

The Students' Writing Ability of Argumentative Essay at English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang

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ABSTRACT

Writing as a productive language skill take a part important role in the curriculum of English. In academic field, ideas are mostly conveyed through writing instead of speaking, because they are more visible and last longer in written form. Argumentative essay is one of the genres studied by students of English education department at Universitas Negeri Padang. The students are commanded in creating and writing an argumentative essay. This research aimed to analyze the ability of students' writing argumentative essay. The subject in this study was the third-year students of English in Universitas Negeri Padang. Twenty five students were selected as samples. This study was used descriptive research. The research data came from the document of students' writing final test to get the ability of students in writing an argumentative essay. There were twenty five documents that had been analyzed based on Brown's indicators. It consists of content, organization, grammar, vocabulary and mechanics. The finding of this study showed that the ability of English education department students were good (68,7). It indicated that the students should increase their ability in writing argumentative essay properly.

Keywords: Ability, Writing, Argumentative essay

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing as a productive skill take a part important in the curriculum of learning English. Kriszner & Mandell [1] say that writing can describe someone ideas. Because, in writing need a process and a skill and apart of actions. In addition, Langan [2] argues that writing is a ability that transforms supposed from some opinion into words became a writing. Also, writing is a step of finding some series of stages; very often, they should explore their ideas or opinions so, they find what they want to write. Moreover, Qonitahun [3] says that writing is deliberated as tool to communicate the imparted to others. Besides, writing can describe the ability of someone and also writing can explain someone's opinion, feeling to others.

Furthermore, writing has function as a written expression of ideas. McMillan, et. al. [4] states that writing is the result of thought and is a clarification of logic. Furthermore, there are several types and forms for clarifying an idea in writing. in addition, writing can not be finished all at once. It takes time and goes through a few steps. Then, Oshima and Hogue [5] declare that writing is a increasing activity. When developing ideas in writing, the writers commute and edit which they will have to undertake multiple times. In conclusion, writing is a written phrase from result of thought, and it is also increasing project.

Afterward, Houge [6] points out that there are four processes of writing. The first process is prewriting. In starting writing, the writers determine their ideas about how they want to express their felling. In this process, the writers chose a topic they want to write. The next is to write a first draft. Begin by developing ideas in this process. The third process is editing the first draft. In this process, the writers should change and correct their writing. In editing, it has two processes; checking a whole paragraph and checking the paragraph contents for good shape such as organizing idea, structure, punctuation, spelling and others. The last process is writer the last finding of the writing. The writers write a well-ordered copy of the paragraph. To sum up, the process of writing is needed. Since, it motivates the students to make a good paragraph in writing. Then, the reader will easily understand what the writers write.

Some kinds of text will be acquired by the students during studying in every university such as descriptive, narrative, explanation, exposition, recount and argumentative. The researcher chooses argumentative essay as the subject of this research. Argumentative essay is the scientific essay that discusses an issue or some of the controversial issues in the society. In writing an argumentative essay the writers have to state their strong opinion with the related

theory to convince the reader, pro and contra on the issue that being discussed are the part of good argumentative or a persuasive essay. The argumentative essay is a scientific paper that contains of arguments, explanation, proof or reasons then the writers argue for a certain idea and try to persuade readers to writers' opinion [7].

Based on the preliminary research at Universitas Negeri Padang, some students have problems in developing argumentative essay. Some of the students still have low ability in developing an argumentative essay. it can be seen from students' writing such as; mistake in spelling words and low grammatical ability. Also, they could not organize the paragraph properly. Then, several students still could not develop their argumentative essay. it caused their essay like a simple essay which is consisting three until four paragraph.

There are several studies have studied by some researcher about the ability of students in composing persuasive essay [8],[9],[10], and [11] did research on analyzing argumentative essay. The result indicated that the ability of students in developing argumentative essay were low. The most of the students' problems in the use of evidence and the extract of sentences in writing. It can be stated that students still have difficulties in composing good sentences based on structure of the essay. They also difficult to composing good conclusion paragraphs from argumentative essay.

Moreover, in different types of genre, the study of students' ability in writing [12] who analyzed the ability of students and problem in writing recount text.

