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STUDENTS' PROBLEMS IN WRITING PARAGRAPH AT THE SECOND SEMESTER OF ENGLISH EDUCATION AT MUHAMMADIYAH KOTABUMI UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

The aim of this research was to find students' problems in writing paragraph and the dominant problem in writing paragraph at the second semester of English Education at Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University. This research employed descriptive qualitative research that examined 8 students in the second semester of English Education Study Program. The design of this research was descriptive qualitative research. The instrument used to collect the data were document of students writing tasks and interview guideline. The kind of interview that was used semi-structured interview. Based on theories of Bryne divides writing problems into three categories. The first is linguistic problems. Linguistic aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, Language use and choice of sentence in writing. The second is Physiology, namely content. The third is cognitive such as spelling, punctuation, capitalization and paragraph. Based on the findings, the results showed that the students' problems in writing paragraph indicate that students faced problems in 2 categories which consisted: linguistic and cognitive problems. Linguistic problems which consist of grammar is 49, vocabulary is 7, and choice of sentence is 2, and cognitive problems which consist of spelling is 1, punctuation is 26, capitalization is 29, and paragraphing is 3. Moreover, it also find the dominant problem in writing paragraph was linguistic problems which consist grammar is 49 where student still experience problems in understanding the basic nature of grammar, namely problems in terms of the appropriateness of the placement of to be, and the correct pattern of verbs. Then, for the Physiology problem, namely content, there were no problems found on the results of the analysis of 8 students' writing documents at the second semester of English education at Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University.

Keywords: *students' problem, linguistic and cognitive, writing paragraph.*

Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menemukan masalah mahasiswa dalam menulis Paragraf dan masalah yang dominan dalam menulis paragraf pada mahasiswa semester dua program studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di Universitas Muhammadiyah Kotabumi. Penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian deskriptif kualitatif yang meneliti 8 mahasiswa semester II Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris. Desain penelitian ini adalah penelitian deskriptif kualitatif. Instrumen yang digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data adalah dokumen tugas menulis siswa dan pedoman wawancara. Jenis wawancara yang digunakan adalah wawancara semi terstruktur. Berdasarkan teorinya Bryne membagi masalah menulis menjadi tiga kategori. Pertama adalah masalah linguistik. Aspek linguistik seperti tata bahasa, kosa kata, penggunaan bahasa dan pilihan kalimat dalam tulisan. Kedua Fisiologi yaitu isi. Ketiga adalah kognitif seperti ejaan, tanda baca, kapitalisasi dan paragraf. Berdasarkan temuan, hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa masalah siswa dalam menulis paragraf menunjukkan bahwa siswa menghadapi masalah dalam 2 kategori yang terdiri dari: masalah linguistik dan kognitif. Masalah linguistik yang terdiri dari tata bahasa (49),



kosa kata (7), dan pilihan kalimat (2), dan masalah kognitif yang terdiri dari ejaan (1), tanda baca (26), kapitalisasi (29), dan paragraf (3). Selain itu, juga ditemukan masalah dominan dalam menulis paragraf adalah masalah linguistik: tata bahasa (49) kali dimana siswa masih mengalami masalah dalam memahami sifat dasar tata bahasa, yaitu masalah dalam hal kesesuaian penempatan to, be, dan pola kata kerja yang benar. Kemudian, untuk masalah Fisiologi yaitu konten, tidak ditemukan masalah pada hasil analisis 8 dokumen tulisan mahasiswa semester dua pendidikan bahasa Inggris di Universitas Muhammadiyah Kotabumi.

Kata Kunci: masalah menulis, linguistik dan kognitif, menulis paragraf.

INTRODUCTION

Writing skill is one of the most important language skill to be mastered in the language learning process, especially English. Brown (as cited in Budiarta 2016, p.139-140) states that as one of the productive language skill, writing skill is very important in communication. Writing skill provide opportunities for everyone to communicate through their writing (Mayekti et al 2022, 30-31). As a productive skill, language learners are also trained to express their ideas in written form starting from sentences, paragraph, and essay. This becomes important in the development of information and communication technology that continues to advance because writing skill is always used to convey information both online and offline.

