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*The Ability of the 4<sup>th</sup> Semester Students of English Education Study Program of Muhammadiyah University Palu in Writing Paragraph*

**Kemampuan Mahasiswa Semester 4 Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Muhammadiyah Palu in Writing Paragraf**

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**Abstract**

*The purpose of this research is to find out the ability of the 4<sup>th</sup> semester students of English department in writing descriptive paragraph. The subject of the research is the 4<sup>th</sup> semester students in academic year of 2017 consisting of seven students. This research used qualitative descriptive method. Written test and interview as techniques of data collection, and technique of data analysis were used percentage that was described qualitatively. Research finding shows that the mean score of the seven students is 77. Three of the seven students got 81, 82, 89. They belonged to excellent and good categories, and four students got 71, 72, 74 and 66, they belonged to enough and poor categories. The result of interview indicated the seven students have different difficulties or problems; most the students faced problems on content and language uses.*

**Key words:** Ability; writing paragraph; descriptive paragraph

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**Abstrak**

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui kemampuan mahasiswa semester 4 jurusan bahasa inggris dalam menulis paragraph deskriptif. Subjek penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa semester 4 tahun pelajaran 2017 yang berjumlah tujuh mahasiswa. Penelitian menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Test tertulis dan wawancara sebagai teknik pengumpulan data, dan teknik analisis data menggunakan persentase yang dideskriptifkan secara kualitatif. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa skore rata-rata dari tujuh siswa adalah 77. Tiga dari 7 siswa mendapatkan 81, 82, 89. Mereka termasuk dalam kategori sangat baik dan baik, dan empat siswa mendapatkan 71, 72, 74, dan 66, mereka termasuk dalam kategori cukup dan kategori buruk. Skor ini menunjukkan bahwa beberapa siswa telah menguasai beberapa komponen. Hasil wawancara menunjukkan ketujuh mahasiswa tersebut memiliki kesulitan atau masalah yang berbeda; sebagian besar siswa menghadapi masalah dalam menggunakan content dan Bahasa.

**Kata Kunci :** Kemampuan; Menulis Paragraf; Paragraph Deskriptif

## **INTRODUCTION**

In educational system in Indonesia, English is included in curriculum for elementary school, junior high school, senior high school level, vocational school or university. Based on the competence of curriculum, the teaching learning of English has the purpose to develop four language skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Writing is one of the core skills that should be mastered by the students to get success in their educational life. Writing is an activity to express thoughts, ideas, feelings, and other things in written form to be informed to the readers and its function is as a tool of written communication.

In English Education Department (EED), as have many subjects and one of them is writing taught from basic writing up to essay writing. In learning writing students learn about basic writing, in the basic writing the students learn about basic principal in writing, they start from parts of sentences, phrases, capitalization and punctuation in a sentence, part of speech, peer editing, and so on. While in the paragraph writing, the students learn about three main parts of paragraph they are the topic sentence, the body or supporting sentence, and the concluding sentence. In this case the students will learn about how to identify the topic sentence, supporting sentence of the paragraph and also the concluding sentence. Whereas in essay writing the students will be taught about steps to make a good essay, which consist of how to write introducing paragraph, body paragraph, and conclusion paragraph and also introduced kinds of essay.

There are two terms of definition of ability in this research which related to the context. Echols and Shadily in an English Indonesia dictionary, ability is *kecakapan, bakat dan kemampuan*. It means that ability is talent, skill, power, interest to do something. General ability can be defined as potential (capability) of power (to do something physical or mental or special natural power to do something).

Writing is an important medium for self-expression in a language and it can help the writer to think critically. The components writing into five main ideas. They are language use, mechanics, vocabulary, content and organization.

Descriptive paragraph is a text which says what a person or thing is like. The purpose of descriptive is to describe a particular person, place, or thing.

Based on the researcher's experiences and the result of the interview of teacher of writing paragraph of 4<sup>th</sup> semester of Muhammadiyah University Palu, the teacher found that the students found problem in writing paragraph. The first problem was that the students' using transitional signal and punctuation. The second problem was that there were many errors in vocabulary, grammar and spelling.

Based on the problem explained in the background, the students found same problems in writing. The question is formulated as follow:

“What is the ability level of the 4<sup>th</sup> semester students' of English Education Study Program in writing paragraph?”