They realized that the students were in fair level. In addition Irwan, Fauzia and Marlina [13] who analyzed students' ability in developing an analytical exposition text. They analyzed about ability of students in developing some thesis statement, stating argumentation, organizing some ideas and using of evidence of analytical exposition text. In addition Mutiara, Rasyid and Suryanti [14] who analyzed students difficulties in developing idea in writing an argumentative essay. The research is aimed to highlight set of difficulties encountered by the students that are assigned to develop ideas whilst writing an argumentative essay. The study reveals that the students still have some difficulties in constructing thesis statement, organizing paragraph, making writing coherence and combining ideas in correct sentences.

Different to the previous study, this study presents the analysis of the students' ability in composing argumentative essay at the third students of Universitas Negeri Padang focuses on components of writing such grammar, content, organization, vocabulary and mechanics.

2. METHODS

This research is used descriptive design. Descriptive research focuses on providing descriptions of phenomenon that occur naturally, without an experimental treatment. The goal of descriptive research is to gather information about some groups of people's

preferences, attitudes, and practices supposing to answer a variety of questions about the current state of the subject of study. Arikunto [15] explains that the descriptive design is used to know or to describe something such condition, situation, events, activities that the finding of the research can be displayed in research report. Furthermore, descriptive research is used to obtain information of ability of students in writing argumentative essay at English department of Universitas Negeri Padang.

The instrument of this research was document of students' final test in writing Essay subject especially argumentative essay. The researcher used document in analyzing the ability of students' argumentative essay writing. The researcher was used five indicators are content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics [16].

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this part, the researcher explained the result of students' ability in writing the argumentative essay at the third-year students of English Department at Universitas Negeri Padang. The data gotten from result of the students' writing final test, which consist of 25 participants. In order to show the students' ability in writing argumentative essay, the researcher wrote the average of compounding scores between researcher and raters.

The researcher discussed the data analysis by showing the table of criterion of students' writing argumentative essay. The result was described from the mean score of the students in developing argumentative essay. The total scores of students in writing were 68,7. Then, the students' ability analyzed by components of writing that offered by Brown. There were five components of writing such as content, organization, grammar, vocabulary and mechanics.

After founding the result of writing argumentative essay, the researcher categorized it into the table criterion of writing score offered by Arikunto [15]. The percentage of students' ability is shown in the following table:

Table 1. Students' Ability scores in Writing Argumentative Essay.

Score	Category	Frequency	Percentage
80-100	Very good	4	16 %
66-79	Good	12	48 %
56-65	Fair	4	16 %
40-55	Poor	5	20 %
30-39	Very poor	0	0
Total		25	100%

It can be seen on the table above, it can be seen that the score of the students are divided into five categories such as very good, good, fair, poor, and very poor. As the consequence, four students received a very high grade, twelve received a good grade, four received a fair grade and five received a low grade.

Students score in content

The first component in explaining the ability scores of students in writing an argumentative essay is content. The percentage of students' scores in content is shown in the following table:

Table 2. Students' Ability Scores in Content

Score	Frequency	%
4	9	36 %
3	8	32 %
2	8	32%
1	0	0
Total	25	100%

From the table above, it can be shown that the most students got 4 score, it was 36 %. It shows that most of student of English Department at Universitas Padang have a good content in arranging sentences in an argumentative essay.

Students' Score in Organization

The second component in explaining the score ability of students in composing argumentative essay is organization. The percentage of students' scores in organization is shown in the following table:

Table 3. Students' Ability Scores in Organization

Score	Frequency	%
4	8	32 %
3	10	40 %
2	7	28 %
1	0	0
Total	25	100%

From the table above, there were 32 % of students who in 4 score, 40% of students were in 3 score, and 28% of students were in 2 score. It concluded that there are some of the students still had problems in arranging of almost proper connectives in organization of argumentative essay.

Students' Score in Grammar

The third component in explaining score of students in ability of writing argumentative essay is grammar. The percentage of students score in grammar is shown in table below:

Table 4. Students' Ability Scores in Grammar

Score	Frequency	%
4	4	16 %
3	11	44 %
2	9	36 %
1	1	4 %
Total		100%

From the table above, there were 16% of students got 4 score, 44% of students were in 3 score, 36% of students were in 2 score, and 4% of students were in 1 score. It describes that some of the students still had problems of grammar in writing argumentative essay.