In contrast to speaking skill, writing is complex and difficult for students because students have to balance several problems in writing such as in terms of grammar, vocabulary, content, and mechanics (use of punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and paragraphing in writing) and this is what makes students feel that writing is difficult. Therefore, writing is not a simple thing (Alfaki 2015, 46). When students write something, they don't just write but they have to pay attention to every aspect of writing both in terms of grammar, vocabulary, content, or mechanics (punctuation, spelling, capitalization, or paragraphing), so that their writing results is good that can be easily understood by readers of the content of their writing, and this is not something that can be done easily, because it must be done with a lot of practice that is done continuously so that the writing is perfect.

The writing process starts from writing a paragraph. Paragraph are important in writing skill. Paragraph is the basic unit of organization. According to Owl (as cited in Wirantaka 2016, 36) states that a paragraph is a series of interconnected sentences consisting of only one main idea or opinion. Furthermore, Oshima and Hogue (as cited in Setiani 2021, 83) state that paragraph is the basic unit of organization in writing. So to make a good paragraph, the student must be able to organize ideas,



arrange sentence structures, use punctuation marks, use capital letters, vocabulary and spelling well.

Universities and colleges are institutions where students are taught many skills, they are listening, reading, speaking and writing (Ahmed 2019, 134). Many skills that students need at university, and the most important is writing. According to Rass (2015, 49) writing is not only the words you write on a piece of paper, but also the effective communication of complex ideas in the simplest form of words that any layman can understand. That is why it is the most important skill that students need in university life. Writing in college requires several requirements in terms of content, organization and so on. There are many types of writing that have been taught in universities, one of which is writing paragraph. Paragraph writing is a compulsory subject for students at second semester of English study program at Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University. This course helps students to be able to identify the parts of a paragraph and write them in good paragraph writing. In writing good paragraph students need many complex requirements and skills such as how they can determine paragraph content, its organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. Therefore, these components or indicators must be mastered by students.

A good teaching and learning process in writing courses ideally is when the lecturer explains the stages in writing a paragraph the students pay serious attention to the explanation given by the lecturer, so that if there is something that is not understood students can ask the lecturer. then when the lecturer gives a writing exercise assignment which will be immediately assessed and given feedback by the lecturer, students can use this to ask if there are things that are not understood based on the feedback given by the lecturer, this will be beneficial for students so they can correct mistakes made in writing, both in terms of grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, capitalization and so on (Putri, 2021, 14).

But, In real condition absolutely different. Based on preliminary research in the basic writing class at Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University in the second semester, the researchers conducted interview with several students to know how the facts of learning in the field. The students said that they often make mistakes in writing in terms of grammar. Where they still tend to make mistakes in terms of using the correct tenses or using the correct verbs, besides that they also say that they also faced limited vocabulary, which sometimes makes them often make mistakes in choosing the correct words or not in accordance with the context of the sentences written. Furthermore, they also said that they also often make mistakes in terms of (mechanics) in the use of punctuation marks,



spelling, capitalization, and in terms of paragraph arrangement, their writing is sometimes still irregular. In addition, the researchers did not only interview the students, but also the researchers interviewed the lecturer of basic writing course, she said that students had problems in terms of aspects of writing such as grammar, vocabulary, or in terms of mechanics (spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing). The grammar problems students often make mistakes in terms of using the right tenses and verbs. In addition, students are often constrained in terms of vocabulary. Where it is still often wrong in terms of choosing words that are in accordance with the context of the sentences written, and students also often make mistakes in terms of placement of punctuation marks, sometimes make mistakes in terms of spelling, capitalization, and often make mistakes in paragraphing. So that the mistakes they make can result in the results of the writing or paragraphs they make not being optimal and can reduce the score they get. Moreover, the researchers chooses in the second semester at the Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University, because students in this semester are still just learning to write paragraph of course there will be problems they face in writing paragraph, making it easier for researchers to find information related to the problems they face in writing paragraph. The purpose of this research is to find out the problems of students in writing paragraph and the dominant problems of English Education at Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University.

