

An Analysis of the Summary Writing Skill of the Fourth Semester English Study Program Students, UIN SUSKA Riau

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Abstrak: Artikel ini ditulis untuk mengetahui keterampilan menulis mahasiswa dalam menulis ringkasan. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian deskriptif. Subjek dalam penelitian ini adalah siswa semester IV kelas F yang terdiri dari 9 siswa laki-laki dan 20 siswa perempuan. Instrumen yang digunakan sebagai alat pengumpulan data dalam penelitian ini adalah berupa tes menulis ringkasan dan interview. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa kemampuan mahasiswa dalam menulis ringkasan adalah bagus. Nilai rata-rata mahasiswa dalam menulis ringkasan adalah 2.68. Meskipun nilai rata-rata mahasiswa dikategorikan bagus, mahasiswa juga menemukan masalah dalam menulis ringkasan. Masalah-masalah mereka berhubungan dengan kosa kata, tata bahasa, mengorganisasikan ide dan ejaan serta tanda baca. Temuan juga menunjukkan bahwa penyebab masalah tersebut adalah pengaruh bahasa pertama, bahasa sasaran yang begitu sulit, dan kurangnya pengetahuan mahasiswa tentang komponen dalam menulis ringkasan.

Keywords : *Writing Skill, Summary Writing.*

INTRODUCTION

Writing is academically required at university. Students frequently have to write a summary, an essay, a paper, or an analysis as a weekly assignment or as a final assignment for each subject. To do their assignments well, they need a good writing ability. They are expected not only to show evidence of good writing ability but also critically select the relevant facts from a mass of data to re-combine these in acceptable form. So, it is important to realize writing is an ability that has to be learnt, developed, and practiced during university.

Writing is considered as a complicated skill. It is complicated and complex because it involves several interconnected aspects such as organization, grammar, vocabulary and mechanic. It is also considered as

difficult skill even in one's own native language. The students are expected to be able to write and organize their ideas clearly. The students must use appropriate grammar and vocabulary as well. They should consider all aspects and components above in creating a good writing product.

Summary is one of the most well known types of academic writing, it is also difficult to accomplish in a short period of time. Because of its challenging nature, most of students have difficulties writing summaries in both L1 and L2 settings. Lecturers in the classrooms do not know exactly how to teach summary writing, although they recognize summary writing is valuable. During in university, students are frequently asked to write a summary without adequate

instructions. In particular, the ability to produce summary writing is an important skill for university students. However, most of them are not good at writing a summary even though they have written a number of summary writings for university students.

Furthermore, almost of the students conveyed that they absolutely did not spend much time to look up words in dictionary, even though they were lack of vocabulary. Most of the students did not take dictionary with them. In addition, the students also made mistakes in using the correct spelling of words, capitalization, and punctuation, for example, the use of capital letters and commas.

These problems can be caused by the lack of knowledge characteristics of summary such as concision, accuracy, objectiveness and coherence. So, they could not explore and develop their writing a summary by having such little ideas whereas, they did not followed the writing stages and did not prepare an outline first as a guideline to write before coming to the while-writing process. For final touch, they did not correct the tenses and punctuation. So, when the readers read their writing it seems unreadable. Based on the information from www.dlu.edu, Nguyen, in her report entitled "The Problems that Students Encounter in Writing Summaries and Recommended Guidelines" said that the students couldn't write a summary because they don't understand the characteristics of summary.

From the description above, one of the important factors causing the students lacks of summary components. Besides, they also have problems in technical writing,

grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics such as punctuation, spelling and rhetorical conventions to put them cohesively into a written text, how to revise text for clearer meaning, how to edit text for appropriate grammar, and how to produce a final product.

The inadequate summary writing ability of the students is identified from analysis of its components, such as: topic sentence, supporting ideas, and conclusion. To do so, the researcher analyzed their summary writing dealing with its components of summary and their problems in summary writing. This research was conducted to the fourth semester students' of English Study Program of UIN SUSKA Riau.

According to Al-Habri (2007: 3), the common problems which are faced by the students of EFL in writing English are lack of vocabulary, a poor grasp of grammatical structures, the incorrect use of punctuation marks, incorrect spelling, poor paragraph and sentence structure, and illogical sequence. Additionally, Msanjila (2005: 1) reveals six writing problems, namely: mechanic problems (spelling and punctuation), unorganized idea, poor organization or illogical sequence, vocabulary and grammatical errors. From the explanation above, it can be summarized that there are some problems that the students face in writing, namely; mechanic, grammar, organization (generic structure), organize of idea and vocabulary.