Students' Score in Vocabulary

The fourth component in explaining the scores of students' ability in developing argumentative essay is vocabulary. The percentage of students' scores in vocabulary is shown as follow:

Table 5. Students' Ability Scores in Grammar

Score	Frequency	%
4	2	8 %
3	12	48 %
2	7	28 %
1	4	16 %
Total	25	100%

From the table score above, there were 8% of students who in 4 score, 48% of students were in 3 score, 28% of students were in 2 score, and 16% of students were in 1 score. it shows that there were most of students use an inappropriate vocabulary in developing argumentative essay.

Students' Score in Mechanics

The fifth is mechanics. The percentage of students' scores in mechanics is shown in the table following table.

Table 6. Students' Ability Scores in Mechanics

Scores	Frequency	%
4	0	0 %
3	9	36 %
2	9	36 %
1	7	28 %
Total	25	100%

Based on the table above, there were 36% of students who in 3 and 2 scores, 28% were in 1 score. It has a result that most of the students had problems in mechanics of developing argumentative essay such as punctuation, spelling and capitalization.

After getting the score for each aspect of writing, the researcher showed the diagram for the percentage of five aspects of writing.

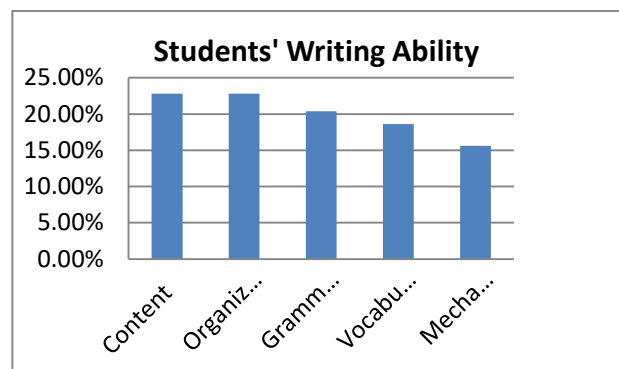


Figure 1 Students' Writing Ability graph result.

The chart showed that the content was 23%, organization was 23%, grammar was 20%, vocabulary was 18%, and mechanics was 16 %. The first aspect was content. In this component the third students of Universitas Negeri Padang still have some problem in

mechanics that some of them difficult to develop a good argumentative essay. The students did not have some ideas in developing a topic. So, they have unclear content and weak statement in writing.

The second component was organization. In this component, some of the students have problem in stating introduction, body paragraph, and conclusion. In composing introduction, some students wrote some background information and stated problem, but it was unclear and some of them lack in composing thesis statement. They did not write the thesis statement in order to support their sentences in paragraph. Then, in composing body paragraph, the students have to state at least three main points with supporting details [9]. From the students' scores, in composing body paragraph most of the students arrange body paragraph less than main points, and a lot of them did not describe their main points with supporting detail. Then, in stating the conclusion, some of the students just write the summary of the main points. Also, some of them did not state their own opinion about the topic of essay.

The third component was grammar. In grammar should involve to the rules of grammatical structure; tenses, subject verb agreement, sentence construction, articles, preposition, etc. From the students' scores in grammar, some of the students have problems in subject verb agreement.

The fourth component is vocabulary. From the result most of the students did not use appropriate vocabulary in their writing argumentative essay.

The last component is mechanics. In mechanics should involve with technical points of writing such as punctuation, spelling, and capitalization. Furthermore, the result showed that the students' writing was dominated by errors of all the technical points; punctuation, spelling and capitalization.

4. CONCLUSION

From the result of the research, it is possible to stated that the students' ability in writing argumentative essays in the third semester English Department is in the good level. Then, the researcher found from five aspect of writing that the high percentage was content and the low percentage is mechanics and vocabulary. It means that the students still have low ability in mechanics and vocabulary. They still made mistakes of mechanics and use inappropriate vocabularies in their writing argumentative essay.

Then, the researcher hopes the students could have better score in developing argumentative essay. They should practice their writing skill as often as they can. Furthermore, students should broaden their knowledge by writing about issues or phenomena that occur in their society. In addition, the students should dominant in five components of writing; content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics.

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