Related reseach about problems in writing paragraph has been conducted by some reseacher. The first research had been conducted by Alfaki (2015) entitled “University students’ English writing problems: Diagnosis and remedy”. This research more focuses on university students’ writing problems in English language and to suggest ways of solving those problems. The study was conducted in the Teachers’ College, and the College of Education, Nile Valley University, North Sudan in 2014. The research method used was the descriptive research method. This study found students' writing problems in English language and to suggest ways of solving those problems. Based on the findings of this study. This study is an attempt to identify the writing problems of a sample of university students who study English as a foreign language in Sudan. The ultimate aim is to pinpoint these problems , and suggest remedial procedures. The sample consists of 20 students . They were asked to write a composition on the description of their home village or town. Their writing products were then analyzed by 10 teachers of English language. Each composition was analyzed twice by two different teachers. The results have showed that there are various types of



writing problems as follows : Mechanical problems, Linguistic problems, Cognitive problems, and Psychomotor problems.

The second research conducted by Rohim (2019) entitled “An Analysis of Students Writing Skill in Paragraph Writing”. This research uses the descriptive qualitative research and more focuses on students writing skill in Paragraph Writing. The population of this research is all students of fourth semester for english study program in Muhammadiyah University of Tangerang. semester academic 2017/2018 consisting of five parallel classes namely class 4a1, 4a2, 4a3, 4b1, and 4b2. The objective of this research is to analyze students’ skill in their paragraph writing. After analyzing the data quantitatively and qualitatively, it was found that the highest average score is in the organization used student in writing indicated by the number 15.65, followed by content with an average value 15.34. The average value of the mechanic is 15.17 and for the grammar is 14.79, and the last indicator is vocabulary that shows 14.68 for it’s avarage. The result of their paragraph writing was catagorized as good, This is seen from average gain is 15.13.

The third research conducted by Melati (2020) entitled “College Student’s Problem in Writing Paragraph (A Case Study at Fourth Semester Students of Informatics Management of AMIK MITRA GAMA)”. This research uses descriptive qualitative research and more focuses on problems faced by the college students of the Informatics Management study program at AMIK Mitra Gama in writing a paragraph. The result of this study was the students had difficulties in writing a paragraph in aspect organization/structure, grammatical and mechanics of writing a paragraph. The most typical difficulty was the organization of paragraph problems in writing concluding sentences (90.3%). Secondly, grammatical problem in using adjective (77.4%), article (645%), and verb (58.1%). Third, mechanics problem in punctuation (38.7%).

Based on previous studies above that discuss students problems in writing paragraf and students writing skill in writing paragraph, this research is more focused on students problems in writing paragraph at Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University. In addition, the researchers chooses in the second semester at the Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University, because students in this semester are still just learning to write paragraph of course there will be problems they face in writing paragraph, making it easier for researchers to find information related to the problems they face in writing paragraph. The purpose of this research is to find out the problems of students in writing paragraph and the dominant problems of English Education at Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University.



RESEARCH METHODS

This research classified into the category of qualitative research. Based on the research objective, which is to describe a language phenomenon, this research uses descriptive methods, especially descriptive qualitative ones. Descriptive method is a research data in the form of a collection of words or descriptions. Creswell (2014, p.32) defined qualitative means exploring and understanding the meaning that is considered by individuals and groups as social or human problems. It could be written or spoken data obtained from an Individual or behavioral categories that have been observed, as well as research patterns. In this research, the researchers took the data from the student's written as documentation and interview with the students.

