ABSTRACT

This research is aimed to know ‘How is Students’ Ability in Writing Paragraph Using Structure of The Paragraph in Argumentative Essay by The Sixth Semester of English Study Program of UMB. The objective of this research was to identify and describe the students’ ability in writing paragraph using structure of the paragraph in argumentative essay by the sixth semester of English Study Program of UMB.

This research used descriptive method. The population of this research was 164 students from all of classes at the sixth semester of English Study Program of UMB. This research used random sampling. The samples were taken from 50% of the total number of population, where the samples were 84 students. The instrument of this research used writing test. The result of this study, the paragraph in argumentative essay was 54.58. From the data were 2 students had very good score, 18 students were good, 16 students were poor, and 48 students were very poor. And the students’ mean score of each aspect in writing are: in introduction was 6.47, in body was 8.13, in conclusion was 5.75, in topic sentences was 8.71, in supporting sentences was 7.96, in concluding sentences was 7.95, in sentences structure was 4.99, and in grammar and mechanics was 4.15. The result of analysis showed that the average of the students’ ability in writing paragraph using structure of the paragraph in argumentative essay was qualified “very poor”. Based on the result above, the researcher suggest that the lecturer; It is suggested for the lectures to analyzed the students’ difficulties in composing essay itself and find out the solving problem in order to make the students more comprehend about compose the essay. The students need practice to write a good paragraph by using essay organization, paragraph organization, sentences structure, grammar and mechanics correctly.
Writing skill is very important to human life. There are many benefit of writing skill which will be got by the students. The students can explore their experience. Halliday (1985b) in David Nunan (1995:84) suggest that writing has evolved in societies as a result of cultural changes creating communicative needs which cannot be readily met by the spoken language. Beside that argument, Raimes (1983:3) views that first, writing reinforce the grammatical structure, idioms, and vocabulary that the teachers have been teaching their students. It means that writing can be used to train ability of students in applying their knowledge about grammatical structure, idioms, and vocabulary. Furthermore, when the students write, they necessarily become very involved with the new language the effort to express ideas and constant use of eye, hand and brain is a unique way to reinforce learning.

Beyond providing another way to communicate, writing can be used to explore our own thinking, a way to examine what students know about a subject. Without writing, teachers cannot look into the mind of someone who is reading to examine their understanding of the text, but teachers can view their comprehension and appreciation of text through writing. Beside, Hadaway (2002:137) Learning about written language, and learning about writing though, students firstly learn how to write the word, phase, and sentence level and eventually apply the multistep writing process. Besides learning how to write, they were also examining written language and how writing and speaking differ.

In addition, the students have purposes in their writing. Dietrich (1989:41) says that when the students write for audience, students generally have one of the

following purposes in mind, such as sharing feeling and thoughts, providing information, and moving others to thought, feeling, and action.

Therefore, the researcher tries to determine the definition about argumentative essay. It is hoped can help students to understand about argumentative essay. The function of an argumentative essay is to show that your assertion (opinion, theory, hypothesis) about some phenomenon or phenomena is correct or more truthful than others’. According to Macmillan (1988) says that an argument is an ordered presentation of support for an opinion that you want others to accept. An argument is made up of your opening statement of opinion, any background information that your readers may need in order to follow you, the evidence that you will use to support your opinion, and concluding statement.

Besides, the students at English Study Program of UMB can be critical student. In this case, critical students mean that the students can give critique concern something which happened in their environment. They can expose their arguments to persuade others. One of ways to influence them to be critical student can be done by asking them to make argumentative essay. Nunan (1995:87) says that text types such as reports, expositions, and arguments are essential for academic success at school and beyond. It means that these forms of factual writing encourage the development of critical thinking skills which in turn encourage individuals to explore and challenge social reality.

Heaton (1988:135) says that writing skills are complex and sometimes difficult to master, requiring, mastering not only of grammatical and rhetorical device but also conceptual and judgmental elements. From these explanations it can be

**Key Term:** Writing, Ability, Students’ ability, Structure, Paragraph, Topic sentences, Supporting Sentences, Concluding Sentences, Argumentative Essay.
concluded that the students’ ability in writing needs to be improved by doing some exercise in the learning process. It is hoped that the students can be able to express opinions or ideas and feeling that they had after writing some various types of writing in the learning process.

