



AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENT'S ABILITY IN USING TRANSITION SIGNALS IN AN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY WRITTEN BY THE SECOND SEMESTER OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITAS NEGERI PADANG

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to describe the students' ability in using transition signals in argumentative essay. This research used descriptive qualitative. The population of this research was the second semester of English Department students at Universitas Negeri Padang, Faculty of languages and arts, who registered on 2018 that education program. This research sample is 22 students. Sample were taken using random sampling which students that choose argumentative essay when last term examination. Data were collected by taking from some lectures who teach paragraph writing. Based on the data obtained, the students' ability in using transition signals in argumentative essay is average (60%)

Key words: Ability, Argumentative Essay, Transition signals.

A. INTRODUCTION

In the process of teaching and learning English, students are required to master four basic skills; they are listening, writing, reading, and speaking. From those skills, writing is considered the most complicated skill one to be learned. As Brown (2004: 218) says that among the language skills, writing is the most complicated and the most difficult one. This is also supported by Renandya and Richards (2002: 303) who say that writing is considered as the most difficult skill for second language learners to master. The difficulty in writing is not only in generating and organizing ideas and finding vocabulary, but also in using transition signals. The writers transfer their thoughts into a written form by following some certain rules such as spelling, grammar and punctuation, coherence and organization of ideas. Those rules should be mastered by writers because writing is a way to communicate with another and they have to be able to construct their paragraphs coherently. A way to present a coherent paragraph is using transition signals which should be clearly demonstrated in an essay.

There are many things that students should notice in writing. One of them is about transition. Oshima and Hogue (1983) say that transition signals are words and phrase that connect the idea in a sentence with the idea in another sentence. There are some kinds of transition signals; it can be transition signals between



paragraphs or within paragraph. In the essay of transition signals, Oshima and Hogue (1998:44-45) divided transition signals into three groups based on grammatical function. The three groups are sentence connectors, clause connectors, and mixed group called others. Those transition signals can be put in the beginning of sentences, in the middle of sentences and it can also appear in the end of sentence. They also divided transition signals into eight types. Those types are addition, contrast, comparison, example, cause effect, sequence and conclusion. In addition, Wingersky (1992:284) introduced some types of transition signals to add something, to show a contrast, to give an example, to compare or show similarity, to show time sequence, to emphasize, to show space relationship, and to summarize.

In the English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang , one of the skills courses is writing. The second semester students take paragraph writing as the first writing in the English department at Padang State University. One part of the writing is argumentative essay. Here, the researcher chooses an argumentative essay because in argumentative essay, the students are restricted by mechanic rules but still in the context depending on their mind. Oshima and Hogue (2006: 142) support that statement because the argumentative essay is an essay in which students agree or disagree with an issue, using reasons to support their opinion. This essay also forces the students to think on their own. They have to take a stand on an issue, support their stand with solid reasons, and support their reasons with solid evidence.

In learning English, there are problems that the students have in writing. Based on preobservation that have been done by researcher to the second Semester English Department students, the researcher gets some problems made by the students in using transitions signals. In general problem most of the students cannot use the transitions well. The first problem is the students seem to use transition “on the other hand” for additional idea, whereas it is transition to show contrast. The second is students forget to add comma after using the transition signals, for example: firstly in the childhood years are time to catch any educational easier, in correct sentence is add the comma after firstly. In fact, writing is not an easy skill. It needs process from putting down ideas until the results a written work. Writing begins from words, phrase, sentences, paragraph and discourse. In making sentences and developing them, students need to pay attention on how to make a good sentence and what of areas that should be noticed in writing.

Based on the explanation above, the writer is interest to analyze the students’ writing especially in their ability in using transition signals. The writer would like to carry out a research under the title “ An Analysis of student’s ability in using transition signals in Argumentative Essay Written by the Second Semester of English Department Students at Padang State University”.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research belongs to qualitative that uses descriptive method, which was done to see the second semester English Department students’ ability in using transition signals. According to Polkinghorne (2005: 137),” Qualitative research is

inquiry aimed at describing and clarifying human experience as it appear in people's life and researchers using qualitative methods gather data that serve as evidence for their distilled description". The purpose of this research is to gain the phenomenon in order to describe existed condition in the field. It means that the researcher see the second semester English Department student's ability in using transition signals in argumentative essay. Population of this research will be the second Semester of English Department students that is education program of Universitas Negeri Padangwhich consist of 5 classes of English Education Department. Because there are amount of the population, the researcher choose the students that write argumentative writing test.

Population of this research will be the second Semester of English Department students that is education program of Universitas Negeri Padangwhich consist of 5 classes of English Education Department. Because there are amount of the population, the researcher choose the students that write argumentative writing test. This research is random sampling. Gay (2009:110) describe that random sampling select the group randomly, not individuals. All the numbers of the selected group have similar characteristic. However there were 40 students to be sampled. According to Gay (2009: 125) that the number of the samples in the research is at average50 percent of the population. Researcher took 50 percent to represent the sample. So each class represented 4 to 5 students that choose argumentative essay in the writing test. There will be 22 students to be sampled from the population.

So, the sampled must choose argumentative in their writing English Education Department.

