

**KEMAMPUAN MENULIS PARAGRAF SEMESTER TIGA TAHUN AKADEMIK
2015-2016 JURUSAN BAHASA INGGRIS FKIP UIR PEKANBARU**

(A Study on The Ability in Paragraph Writing of the Third Semester Academic Year 2015-2016 of English Language FKIP UIR Pekanbaru)

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ABSTRACT

Artikel ini berjudul “Kemampuan Menulis Paragraf Semester Tiga Tahun Akademik 2015-2016 Jurusan Bahasa Inggris FKIP UIR Pekanbaru” Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan Kemampuan menulis paragraf semester tiga tahun kademik 2015-2016 jurusan bahasa Inggris FKIP UIR Pekanbaru dalam menulis paragraf. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kuantitatif. Sampel yang berjumlah 35 orang dipilih melalui teknik random sampling dan data diperoleh melalui tes writing. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa 25% diantara meareka berada pada kategori di bawah rata-rata (poor) pada indicator *paragraph organization*, 31 % pada indicator *content*, 34.3% pada indicator *formal grammar*, dan 30% pada indicator *mechanic*. Dari hasil penelitian tersebut menunjukkan bahwa Semester Tiga Tahun Akademik 2015-2016 Jurusan Bahasa Inggris FKIP UIR Pekanbaru masih mengalami kesulitan dalam menulis paragraf.

Key words: Students’ ability, paragraph and writing.

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PENDAHULUAN

Writing well is really a big challenge for both native and non-native students. In general, it is much bigger with the students of English as a foreign language. Students nowadays have very little interest in writing which is so important to fulfil the education requirements. This may be due to technology progress which has its negative effect on students’ skills of writing because of the availability of ready-made assignments. Moreover, teachers have adopted the belief that writing is a kind of communication; this has led them to focus on the subject itself and overlook the incorrect style of writing. Feeling that students have no inclination to writing due to their weakness in it has been the impetus for the researcher to do the current study.

Writing activity is an inseparable part from learning process, since students are often required to complete many of their assignment

in written form. So, the activity of writing is very dominant in language learning and development. This meant that the students are expected to be able to enrich their view about the topic they want to write as well as to improve their strategies in writing development.

Since the prime duty of the English Department, College of Education, is to supply schools with qualified teachers of English language, the researcher - as a composition instructor - considers that improving the students’ writing is badly needed; graduates should be skilled and qualified enough to be able to teach the basics of writing. The researcher has diagnosed several shortcomings which have covered most of the basics of good writing among which are paragraphing, ideas, grammar, spelling, punctuation and handwriting. Students should have mastered these basics before joining the

college where they could direct their attention and efforts to learn how to analyze, synthesize assignments and critically respond to new information (Irvin, L.Lennie, 2010: 7).

However, writing is one of the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). It is very important to be mastered. In writing skills, we find many conventions of rules that have to be followed in order to achieve the standard of writing skills. Therefore, the students can provide themselves to practice in writing which is reinforcing the language that the students have learned. Writing a text in English as foreign language is not easy. Students have difficulties to write in English well because English is considered as foreign language in Indonesia. This tendency is likely caused by its different syntax, organization, vocabulary, and spelling from the native language, Indonesia. For instance, the word "chair" (English) has the same meaning with the word "kursi" (Indonesia). But, they have different spelling.

People communicate with others using English either in spoken or in written form around the world. However, they often use direct conversation or spoken language to interact each other in daily activities rather than written language. It is because people can convey ideas more easily in spoken form. They can communicate face to face, ask for clarification, explain the topic, and use facial expressions. Besides, "In spoken language, the speaker and the listener have the possibility to interact immediately and the opportunity to ask for clarification" (Fairbairn and Winch, 1996:4). But, in writing the writers and the readers can not communicate orally. As it is stated by Fairbairn and Winch (1996:6) that "When the writers are writing to someone, tone of voice, physical proximity and possibility of quick interaction are not available and the writers need to be able to communicate effectively without resorting to these features." In addition, Goldman and Hirsch (1986:5) state that "Writing usually requires the writers to cover their topic more clearly and in greater detail than speaking." In short, people can communicate directly in spoken, but in writing,

they have to think their idea and using good language first before they write something.