In English Study Program at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu, writing is one of the skills that the students should master. The students are expected to be able to compose well organized piece of writing, acceptable on the college level in particular. It means that the English Study Program at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu try to prepare themselves to be a good writer because writing is a subject that is important to improve their writing skill.

Moreover, the students of the sixth semester in academic 2001/2002 had taken writing subject I, II, and III. The sixth semester of English Study Program of UMB will be choosen as the sample of this research. The reason is they had taken Writing I until Writing III. From the all of the sixth semester of English Study Program of UMB, the researcher got the total score for each A, B, C, D, and E class the total score were B score and some of students were C score.

From the discussion above, it means that writing subject was still difficult for the students. Otherwise, when the students made mistakes in making a paragraph, essay, diary, the kinds of text, ect. Some of students did not try to get the right one. Although, the lecturer gives motivation to correct their mistakes by asking the other students which have more knowledge than them, the students were still lazy to correct their mistake.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Based on the background above the question can specifically be formulated as follows: “How is the students’ ability in writing paragraphs using structure of the paragraph in Argumentative Essay by the sixth semester of English Study Program of UMB?”.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, the researcher describes the meaning of writing, the purpose of writing, definition of paragraph, three main parts of a paragraph, criteria of complete paragraph, definition of argumentative essay, elements of argumentative essay, example of argumentative essay, the teaching of writing subject at English Study Program at UMB, and review of relevant studies.

2.1 The Meaning of Writing

According to Cohen, Andrew D (1994:305) writing is a process where in finished product emerges after a series of draft. The process approach puts emphasis on in incubation period, in which the written piece takes shape. The writer’s awareness of writing processes is heightened and ideally. Furthermore, Tarigan (1982:3) says that writing is an activity, which is productive and expressive. He adds that writing skill does not come automatically, but it needs a lot of practices. The students who want to be able to write well, need more practice in order can master the elements of writing and also the purpose of writing itself. Besides, writing require expressions and feeling away with the development of thought. It is important to not a product, because writing is not easy, it takes time to studies and practices to develop this skill.

Raimes (1983) states enumerate reason for writing: first, writing reinforces grammatical structure, idioms and vocabulary that we have been teaching to our students. Second, when our students write they also have a chance to adventurous with language, they go beyond what they have just learned to say, to take risk. Third, when they write they necessarily become involved with the new language, they effort to express ideas and constant use of eye, hand and brain is unique way to reinforce learning.

2.2 The Purpose of Writing

According to Kneffel, Don in his book Writing and Life: A Rhetoric for Nonfiction with Readings (1986: 6-7) statez that writing is done in the course of daily life is to fullfill one or more of general purpose, such as:

a. **To Inform**

   The writer communicates information clearly, accurately, simply and directly. This purpose is often found in report, like magazine, newspaper, and case study.

b. **To Analyze or To Explain**

   The writer uses languages to analyze or to explain the information that the writer gets. It means that to discover the deep meaning form the information.

c. **To Confine**

   The writers the opinion to make the reader does an action after reading it. It is usually found in newspaper, argumentative essay, and critical reviews.

d. **To Express**

The writers uses the language to express his/her feeling but the writer does not expect the reader does an action. It can found in narrative writing.

2.3 Definition of Paragraph

Many experts define a paragraph in many ways. One of them, Peter (1991:145) stated that a paragraph is a short piece of writing on a very limited topic, and although some paragraph can stand alone, most are parts of a larger piece of writing, such as an essay. According to William (1985:25) a paragraph is a conventional form which writers find useful to help their readers follow a sequence of ideas or thoughts.

Oshima and Hogue (1983:3) stated that 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 sentence. The number of sentences is unimportant: however, the paragraph should be long enough to develop the main idea clearly. They also tell that a paragraph is made up of three kinds of sentences that develop the writer’s main idea, opinion or felling about the subject. These sentences are topic sentence, supporting sentences, and concluding sentence.