This research conducted in the second semester of English Education study program Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University academic year 2021/2022, which located at Hasan Kepala Ratu street number 1052 Sindang Sari, Kotabumi, North Lampung. The researchers took this place as a place of the research because Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University has English Education Study Program and applied paragraph writing subject, Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University is one of universities in North Lampung, The researchers chooses Basic Writing course as an object of the research.

The data source was subject where data was found. The source data in this research was students in the second semester English education program the students of Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University. In this research sampling technique will be use to take sample is purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is all cases that mean some criterions that would be useful for quality assurance (Creswell, 2014, 209). In this research, researchers took a sample of 37 was students in the second semester English education program the students of Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University. For these criteria, this research focuses on students who have low score in class basic writing. For the data source of the research 8 students from 37 students. The reason the researchers chose these students as the criteria was because these students have low score than of students was taken 8.

According to Sugiyono (2019, 102) research instrument is tools to measure nature phenomenon and social that is observed. As for various types of instruments that can be used in research such as documentation, interviews, questionnaires, and others. In this research, the subject are students in the second semester of English Education, and use documentation and interview as the instruments of this research. In qualitative research, data analysis technique are obtain through various sources. According to Sugiyono (2019, 244) stated that data analysis is the process of



systematically compiling data in the form of interview, field notes, and other material, so that they can be informed to others and easy to understand. The researchers proceeding to the next step, which was data analysis after the acquisition and collecting the data. The following procedures were use by the researchers to analyze the data based on Miles and Huberman in Sugiyono (2019, 246) as follows: the data obtained from the field is quite a lot, it needs to be recorded carefully and in detail. Then, it is necessary to immediately analyze the data through data reduction. Reducing data means summarizing, choosing the main things, focusing on the things that are important, looking for themes and patterns. Thus, the reduced data will provide a clearer picture, and make it easier for researchers to collect further data, and look for it when needed. In reducing data, researchers will be guided by the goals to be achieved, namely finding (Sugiyono, 2019, 247). first is data display is after data reduction is done, the next step is data display. In qualitative research, data display can be done in the form of brief descriptions, charts, relationships between categories, flowcharts and the like. In this step the researchers is to present the data in the form of narratives and table. Second is conclusion/Verification, and third is conclusion in qualitative research is to draw conclusions and verification of the data obtained. The researchers draw conclusion about the problems in writing paragraphs after analyzing the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research results about the problems that have been formulated in chapter 1, which is about students' problems in writing paragraph in the second semester of English education at the Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University. The researcher used documentation and interview to collected research data. The researcher took the data from the student's written as documentation. The data was taken from students in the second semester of English Education Study Program at Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University North Lampung. There were 8 students as the respondents in this research. The researcher decided those eight respondents as their availability and agreement to do the interview and analyze their written text.

The researcher analyzed students' written text or their written after it has been checked by the lecturer on Wednesday June 22nd, 2022. In addition, researcher also conducted semi-structured interview with open-ended questions. The purpose of using interview in this study is as supporting data of the data from the analysis of students' written. During the interview, the researcher asked the students seven questions based on the previously prepared questions. Respondents in this

research were 8 students in the second semester English with the initials name (PAM), (IS), (RZL), (IL), (MS), (RR), (S), (AT). As for the interview conducted with respondents, they were conducted by interviewing respondents via WhatsApp chat on Friday September 9th, 2022.

The researchers explained all of the data found during the research process. the researchers used the main theories: Bryne's theory about problems in writing. The researchers discussed the research findings in the research findings section above, which were related to the problem in writing paragraph in the second semester in basic writing course. The purpose of this research was to find out the problems in writing paragraph, and the dominant problem in writing paragraph in the second semester of English Education at Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University, North Lampung, which was carried out through analyzed students' writing documents and interview with those students.