Writing plays an important role in communication, so that it needs more attention in teaching it. By mastering this skill one can communicate with friends and people in the world. Gould (1994:52) states that "writing is a communicative activity". Writing is a language skill used to communicate indirectly. Writing is a productive and expressive action. Worthington (1997) stated that writing is a creative act. It means that the students are involved in actual interaction in the classroom and they have a stronger desire to interact. Besides, he adds that writing is an expensive process. That is why the learners can express their ideas, feeling, emotion, estimation, or opinion. He further says that writing is an act of making understandable statement organized. Furthermore, Lado in Gould (1994:284) states that writing is the ability to use the language and its representation productively in ordinary writing situation. More specifically writing is the ability to use the structure, lexical items and their conventional representation in ordinary matter of act of writing. Crimon (1980:9) connects writing with language that language is defined, as knowledge in one's head, while writing is a realization of that knowledge in behavior.

Sometimes, writing is treated as a hobby. People feel satisfied if they could write like creating a poem, or a story. Writing is also defined as knowledge and skill of putting ideas into written form. Byrne (1983: 23) states that writing is the whole of the relevant activity where the writer creates the context as he/she writes. According to Gani (1986: 158) writing is the hardest skill. In this case, it should involve other language skills. In other words, students must involve the simultaneous practice of the numbers of very different ability and language skill to compose the paragraph. And the students

should be able to express their thinking and concentrate on what they do.

The Cognitive Aspects of Writing

Starting from the very beginning of the study, the researcher tried to attract the students' attention to the importance of the following aspects of affective writing:

13.1 Paragraphing:

It is important to avoid too much eye strain. A piece of writing has to be interesting to attract the reader to new pieces of information. A good paragraph is achieved when a topic sentence is intelligently chosen; the knowledge of choosing a good topic sentence for each paragraph helps students arrange the sequence of their information in a logical order.

13.2 Ideas:

They are the soul of writing. One cannot achieve writing without ideas. The first step of writing is to choose a topic sentence which is the controlling idea. The controlling idea could be an effective beginning which attracts the attention of readers (Peha, 2003:7). The next step is to develop the controlling idea. To be explicit, ideas should logically be arranged and coherently connected to each other. Thus, readers can easily understand the presented information and get interest in it.

13.3 Grammar and spelling:

They are essential for communicating correct and clear meaning. Abbot (2007:6) states that a clear thinking could not be written clearly without using words according to definite rules. Moats (2005:1) show the importance of spelling for writing and say that some writers restrict their writing to the only words that they know. In some specialties like medicine, law, and commerce, misused grammar or spelling may often cause problems and terrible losses.

13.4 Punctuation:

Betham (2011, 37) points out that "Punctuation is more important than spelling". Punctuation marks give meaning to words as pauses and change in tone of speech do. Several studies have revealed that punctuation marks may change the meaning of words if they are

incorrectly used, and they may reveal mystery when they are correctly used.

13.5 Handwriting:

In business, you might be impressed by one's personality through her/his handwriting. For students, handwriting is a reason of failure or success because teachers do not waste time to decipher what a student has written. Readability of letters and good spacing between words and within the word lead to legible handwriting. Moreover, the right direction of drawing letters without lifting the pencil helps accelerate writing. Children who are slow writers find it difficult to transfer the information held in their memory for they may forget it before achieving of transference into writing (Rosenblum et al., 2003).

Crimon (1980:12) states that "writing is the act of one writer. There are two major reasons for writing. The first reason is someone writes to learn. It is usually for private and personal purpose. The second one, one writes for communication. It is usually for public purpose. Writing in English is a mean to fill the gaps that exist between the ability to express some things in written form in English language".

Based on the fact found that the basic problem that is faced by the students in third semester of English language FKIP UIR grades is the students have less ability in writing, especially in paragraph writing. Many factors contribute to this less ability such as the students have difficulty in generating ideas and organization ideas. The students have problem in using suitable vocabulary items. They also lack of attention using the suitable verbs to create sentences to a good paragraph.