A paragraph contains of topic sentence and sentences that the support it. Saraka (1988:26) stated that a paragraph can be subdivided into two main types. The first is physical paragraph: and the second is conceptual paragraph. A physical paragraph is a paragraph which is marked by spacing or indentation during the course of writing to show that new idea will come. A conceptual paragraph is one in which a writer constructs limits to one single idea, one topic sentence plus supporting details.

2.4 Three Main Parts of a Paragraph

In paragraph writing, the clarity and completeness of information contain will indicate that a paragraph is good paragraph. According to Oshima (1983) a good paragraph has three main parts, namely: topic sentence, supporting sentence, and concluding sentence. Below, the description of each of these parts.

2.4.1 Topic Sentence

Topic sentence is used to state the main idea in a paragraph. As Saraka (1988:30) tells topic sentence states the main idea of the paragraph. It does not only name the topic of the paragraph but also limit the topic to one or two areas that can be discussed completely in the space of a single paragraph. The specific area is called the controlling idea. According to Bram (1995:16) stated that a topic sentence must have a subject and an attitude. In other words, it consist of a topic or subject matter and a restricting statement.

Tyner (1987:52) stated that there are some important things to know about topic sentence: 1) a topic sentence expresses the main idea of the paragraph, 2) a topic sentence usually states a definite opinion or attitude, 3) a topic sentence provides the reader with a clear understanding of what a paragraph is about, 4) a topic sentence gives direction to a paragraph that both the writer and reader can follow, 5) a topic sentence often begins a paragraph or is found near the begining of a paragraph, 6) other sentences within a paragraph relate to the topic sentence, 7) the final “wrap-up” sentence in a paragraph often reinforces the topic sentence.

Topic sentence is the most general sentence in a paragraph. Reid (1994:36) suggest that topic sentence is the most general and the most important sentence in the paragraph that introduces the reader to the topic. It states the main idea and focuses the paragraph. Therefore, it is the most general statement in the paragraph. It does not give any specific details.

There are three ways to state ways to state the topic sentence. They are:

1. Using a statement of opinion.
2. Using a statement of intent.

2.4.2 Supporting Sentences

Supporting sentence is sentences that develop the topic sentence. Saraka (1988:30) tells that supporting sentences that develop the topic sentence by giving definitions, reasons, examples, facts, incident, comparison, analogy, cause and effect, statistics and quotations. Development means supporting the main idea or generalization with specifics.

Dietsch (1998:78) stated that support sentences explain the main idea of the topic sentence. They supply evidence to convince the reader of the soundness of the claim, assertion, or opinion. You might regard the topic sentence as an argument (view) to be proven. The support sentences supply evidence in the form facts, definitions, reasons, examples, or illustrations to back up the claim in the topic sentence.

2.4.3 Concluding Sentence

Concluding sentence is the last sentence that concludes the points of the paragraph. Oshima and Hogue (1983:12) state concluding sentence is a sentence that summerizes the main points of the paragraph. It signals the end of the paragraph and leaves the reader with important ideas to think about. It can be written as the same as topic sentence vut in the different words. According to Dietsch (1998:78) stated that besides the two basic parts just discussed the topic sentence and support sentences,
some paragraphs have a third part: a concluding sentence. This final sentence may be summary of the points made in the support sentence.

For concluding sentences, Reid (1994:42) tells that there are five techniques can be used in a paragraph. They are:

1. Summarizes the material in the paragraph.
2. Offers a solution to the problem stated in the paragraph.
3. Predict a situation that will result or occur from the statement made in the paragraph.
5. States a conclusion to information given in the paragraph.

From the quotation above, the researcher can summarize that a concluding sentence is an ended sentence that leaves the reader with the important ideas on the topic of the paragraph. While, some techniques in the concluding sentence are summarize the information, offers a solution(s), states conclusion, makes recommendation, or predict a situation.

