. The writer gave several topics related to the facts or personal topics that happened in the life of society and the students can choose the topics.

After the collected the data, the writer analyzed the data using some steps such as :

For scoring a writing pargraph, the writer supported use three raters to measure the score of students in writing a paragraph.

The writer provided formal scoring rubric to the raters, so that it can be used as scoring guide of the students in writing paragraph.

After getting the students' score from the three raters, the writer analyzed the data in order to know the ability of students in writing paragraph. The ability of students is being analyzed by using the formula:

$$RS = \frac{TS}{MS} \times 100$$

Where:
RS = Real Score of each individual
TS = Total of average score for each aspect of writing
MS = Maximum score

<div align="center">(Sudijono, 2011 in Dewi, 2017)</div>

To find out the mean score of students, the writer calculated the score by using formula (sudijono,2011):

$$X = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

Notation:
X = the mean
$\sum X$ = the score summation
N = the number of students

Then, to find out the percentage of the students' ability in writing paragraph, the writer use the following formula (Sudijono 2011,) :

$$P = \frac{F}{N} X 100$$

Where:
P = Percentage
F = Frequency
N = the number of students

Furthermore, the ability of the students' score in writing paragraph can be classified into four levels of mastery. The classification can be seen in this following table :

Table 3.3 Students' Ability Classification in Writing Paragraph

No	Score Interval	Level of Ability
1	80 – 100	Excellent

2	66 – 79	Good
3	56 – 65	Fair
4	46 – 55	Low
5	0 – 45	Failed

(Adapted from Sudijono, 2011)

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

There were 39 students who took the test. After reseracher analyzed the data, the result obtained that the ability of the second semester students English Department in writing paragraph in good level with mean score 68,3 out of 39 students.

Table 4.8 The Percentage of Students' Scores from the Three Raters

Test Score	Category Score	Quality	The Number Of Students	Percentage
80-100	Excellent	A	4	8%
66-79	Good	B	32	82%
56-65	Fair	C	3	10%
46-55	Low	D	0	0%
0-45	Failed	E	0	0%
Total			**39**	**100%**

Table 4.8 presents the percentage of the students' scores according to the three raters as follows: 8% of the students are in excellent level. 82% of the students are in good level. 10% of the students are in fair level.

In order to clarify the ability of writing paragraph for each aspect, they are: complete sentence, topic sentence, relevant details/ supporting sentences, transition word and vocabulary, concluding sentence, grammar, and mechanics. Table 4.9 shows the students' mean scores for each aspect of writing paragraph.

Table 4.9 The Students Mean Scores for Each Aspects of Writing Paragraph

The Aspects of Paragraph Writing	Rater 1		Rater 2		Rater 3		The mean scores of Three raters
	$\sum$x	$\bar{x}$	$\sum$x	$\bar{x}$	$\sum$x	$\bar{x}$	
Complete Sentences	142	3,6	90	2,3	123	3,2	3
Topic Sentence	141	3,6	92	2,4	143	3,7	3,2
Relevant Details/Supporting Sentences	139	3,6	87	2,2	137	3,5	3,1
Transition Words & Vocabulary	112	2,9	86	2,2	131	3,4	2,8

Closing Sentence	125	3,2	70	1,8	140	3,6	2,8
Grammar	108	2,8	92	2,4	134	3,4	2,8
Mechanics	105	2,7	94	2,4	115	2,9	2,6

Table 4.9 above indicated mean scores of students for each aspect of paragraph writing. The score with symbol ∑x means total score for one aspect from 39 students. Symbol $\bar{x}$ means the mean score of each aspect of writing paragraph. Maximum score for each aspect is 4. It can be seen that the highest mean scores is topic sentence with the mean score 3,2. It means that students are able to express their main ideas in their paragraph writing, they are easy to write a paragraph with good introductions based on the topic sentence. On the other side, there are two aspects of paragraph writing which have low score, they are: grammar and mechanics aspect.

Discussion

From the result and analysis above, the writer interpreted that the students' score writing paragraph in a good level with the mean score of 68,3. However, even though the students' writing score is in good level, the actual of this score is not that high. This score is considered still low compare to the range from in this level (66-79). The students are suggested to improve their writing and develop their writing ability particularly in paragraph writing. According Boardman (2008) he states that if we want to be a successful writer in any language, we need to learn the structure of writing and the style of writing in addition to words and grammar rules in writing paragraph.

The writer interpreted some information by the students' writing a paragraph based on the aspects of paragraph writing. There are seven aspects of paragraph writing such as complete sentence, topic sentence, relevant details/supporting sentences, transition words & vocabulary, closing sentence, grammar and mechanics. After analyzed the data, the writer found that two aspects of paragraph writing get in high score in writing a paragraph, they are topic sentence and relevant details/supporting sentences aspects. The first aspect of paragraph writing is topic sentence.

In this research, the writer found that the topic sentence is the highest score among several aspects of paragraph writing. Almost all of the students have good ability in stating their words at the beginning of the paragraph. They can state the main idea in their paragraph writing and introduce their topic sentence in clearly. It is also supported by Reid in sukarta kartawijaya (2018) states that the topic sentence is the most general and the most important sentences in the paragraph that introduce the reader to the topic in clearly.

Besides that, there are supporting sentence/relevant details that also get high score in aspects of writing paragraph. From the data, the writer analyzed that many students can provided a sufficient amount of supporting sentences in detail relating to their topic sentence. This is also supported by Dietsch in azad ali muhammad (2015) states that supporting sentences explain the main idea from the topic sentence. They provide evidence to persuade the reader of the truth of claim, assertion, or opinion which it has to regard the topic sentence as view to be evident.

On the other hand, there are aspects of paragraph writing that have low score which need to be strengthened or revised. It is the mechanics aspect. The writer analyzed from data found that many students lack in the mechanics aspect of paragraph

writing. They made errors in spelling, capitalization and punctuation. According to Jacob in ismiyanti (2008) stated that mechanics is the ability to use correctly in conventions of the language. It identifies the use of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization within the paragraph. So, the students should concern themselves with the rules of mechanics aspect in correctly, so that the students' writing will not be reckless anymore.

After the writer analyzed the data, there are 5,12 % students duplicate works or 2 students duplicated works in their writing as same as with the internet. The writer checked the students' result by using the website of plagiarism checker (http://www.check-plagiarism.com/id/). In addition, almost all the students can write their writing based on their own ideas.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

After conducting the research which entitled A Study on the Ability of the Second Semester English Department Students in Writing Paragraph the writer can formulate some conclusions. First, it can be concluded that the most of students are able to write paragraph correctly and appropriately based on the structure of paragraph writing with mean score of 68,3 which is in good level. Second, only some students or 10% students in fair level are not able to write paragraph well. Another classification indicated that 8% students are in excellent level and 82% students are in good level. Third, the ability of writing paragraph is an important skill that is needed to learn and practice by the students.

Recommendations

Based on the result of the research 82% of the students' ability in writing paragraph is in good level. However, even though the students' writing score is in good level, the actual of this score is not that high. This score is considered still low compare to the range from in this level (66-79). The students are suggested to improve their writing skill and develop their writing ability particularly in paragraph a writing. The students should do more exposure in writing paragraph simultaneously to shape their writing in good skills especially in writing paragraph. It is also recommended for the lecturer to provide more exposure students skill in writing skill by using relevant approaches and techniques to improve students' ability in writing paragraph. Lastly, this research is also recommended as source information for other researchers that who want to investigate the similar topic with the same object and different perspective which is to find out the alternative strategies and techniques or methods to improve the students' ability in writing skill in some research designs.

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