In relation to those ideas, Robert (1978:2) claims that a paragraph is a group of sentences advancing the thought some what further. Then each paragraph should leave a reader more informed at the end and at the beginning. Furthermore, he also said that a paragraph does its jobs

throughly: if its function is to develop a unit of an outline. Every sentence in a paragraph should make the reader feel that the unit has been efficiently developed

From the ideas above it can be defined that a paragraph is a group of sentences that develop our main idea. In a paragraph should be included a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and concluding sentence. At last it can be said that the idea in writing should be suitable with language the writer writes, for example when one writes in English, he or she should write something suitable with English. A good paragraph must be able to help the reader to understand what the writer has intended to communicate. A writer must organize his writing in a way that allows the readers to establish an appropriate expectation because the paragraph organization is the communicative framework which presents idea in a written language and it requires artificial arrangement of the information.

Punctuation : punctuation is mark such as full stop and commas in a piece of writing. Punctuation is an important aid to understand sentence. It can be a guide, or marker, for the location of sentence core parts. It may also separate the core parts of the sentence from other words and phrases in the sentences. **Capitalization:** Hughes, and Clark (..) say that capitalization is the first word in a sentence. Capitalize the first word in a direct quotation. There are some places of capitalization. The first, capital letters in names of people (e.g. Gaina Nafiza) capital letters in titles of people (e.g. Dr. Khairi Alfi), capital letters in name of days, months, and holidays. **Form (organization)** It is important for paragraph to have form (organization), which means that all of sentences in it discuss only one main idea. **Narrative:** narration is story telling. Whether it tells a true story or fiction, a narrative essay gives an account of one or more experiences. It tells a story to make a point or explain an idea or event. A narration typically contains action, dialogue, elaborate details, and humor.

Based on the definition above, it can be concluded that writing can be defined as an act

for forming the symbol or the ability to use structure, vocabulary, and their conventional representation on some kinds of realization knowledge behaviour.

METHODOLOGY

The participants of the study

This study is preceded on the third semester of academic year 2015 – 2016 at English language FKIP UIR Pekanbaru. The subject consists of 35 graders who come from class III F. The procedures of the research design were formulated as follows: determining the research area based on random sampling; collecting supporting data by giving a test administered to describe the third year students' ability in paragraph writing. It was given in the form of essay. The students were asked to write paragraphs given that consists of five paragraphs for 90 minutes based on the topic given by the researcher. The writing test was assessed by the researcher and other English teacher in order to get reliability data about the students' ability in writing.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In order to arrive at the following outlined results, it was necessary to go through the following procedures: The researcher collected the primary data by giving writing test to the students, then analyzing the result of the test, classifying of the score levels quantitatively and concluding the research finding descriptively to answer the research problem. As the main data of the research there were three steps used in analyzing the data. The first step was a test. In taking data of each element of paragraph writing, the writer used a written test as an instrument of the research, the subjects work scored by using a 0 – 100 scoring scale. The test was used to know the students' ability in paragraph writing.:

$$M = \frac{\sum F.X}{n} \times 100\% \dots\dots\dots(1)$$

where: M = the arithmetic mean
(test item)
FX= the total score
n= the number of items

The second step, the arithmetic mean that is obtained is interval as follows:

$$M = \frac{\sum F.X}{n} \times 100\% \dots\dots\dots(2)$$

where: M = the arithmetic mean
FX= the total score
n= the number of students

The third step, to know the percentage of the students' answers in each element of paragraph writing, the formula was used as follows:

No.	Classifikation	Score
1.	Excellent	90 – 100
2.	Very Good	80 – 89
3.	Good	70 – 79
4.	Fair	60 – 69
5.	Poor	0 – 59

DATA ANALYSIS

For the purpose of this study, the students' test has been analyzed and taken into account is that of "the ability of students in paragraph writing (the scores of each element of paragraph writing). Results coming from this

study can be categorised into four indicators of writing: paragraph organization, grammar, mechanics and content. Then, can be seen in the following tables:

Table 1. Rate percentage of the students' score in paragraph organization.