The objective of the research in relation to the problem statement, the objective of this research is to find out the ability of the 4<sup>th</sup> semester students' of English Education Study Program of Muhammadiyah University in writing paragraph.

There are some previous research findings related to this research. The first is Anita (2016), about Students' Ability in Writing Paragraph of Argumentative Essay of the Second Year English Department of UNP (State University Padang). The design of the research was descriptive since it only described the students' ability in writing paragraph argumentative essay.

The second is Gusmuliana (2016), entitled: The effective Students' Ability in Writing Narrative Paragraph of the Grade Students' of MTs Desa Sawah of Kampar Regency. Of the design of the research is descriptive research.

Considering the previous studies above, it can be found that there are some differences among two previous researchers with this research. In the first and second previous studies, the researcher focused on argumentative essay, and the second but the was narrative paragraph. The difference their research was focused on writing paragraph argumentative essay but this meant research but the researcher focused on writing descriptive paragraph. The second previous research, the research focused on writing narrative paragraph but the meant research focused on writing descriptive paragraph. The similarity was students' ability.

## METHOD

Considering the purpose of the research and the nature of the problem, this research is descriptive research. The design of the research is descriptive qualitative it describes the students ability in writing paragraph. The subject of this study was the 4<sup>th</sup> semester students of English Department of Muhammadiyah Palu in the academic 2019/2020, which the total numbers are 7 students. The subject of the research was ability level of writing descriptive paragraph. This research was conducted in English Education Study Program of Muhammadiyah University, focusing in the 4<sup>th</sup> semester students. It is located at Jl. Hang Tuah no. 29A. Palu Sulawesi Tengah.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### Finding of Test

The finding of the research was based on the results of data analysis. The data analysis consist of two sessions the data analysis of the test and interview. The researcher used the following table which consist of the students mean score of the test.

The researcher used the following table consist of the students mean score of the test as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}\Sigma &= \frac{\sum x}{N} \\ &= \frac{542}{7} = 77\end{aligned}$$

Based on the mean score, it showed that 7 students were expected to able to reach the maximum score in test of 7 students belonged to 'very good' category, 3 of 7 students belonged to belonged so 'poor' categories. That is indicated by 81, 82, 89, 79 >77 <66, 71, 74.

After calculating the students' mean score of the test, the researcher explained the ability of writing descriptive paragraph of the test. In term of content, two students 'belonged to excellent category with

Percentage score 28.57% of 7 students. They had knowledge, substantive, through development of writing, relevant to assigned topic. Three students belonged to good category with score 42.86%. They had some knowledge of the subject the adequate range, limited development of thesis, mostly relevant to topic but still lack of supporting details. The students in general had difficulties in generating and expressing their ideas in English as it took them guide long time. Two students were 'poor' category with ability score 28.57%. They don't show knowledge able of subject, non-substantive, non-pertinent, or not enough to evaluate.

In the organization aspect, three students belonged to 'very good' category with score 42.86%. They already had ideas clearly stated, well-organize, logical sequencing, and cohesive. Three students belonged to 'good or average' category with score 42.86%. They mean ides was impropriated with supporting sentence. Limited support in sentence and incompletes sequencing. One students got enough category with score 14.29%. He had confused and unconnected ideas and lack logical sequencing and development.

It terms of vocabulary, three students belonged to 'very good' category showed they ability scores were 42.86. They had already effective word/idiom and usage and word mastery.

Three students' belonged to 'good' categories with ability score was 42.86%. They had adequate range, choice of usage, but meaning was not obscured. One student belonged to 'poor' category, her ability score was 14.28%. She had frequent errors of word/idioms form, choice, usage and meaning confused or obscured. In the language use aspect, one student belong to 'very good' category, his score was 14 28%. Had effective complex construction few errors of agreement, tense, number, world order, article, pronouns, and preposition. Four students belonged to 'fair/poor' category. Their presentence was 57.14%. They have major, problems, in simple complex construction, frequent errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and preposition.