2.5 Criteria of the Complete Paragraph

A good paragraph must have a sense of completeness. Baker and Oliu Saraka (1988:73) state that completeness in a paragraph means that the controlling idea thoroughly develop by the use of particular (specific) information. They also state paragraph is complete when it leaves no confusion in the reader’s mind about what is intended, about how the reader is supposed to respond and about why such response is both necessary and appropriate.

2.6 Definition of Argumentative Essay

Macmillan (1988) says that an argument is an ordered presentation of support for an opinion that you want others to accept. An argument is made up of your opening statement of opinion, any background information that your readers may need in order to follow you, the evidence that you will use to support your opinion, and concluding statement.

2.6.1 Elements of Argumentative Essay

According Illinois Normal (1996) views that an argumentative essay contains the following:

➢ In the Introduction

  • **Background** is appropriate. This may consist of a brief history of related past events, a summary of others’ opinions, or a review of the basic facts.

  • **Athesis statement** is required. This informs the reader of the writer’s opinion regarding the matter under discussion and previews his plan of development.

➢ In the Body Paragraphs

The writer presents his points of discussion. Each point is typically given its own paragraph and is supported by evidence. Most often, the writer begins with his weakest point and concludes with his stronger arguments. If all the writer’s points are equally strong, he builds a relationship with his audience by discussing the most familiar, less controversial points first.

In the Conclusion

The writer restates, in general terms, the major arguments he has marshaled in defense of his thesis.

The writer may summarize key points, restate his thesis, reinforce the weakness of his opposition, underscore the logic of his presentation, re-emphasize why this debate is important, suggest a course of action, or challenge the reader to apply the paper’s argument to his own life.

2.7 The Teaching of Writing Subject at English Study Program of UMB

Writing subject is one of the subjects that should be taken by English Study Program Student of Muhammadiyah University of Bangkulu. It consists of Writing I, II, and III. They are able to continue the next steps if they have passed the first step. Writing is a subject that is very important for students; students can increase their ability through writing subject.

In writing teaching and learning process, student will guided by a lecturer. Firstly, the lecturer will explain the theory of writing, and then students apply the material in real activity. They will try to write about one topic and they should write a composition based on topic which is given by the lecturer. Then the lecturer will give some exercises for the students to write about some topics and from the result the lecturer will know whether the students have understood the material or not.

From explanation above, the researcher assumes that writing is not an easy subject to be followed by the students. So, students should pay attention to writing subject. The students are hoped to be able write a good product and they also can increase their knowledge in writing.

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the researcher describes the research design, population and sample, the instrument of the research, technique of collecting data, and technique of data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

The research design in this research was descriptive method. According to Gay (1990:189) descriptive method is used to determine and reports the way things are. The descriptive method will be used in this study because it reports the condition of students’ ability in writing paragraphs using structure of the paragraph in argumentative essay, especially argumentative essay. Therefore, this method is suitable for this research.

3.2 Population and Sample

3.2.1 Population

Population and sample were significant in a research. The population is the group of interest to the researcher, the group to which she or he would like the result of the study to be generalized (Gay, 1990). The populations of this research were the students of the sixth semester at English Study Program of UMB, which consist of class A, B, C, D, E. There are 164 students.

Table 1: Table of Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2.2 Sample

The small group that is called a sample (Ary: 2010). According to Gay (1990: 114) “For descriptive research, a sample of 10% of the population is considered minimum. For smaller population, 20% may be required”. In this research, the researcher takes 50% from 164 students. There are 84 students. The researcher will use random sampling technique to choose the sample. Random sampling is the process of selecting a sample in such a way that all individuals in defined population have an equal and independent chance of being selected for the sample (Gay, 1990). The researcher was put the names of all students who have been selected as the population of 164 students into a glass, and then she/he was shake the glass and take as much as 50% of the population, there are 84 students, the names that came out used as sample.

3.3 Instrument

In collecting data that the researcher was used a written test form as a main instrument. The students was asked to make a paragraph that consists of least three paragraphs and they wrote one of the three topics provided: The Advantages of studying at university, Abortion, The happiest day in my life. These topics are taken from Oshima and Hogue (1983).