The explanation above shows that the students faced some general problems in writing. Here, specifically it will be focused on the problems that the students face in writing summary text. There are some common problems faced by the students in writing summary text.

Bahri and Sugeng (2009: 15) states the common problems faced by the students in writing are the grammatical errors in which the students can't use tenses correctly, the problem related to organizing idea, misunderstanding of paragraph organization which the students get confused in writing orientation and interpretative recount, vocabulary deficiency, and the irregular spellings. Furthermore, Farooq and Ul-Hassan (2012) convey the common problems of students in writing are: first, mechanics in which the students misuse of spelling, misuse of punctuation marks (students usually commit mistakes in using commas, full stops, semicolons and colons which affects communication process) and misuse of the capital letters. Second, incorrect use of grammar which becomes the most difficult area for the students' in writing summary text especially in using compound and complex sentences. Third, mistakes in organize the ideas. Fourth, mistakes in writing generic structure (organization) of the text. The last, lacks of vocabularies. All problems above make writing colourless, boring and ineffective.

There are some factors that influence students' problems in writing summary text, they are: interference of first language, the complexity of the target language and lack of knowledge about writing components (Saadiyah, 2009: 21).

From explanation above, it can be concluded that the common problems of students in writing summary text are mechanics (incorrect spelling, misuse of punctuation), grammatical errors (especially in using compound and complex sentences, using noun phrase and using correct tense), poor

paragraph organization (generic structure), unorganized idea and the last one is lack vocabulary.

Based on the explanation above, the purposes of the research are:

1. To find out the students' skill in writing a summary components (topic sentence, supporting idea, and conclusion) at the fourth semester students of English Study Program of UIN SUSKA Riau.
2. To find out the students' writing skill in grammar and mechanics in writing a summary.
3. To identify the students' problems in writing summary.
4. To explain any causes of students' problems in writing summary.

Method

This was a descriptive research. The subject of this research was the fourth semester students' at the English study program of UIN SUSKA Riau. The population of this research was the fourth semester students' at the English study program of UIN SUSKA Riau. This research had been conducted on April 2014 till May 2014.

The data was collected from writing summary test and interview. They were analyzed by using summary writing rubric by Ela (2012) and Berg (2001).

Findings and Discussion

Based on the summary writing analysis of the summary writing students and doing interview, the finding of the research can be described as follows:

1. The students' summary writing skill in summary components

(topic sentence, supporting ideas, and conclusion)

The students' skill on writing summary of topic sentence can be explained as follows:

Table 1:
Students' Skill on Writing Summary of Topic Sentences

No		1	2	3	4	TOTAL
Students' Skill level		excellent	good	fair	poor	
Range Score		3,5-4	2,5-3,4	1,5-2,4	1-1,4	
Text 1	F	5	16	8	0	29
	%	17	55	28	0	100
Text 2	F	3	15	11	0	29
	%	10	52	38	0	10
Text 3	F	2	15	10	2	29
	%	7	52	34	7	100
Average	F	10	46	29	2	87
	%	12	53	33	2	100

The highest score of three texts are in good skill level, because they correct in identifies most of the topic sentence in a complete sentence, and the lowest are in poor skill level, because the students identify a detail

but not the topic sentence. Some of the students didn't mention the title of the text, and the name of the author.

The students' skill on writing summary supporting ideas can be explained as follows :

Table 2:
Students' Skill on Writing Summary on Supporting Ideas

No		1	2	3	4	TOTAL
Students' Skill level		excellent	good	fair	poor	
Range Score		3,5-4	2,5-3,4	1,5-2,4	1-1,4	
Text 1	F	3	19	7	0	29
	%	10	66	24	0	100
Text 2	F	0	20	9	0	29
	%	0	69	31	0	10
Text 3	F	2	15	10	2	29
	%	7	52	34	7	100
Average	F	5	54	26	2	87
	%	6	62	30	2	100

The highest score of three texts are in good skill level, because the students states at least 2 important details with some paraphrasing of

information, and the lowest are in poor skill level, because students' supporting ideas didn't support for their topic sentence from their own

experience or reading and the students includes unnecessary details, didn't demonstrate any paraphrasing.