No	Classification	Score	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Excellent	90-100	2	5.7%
2.	Very Good	80-89	4	11.4%
3.	Good	70-79	7	20%
4.	Fair	60-69	13	37%
5.	Poor	0-69	9	25.7%
Total			35	100%

Table 1 indicateas that there were only two of the students (2.85%) categorized an excellent. A small number of students (11.4%) were categorized very good, and only 20% of them were categorized good. Meanwhile, 13

students (37%) were categorized fair and 9 students (25.7%) were categorized poor. Therefore, It can be inferred that students' attention in writing skill will be less than the others.

Table 2. Rate percentage of the students' score in the use of grammar

No	Classification	Score	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Excellent	90-100	1	2.85%
2.	Very Good	80-89	2	5.7%
3.	Good	70-79	4	11.4%
4.	Fair	60-69	16	45.7%
5.	Poor	0-69	12	34.3%
Total			35	100%

From the table above it could be reported that only one student (2.85%) was categorized an excellent category, two of them (5.7%) were categorized very good. 4 students (11.4%) were categorized good. Whereas a lot of students 45.7% were categorized fair and 12 students (34%) were categorized poor. Consequently, it can be concluded that Most of students often

have mistakes about grammar when writing a passage. This clearly expressed in the analysis on the students' writing papers above. Grammar limitation also affects the ability of using language to most of the students.:

Table 3. Rate percentage of the students' score in the use of mechanics

No	Classification	Score	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Excellent	90-100	2	5.7%
2.	Very Good	80-89	3	8.57%
3.	Good	70-79	9	25.7%
4.	Fair	60-69	14	40%
5.	Poor	0-69	7	30%
Total			35	100%

According to table 3 that 2 of students (5.7%) were categorized an excellent, 3 students (8.57%) were categorized very good, 9 students (25.7%) were categorized good. Whereas 14 students (40%) were categorized and 7 students

(30%) were categorized poor. Ultimately, The result also indicated that they feel difficulty in writng (how to punctute a paragraph):

Table 4. Rate percentage of the students' score in content

No	Classification	Score	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Excellent	90-100	1	2.85%
2.	Very Good	80-89	2	5.75%
3.	Good	70-79	3	8.57%
4.	Fair	60-69	18	51%
5.	Poor	0-69	11	31%
Total			35	100%

The above table shows us that only 1 student (2.85%) was categorized an excellent, 2 students (5.75%) were categorized very good. 3 students (8.57%) were categorized good. Meanwhile, 18 students (51%) were categorized fair and 11 students (31%) were categorized poor. Therefore, the students' ability in the aspect of content was low. It means it also falls in the category of "poor". It indicates that writing is not a favorite subject for

them. This also supports for the idea given on the table above. It can be implied that many students do not pay attention in writing skill.

The result of the data that shown on the previous tables that the third semester students of English language FKIP UIR have problems in essay writing, it can be seen that most of the students got fair for all elements of writing paragraph. It means that they should be given more practices in

writing, especially in writing paragraph including; paragraph organization, the use of grammar, the use of mechanics, and content. In addition, the higher errors made by the students when writing based on the score given is in content.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of data analysis the most serious problem that the students often have is content (ideas). They are the soul of writing. One cannot achieve writing without ideas. The first step of writing is to choose a topic sentence which is the controlling idea. The controlling idea could be an effective beginning which attracts the attention of readers (Peha, 2003:7). The next step is to develop the controlling idea. To be explicit, ideas should logically be arranged and coherently connected to each other. Thus, readers can easily understand the presented information and get interest in it.

Since the sentence is considered essential to build a piece of writing, it is important to explain it at the beginning of the course. In the light of the results of the scoring analysis, the researcher thinks that explaining a single item at a time directly followed by assignments and exercises has a very important impact on helping students improve their writing.

1. Furthermore, The result of the research are expected to give some feedbacks to the English teachers in improving students' writing skill. They have to provide writing exercises to their students, especially in the form of writing essay. They should also emphasize in teaching tenses (grammar) and the organization of paragraph. In addition, the third semester of academic year 2015 – 2016 at English language FKIP UIR Pekanbaru are hoped to practice writing a lot and read more books relate to paragraph writing.

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