3.4 Technique Collecting Data

The research procedures were as follow:

1. The researcher was prepared the condition of the class where the students are ready to follow the test.
2. The researcher was gave paper to the students.
3. The researcher was gave instructions to the students to wrote a paragraph using structure of paragraph in argumentative essay.
4. The students wrote a paragraph using structure of paragraph in argumentative essay with an allocation time 45 minutes.
5. The researcher was analyzed the data, in the analyzed the data researcher was helped by co-researcher. His name Mr. Wahyudi Badri, S.Pd. He is a writing lecturer in Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu.

3.5 Data Analysis Technique

1. The data in this research was analyzed by following the steps below:

The researcher and co-researcher were scored students’ paragraphs used Checklist rubric by Oshima and Hogue (1983):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Peer Editor’s Comments and Suggestions</th>
<th>Score Each Item</th>
<th>Scoring System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESSAY ORGANIZATION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction:</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7-10 : good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the introductory paragraph have both general sentences and a clear thesis statement?</td>
<td>The introductory paragraph has both general sentences and a clear thesis statement.</td>
<td>4-6 : enough</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1-3 : bad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Body:
- **Conclusion:**
  - Is there a concluding sentence that is either a paraphrase of the thesis or a summary of the main points? Is there a final comment (if one is appropriate).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>15</th>
<th>11-15 : good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7-10 : good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6-10 : enough</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-5 : bad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Paragraph Organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic sentences:</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>11-15 : good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does each paragraph have a topic sentence? Does each topic sentence for a controlling idea</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7-10 : good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6-10 : enough</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-5 : bad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supporting Sentences:</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>11-15 : good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do the supporting sentences flow smoothly? Are there sufficient concrete details to support each point? Are transition signals used effectively both within and between paragraphs? Does each paragraph have unity?</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7-10 : good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6-10 : enough</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-5 : bad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concluding sentences:</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>11-15 : good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are concluding sentences used (if they are necessary)?</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7-10 : good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6-10 : enough</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-5 : bad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sentences Structure
- **Conclusion:** The sentences are clear.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>10</th>
<th>7-10 : good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4-6 : enough</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

2. Score from co-researcher and researcher were added, and then were divided into two.

3. The researcher was tabulated the data.

4. The researcher was check the students’ mean by using the formula of Brown (1990: 66) as below:

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

Where : $M$ = Averages total

$X$ = Averages of students’ total score

$N$ = Sample of total (Brown, 1990: 66).

**DISCUSSION**

In this section, the researcher explained students’ ability in writing paragraphs using structure of the paragraph in argumentative essay by the sixth semester of English Study Program of Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu. There were eight criteria that were related to the component of students’ test, such as *Essay Organization* (*Introduction, Body, Conclusion*), *Paragraph Organization* (*Topic sentences, Supporting Sentences, Concluding Sentences, Argumentative Essay*).

Sentences, Supporting Sentences, Concluding Sentences), Sentences Structure, Grammar and Mechanics. From the result above, the features of Essay Organization (Introduction, Body, Conclusion), Paragraph Organization (Topic Sentences, Supporting Sentences, Concluding Sentences), Sentences Structure, Grammar and Mechanics belong to “Enough”.

In brief, the result of this research showed that the students’ ability in writing paragraphs using structure of the paragraph in argumentative essay were still categorized low. In addition, students’ ability in writing paragraph is “Enough” in Introduction, Body, Concluding, Topic Sentences, Supporting Sentences, Concluding Sentences, Sentences Structure, Grammar and Mechanics.

CONCLUSION

The table below shows the students’ ability in writing paragraphs using structure of the paragraph in argumentative essay in criteria conclusion. It can be seen more detail in appendix 4.

Table 4.5 The Students’ Score and Frequency in Criteria of Conclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>7-10</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Enough</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bad</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean score of students’ in criteria of aspect “Conclusion” was (5.75). From the table 4.5, it could be seen that 35 students were good, 32 students were enough, and 17 students were bad. Based on the students’ mean score in criteria
conclusion, it can be concluded that the score of the sixth semester students in aspect conclusion was categorized as “Enough”.

REFERENCES