The students' skill on writing summary of conclusion can be explained as follows:

Table 3:
Students' Skill on writing Summary of Conclusion

No		1	2	3	4	TOTAL
Students' Skill level		excellent	good	fair	poor	
Range Score		3,5-4	2,5-3,4	1,5-2,4	1-1,4	
Text 1	F	2	15	12	0	29
	%	7	52	41	0	100
Text 2	F	2	16	11	0	29
	%	7	55	38	0	10
Text 3	F	3	12	13	1	29
	%	10	41	45	4	100
Average	F	7	43	36	1	87
	%	8	50	41	1	100

The highest score of three texts are in good skill level, because some of the students write an adequate concluding statement, and the lowest score are in poor skill level because most of the students didn't include unnecessary details, didn't demonstrate any paraphrasing. Some

of students didn't include a concluding statement.

2. The Students' Writing Skill in Grammar and Mechanical Accuracy in Writing Summaries

The students' skill on writing summary of Grammar and Mechanics can be explained as follows:

Table 4:
Students' Skill on Writing Summary of Grammar and Mechanics

No		1	2	3	4	TOTAL
Students' Skill level		excellent	good	fair	poor	
Range Score		3,5-4	2,5-3,4	1,5-2,4	1-1,4	
Text 1	F	2	19	8	0	29
	%	7	66	27	0	100
Text 2	F	0	20	9	0	29
	%	0	69	31	0	10
Text 3	F	1	18	9	1	29
	%	4	61	31	4	100
Average	F	3	57	26	1	87
	%	3	66	30	1	100

Concerning the data above, the researcher concluded that the students could be able to improve their mechanics on their writing summary during first test activity. The improvement was caused by having amount of practices. More practice was necessary to assist them in increasing their ability in using correct mechanics.

3. The Students' Problems in Writing Summaries

Based on the result of analysis students' writing summary and interview, the students' problems are: (a) Students' problem in developing ideas, the problems faced by students are students give general statement only and students always write summary starting with the definition of topic. (b) Students' problem in organizing the idea, the problems faced by students are the paragraph made by the students did not cohesion and coherent. (c) The students' problem in vocabulary mastery, the problems are mistakes in diction and limited vocabulary. (d) Students' problem in using mechanics, the problems are the students' did not understand the use of punctuation and mistakes in spelling.

4. The Causes of the Students' Problems in Writing Summaries

The causes of the students' problems in writing summary text were interference of first language, complexity of the target language, and lack of knowledge about writing components.

Discussion

Based on the findings of this research, there were four points that needed to be discussed. First, was the students' summary writing skill in

summary components (topic sentence, supporting ideas, and conclusion). Based on the result of students' summary writing, the score of the students in summary components (topic sentence, supporting ideas, and conclusion), the average score of the students were in good skill level. The researcher concluded that the students could be able to improve their summary writing in summary components during first test activity. The improvement was caused by having amount of practices. More practice was necessary to assist them in increasing their ability in summary components. In addition, the findings of this research also support the research done by Harmer (2001:138) also explain that the important thing about instructions is that the students should understand and agree on what decide the task given according to the materials taught to students. From the students' summary writing, it can be assumed that the students have not understood enough how to write a summary well.

Second, was summary writing skill in grammar and mechanic. Based on the result of students' summary writing, the score of the students in grammar and mechanic, the average score of the students were in good skill level. The researcher concluded that the students could be able to improve their summary writing in grammar and mechanics during first test activity. The improvement was caused by having amount of practices. More practice was necessary to assist them in increasing their ability in using correct grammar and mechanics. In conclusion, the students could improve their grammar aspect of their writing. It could be influenced by the regular practice of

writing. Then, we could see from the table above it clearly showed that the students' score was in better improvement.

Third, the students' problems in writing summarize. Based on the interview to some of the students, the researcher concluded that the problems of the students in writing summary such as: choice of words in writing summary, the used of correct grammar and mechanics, spelling, developing ideas in writing, and organizing the ideas.

Fourth, the causes of students' problems in writing a summary. Because the students had problems in summary writing, there must be some factors which caused the students' problems occurred. There were three indicators that were used to see the causes of the students' problems. Those indicators were interference of first language, the complexity of the target language, and lack of knowledge about writing components.

Conclusion

Based on the finding of the research that have been discussed in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the students' skill in writing summary still needs improvement, because most of the students didn't get the target of the lecturer. The researcher's hopes the minimum score of the students were B (70 – 74). Based on the findings presented in the previous chapter, the researcher suggests several points for the lecturers and the students, especially in UIN SUSKA Riau, Pekanbaru. Those suggestions are: (a) The English lecturers should be more aware of all their roles in teaching summary. (b) The students should try to eliminate the problem on writing a summary by trying to learn vocabulary and grammar, reading the

directions of summarizing, and asking lecturer and peers. (c) The students should have motivations, so they know the different rules used to express something.

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