The first problem formulation was about problems in writing paragraph. The researchers discussed the problems in writing used Bryne's theory. Based on theories of Bryne divides writing problems into three categories. The first is linguistic problems. linguistic problems such as grammar, vocabulary, language use and choice of sentence in writing. The second is physiology, namely content. The third is cognitive such as spelling, punctuation, capitalization and paragraph. Based on the research findings, the researchers found that the students did problems in writing paragraph which consisted of two types of problems: linguistic and cognitive problems. The result of linguistic problems can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. Result of Linguistic Problems

Students number	Linguistic Problems		
	Grammar	Vocabulary	Choice of Sentence
1	4	-	-
2	7	-	-
3	6	-	-
4	10	-	-
5	4	7	2
6	12	-	-
7	4	-	-
8	2	-	-
Total	49	7	2

Based on the results of the linguistic problems faced by students, it was shown that the problems faced by students based on the results of their writing analysis were that the first student



made errors in terms of grammar 4 times, vocabulary (-), and choice of sentence (-), then the second student made a error in terms of grammar 7 times, vocabulary (-), and choice of sentence (-), the third student made errors in terms of grammar 6 times, vocabulary (-), and choice of sentence (-),the fourth student made errors in terms of grammar 10 times, vocabulary (-), and choice of sentence (-), the fifth student made errors in terms of grammar 4 times, vocabulary 7 times, and choice of sentence 2 times, sixth student made errors in terms of grammar 12 times, vocabulary (-), and choice of sentence (-), the seventh student made errors in terms of grammar 4 times, vocabulary (-), and choice of sentence (-), and the eighth or last student made erors in terms of grammar 2 times , vocabulary (-), and choice of sentence (-), so the total result of the students' writing analysis related to linguistic problems was grammar49 times, vocabulary 7 times, and choice of sentence 2 times.

The linguistic problems namely grammar, vocabulary, and choice of sentence. Then, cognitive problems, namely spelling. Gowere (as cited in Alfaki 2015, 45) states that due to the influence of other languages, variant pronunciations and other historical reasons, the English spelling system which has become inconsistent is complex for students, (punctuation) Carrol and Wilson (as cited in Alfaki 2015, 45) state that students' writing encounter punctuation problems as there are no universal rules of punctuation. When they have to use a comma (,) or they finish without a dot (.), capitalizationfor sentences initials, the begining of paragraph, begining of important of word, in topic, etc. It is important to use capital letters. Kroll (Anjani & Safitri, 2023; Nasution et al., 2023; Safitri et al., 2022, 2023; Uswatun Hasanah et al., 2023). However many students have problems with capitalization. They wrote sentences with capitalization when they should in write in a normal case., and (paragraphing) students have problems in the structuring of paragraph, topic, development of a paragraph, structuring the whole discourse and a theme in a discourse Kharma (as cited in Alfaki 2015, 46). Based on the results of the analysis of 8 students' writing documents on linguistic problems, it showed that they made mistakes in writing paragraph in terms of grammar which consist of 49, in terms of vocabulary is consist of 7, and choice of sentence consist of 2, while the results of the analysis of 8 students' writing documents on cognitive problems, it showed that they made errors in terms of punctuation consist of 26, spelling is 1, capitalization is 29, and paragraphing is 3. It can be seen from the following table:

Table 2. Result of Cognitive Problems

Students number	Cognitive Problems			
	Punctuation	Capitalization	Spelling	Paragraphing
1	1	1	-	-
2	2	5	-	1
3	3	1	-	1
4	4	1	-	-
5	8	6	1	-
6	2	3	-	-
7	-	11	-	-
8	6	1	-	1
Total	26	29	1	3