**Table 1.** Students' Score of Test Item Analysis

| Initial Names | Content | Organization | Vocabulary | Language Use | Mechanics  | Total |
|---------------|---------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|-------|
| <b>NPD</b>    | 27      | 18           | 18         | 22           | 4          | 89    |
| <b>SM</b>     | 27      | 18           | 18         | 17           | 5          | 81    |
| <b>APY</b>    | 26      | 18           | 17         | 18           | 4          | 82    |
| <b>F</b>      | 26      | 13           | 17         | 18           | 3          | 66    |
| <b>RW</b>     | 21      | 17           | 13         | 17           | 4          | 71    |
| <b>AR</b>     | 26      | 17           | 18         | 17           | 3          | 79    |
| <b>RN</b>     | 21      | 17           | 17         | 17           | 3          | 74    |
| <b>Total</b>  |         |              |            |              | <b>542</b> |       |

Table 1 indicated the one student's belonged to "very good" category with score 14.28%. He had few errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing.

Three students belonged to "good or average" category and got score 42.86%. They made Occasional errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, but meaning not obscured. Three students belonged to "fair poor" category with their score were 42.86%. They usual errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, poor handwriting, memory confused.

### Finding of the Interview

Interview used to know the factor of the students difficulties in writing paragraph. About 7 students, the researcher chose 2 students' for interview. There were 5 questions.

As the result of interview to the students, the researchers conclude that most students faced a lot of problem when they write paragraph. When the researchers asked the students what difficulties they faced in writing paragraph? According to Ni Putu Puspita Dewi

*"There are difficulties when I written paragraph, such as find topics, and develop my ideas into sentences, and it makes me difficult to grammar, vocabulary, lack ideas, and afraid of making mistakes while writing. It really helped me improve my writing skills and gave me new knowledge about writing. I have to practice often and be diligent in reading so that my ideas are increasing and my sources for writing are also numerous. I also have to multiply the vocabulary to be able to write well"*

From difficulties that the students faced the researcher concludes that five aspects of writing vocabulary, grammar, and lack their ideas, in writing descriptive paragraph are still difficult for her. Amanda P. Yasmin said;

*"There are difficulties writing paragraph first like knowledge, like a vocabulary, the choose of title, when I choose title lack knowledge understanding, the writing process task exposing feeling and experience writing symbol, and form. How to be practice our writing paragraph and always typing together. The difficulty of the aspects of writing paragraph was meaning of title and unity"*.

### DISCUSSION

The first analysis is the data collected from the written test. Referring to the research objective, the finding showed that the use of writing descriptive paragraph and the supporting action improve the students' writing ability in the aspects of content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanic

In term of content, two the students' belonged to "excellent" categories with score was 28.57% of 7 students. Three students belonged to "good" categories with score 42.86% of 7 students. Two students were enough with score 28.57% of 7 students.

In the organization aspect, three excellent category students with score 42.86%. Three students belonged to good or average categories with score 42.86%. One belonged to "enough" his ability score was 14.29%.

It terms of vocabulary, three excellent students showed their abilities scores were 42.86%. Three students belonged to "good or average" categories with ability score was 42.86%. One

“enough” category student show that his ability score was 14.28%. They had already effective word/idioms and usage, and word mastery

In the language use aspect, one excellent student, he ability score was 14, 28% of. Two students belonged good with ability score 28.57%. They in ability score was 57.14%.

The second, the analysis of data collected from the interview. The result of the interview with students, the students fell difficulty in writing descriptive paragraph because they lack of their ideas, vocabulary, and grammar, content.

## **CONCLUSION**

The first point is the mean scores of seven students were 77. Three students' got scores lower than mean scores. Second the students writing ability in the aspect of content is two of seven students belonged to “poor” category their ability score was 28.57%. In the aspect of organization, one of students belonged to “poor” category, her ability score was 14.29%. In the aspect of vocabulary is one of seven students belonged to “poor” category, her ability score 14,28%. In the language use aspect, four of seven students belonged to “poor” category, their ability score were 57.14%. They have major, simple, complex, problems. In the mechanic the one of 7 students belonged to excellent category with score 14.28%. Three of 7 students belonged to “poor” category, their ability score 42.86% of 7 students. The last, of analysis the data collected from the interview. The result of the interview with students, the students fell difficult of in writing descriptive paragraph because they lack of their ideas, vocabulary, and grammar.

## **SUGGESTION**

The researcher formulated some suggestion to the students' and other teachers or researcher. Hopefully, the research finding in effected to be usual: For the teacher, should create alternative method in teaching English language especially in writing ability. They should create the good atmosphere in the classroom and make the students more active in the class.

For the students, the researcher suggests that they should always practice their writing on content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanic because they are helpful to improve their writing ability. The other researcher, who wants to develop all information and knowledge and for those who have interest in doing research related to topic use the research finding on reference.

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