Based on the results of the cognitive problems faced by students, it was shown that the problems faced by students based on the results of their writing analysis were that the first student made errors in terms of punctuation 1 times, capitalization 1 times, spelling (-), and paragraphing (-), then the second student made a error in terms of punctuation 2 times, capitalization 5 times, spelling (-), and paragraphing 1 times, the third student made errors in terms of punctuation 3 times, capitalization 1 times, spelling (-), and paragraphing 1 times, the fourth student made errors in terms of punctuation 4 times, capitalization 1 times, spelling (-), and paragraphing (-), the fifth student made errors in terms of punctuation 8 times, capitalization 6 times, spelling 1 times, and paragraphing (-), sixth student made errors in terms of punctuation 2 times, capitalization 3 times, spelling (-), and paragraphing (-), the seventh student made errors in terms of punctuation (-), capitalization 11 times, spelling (-), and paragraphing (-), and the eighth or last student made errors in terms of punctuation 6 times, capitalization 1 times, spelling (-), and paragraphing 1 times, so the total result of the students' writing analysis related to cognitive problems was punctuation 26 times, capitalization 29 times, spelling 1 times, and paragraphing 3 times.

The second formulation was about dominant problem in writing paragraph. The researchers discussed the problems in writing used Bryne's theory. Based on the research findings, the researchers found that the most dominant problem faced by students in writing paragraph was linguistic problems, (grammar) which is (49). Where students still have problems in understanding the basic nature of grammar, namely problems in terms of the suitability of word placement , and the correct verb pattern. Therefore, grammar is the main point in writing. As supported by Batstone



(as cited in Meifira and Sharif, 2019, 17) states that grammar serves to explain when the author writes the text. Therefore, grammar must be understood by students because it is a useful guide in writing paragraph.

The researchers concluded that the students' problems in writing paragraph in the basic writing course in the English Education study program from the description above. Based on previous research by Alfaki (2015) entitle "University students' English writing problems", the study found students' writing problems in English language and to suggest ways of solving those problems. Based on the findings of this study This study is an attempt to identify the writing problems of a sample of university students who study English as a foreign language in Sudan. The ultimate aim is to pinpoint these problems , and suggest remedial procedures. The sample consists of 20 students . They were asked to write a composition on the description of their home village or town. Their writing products were then analyzed by 10 teachers of English language. Each composition was analyzed twice by two different teachers. The results have showed that there are various types of writing problems such as: Mechanical problems, Linguistic problems, Cognitive problems, and Psychomotor problems.

In line with previous research by Melati (2020) entitle College Student's Problems in Writing Paragraphs. This research found problems faced by the college students of the Informatics Management study program at AMIK Mitra Gama in writing a paragraph. The result of this study was the students had difficulties in writing a paragraph in aspect organization/structure, grammatical and mechanics of writing a paragraph. The most typical difficulty was the organization of paragraph problems in writing concluding sentences (90.3%). Secondly, grammatical problem in using adjective (77.4%), article (64.5%), and verb (58.1%). Third, mechanics problem in punctuation (38.7%). From the description above, the researchers concludes that there are differences and similarities between the findings of this study and previous studies.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results that have been explained in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that second semester English students of Muhammadiyah Kotabumi University have problems in writing paragraph. The conclusions are as follows: The researchers found that the students' problems in writing paragraph which consisted of two types of problems: linguistic and cognitive problems. The linguistic problems which consist of grammar is 49, vocabulary is 7, and



choice of sentence is 2. Then, cognitive problems which consist of spelling is 1, punctuation is 26, capitalization is 29, and paragraphing is 3. Where the most dominant errors made by students in writing paragraph is grammar 49. Then, the dominant problems faced by students was Linguistic problem: grammar is 49 where student still experience problems in understanding the basic nature of grammar, namely problems in terms of the appropriateness of the placement of to be, and the correct pattern of verbs.

Based on the conclusion above, there some suggestions from the researchers, it may be becoming consideration; for the writing lecturer should encourage students to understand more about writing paragraph. The lecturer should always activate the students to learning about writing components continuously, also to motivate the students in learning. Especially in writing paragraph, and the lecturer gives more attention in understanding students in grammar. It is recommended for students to read more and practice how to write good paragraph. Students must understand well the components in writing a good paragraph, so that students do not experience problems during the process. In addition, they must also pay more attention to the lecturer's explanation when the teaching and learning process is carried out.

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