No.	Class	Number of papers	Samples taken (50 %)	Completed to
1	K 1	10 paper	5	5 papers
2.	K 2	9 paper	4,5	5 papers
3.	K 3	9 papers	4,5	5 papers
4.	K 4	7 papers	3,5	4 papers
5.	K 5	5 papers	2,5	3 papers
Total		40 Argumentative Essays' papers		22 Argumentative Essays' papers

In this research, the researcher will use writing test as data source in this research.Writing test was designed by some lecturers of the second semester students who taught in paragraph writing class. The purpose of this writing test is to see student's application in using transition signals especially in argumentative essay. This test was based on last- term examination. The students were ask to write an argumentative essay and write it into four or moreparagraph in 90 minutes to finish this test.To know the student's the ability of the students was counted by in using transition signals or the percentage of the student's results, the formula used as follows (Sudjana, 1991):

$$P = \frac{f}{N} \times 100\% = \dots\dots\dots\%$$

P = Percentage the answer

f = Frequency of the students who gets correct answer

N = Number of transitions in an essay

Next, the percentage of the correct transition signals was classified into the following interval as in *Panduan penulisan Tugas Akhir /Skripsi UNP* that was adapted for this research as below:

Table 5 : the classification of score level students.

Interval percentage	Category	Classification
81 - 100%	A	Excellent
66 - 80%	B	Good
56 - 65%	C	Average
40 - 55%	D	Poor
0 - 39 %	E	Very poor

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Research Finding

In this part, the use of transition signals of students was presented in the form table to make easier the reader in understanding this research. The presentation of data in the table is divided into 13 parts. Students who use the transition correctly were given 1 point and the wrong were given 0 point. After the students' ability in using transitions signal were presented in the form table, the essay was classified into rating quality. There are five rating qualities; they are excellent, good, average, poor, and very poor. The percentage of student's ability in using transition signals can be seen clearly these following tables.

Table 7. The percentage of students ability in using transition signals

Students	Numbers of Transitions	Incorrect Answer	Frequency of correct answer	Percentage the answer (%)	Classification of Score Level
1	5	2	3	60	Average
2	8	6	2	25	Very poor
3	8	3	5	62,5	Average
4	6	3	3	50	Poor
5	18	5	13	72,2	Good
6	7	6	1	14,2	Very poor
7	11	7	4	36,3	Very poor
8	14	4	10	71,4	Good
9	21	12	9	42,8	Poor
10	12	5	7	58,3	Average
11	12	4	8	66,6	Average
12	11	4	7	63,6	Average
13	10	5	5	50	Poor
14	7	3	4	57,1	Average
15	14	6	8	57,1	Average

16	9	3	6	66,6	Good
17	7	2	5	71,4	Good
18	7	3	4	57,1	Average
19	5	3	2	40	Poor
20	6	4	2	33,3	Very poor
21	8	3	5	62,5	Average
22	6	2	4	66,6	Average
Total				60 %	Average

From the table 7, it was found that the percentage of the student's ability in using transition signals was Average (Excellent). The students were categorized Excellent, Good, Average, poor and very poor. To make it clear, see the following table:

Categorized	Numbers of students
Excellent	-
Good	4 Students
Average	11 Students
Poor	4 Students
Very poor	4Students

Table 8 show that there are 4 students categorized Good,10student categorized Average, 4 students categorized poor and 4 students categorized very poor. In this table there is no student that not uses transition in the argumentative essay. This below the researcher will classify the students from the category. From those facts above, it can be seen that the second semesterEnglish Department student'sof Universitas Negeri Padang still had difficulties in using transitions signals. Most of them can use transition signals correctly and even they still could not write sentences by using transition in their writing.

The second problem faced by the second semester English Department students'of Universitas Negeri Padang in using transition was the placement of transition signals and the use of commas, some students could put the transitions correctly, but they didn't put comma. They got mistakes in their essay it that did by their self. Thus, the findings on this study indicate that the students' ability on transition signals is classified into Average. They made mistake in using transition signals despite not all kinds of transition their used. In fact, the students had the highest errors on transitions are to show the cause and effect, to introduce example of illustration, and to show the sequence of ideas or time order. Then, there are many types of transition signals that are rarely used by students and applying into sentences or paragraph like: transition to add the similar ideas, to emphasize or clarify a point, to show the definition, to show the clarification, and to show the concession.

2. Discussion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that: First, most of them can use some transitions signals correctly and even they still could not write sentences by using transitions correctly. Second, problem in using transition was placement of transition signals and the use of commas, some students neither did. Third, there some transitions that never used by the students 1) to emphasize or clarify a point,

2) to show the definition, 3) to show the clarification, 4) to show the concession. The last is the highest errors students made were on transitions: 1) to show the cause and effect, 2) to introduce example of illustration, and 3) to show the sequence of ideas or time order. Therefore, the second semester English Department students of Universitas Negeri Padang should be aware in using transition signals. As states by Richardson (2011: 384) that transition signals are important because they are the glue which keeps ideas together in sentence, paragraph and in essay.

This study had shown that the English Department Students' ability of Universitas Negeri Padang on transition is Average. Hence, they need to learn more understanding in it order to produce a quality and excellent writing to reach a great result in writing.

There are factors that caused the students made mistakes in applying transition signals. First, many students still do not know how to use transition in sentences; second, limited of knowing transition; third, they do not know where the placement of transitions is; and the last, many of them ignore the use of commas when the put transition. Indeed, the second semester English students of Universitas Negeri Padang should be careful and learn more how to use transitions because from the data and findings

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the second semester English Department students of Universitas Negeri Padang have shown Average in using transition signals. Despite, there are some students t were not able to use transitions signals well. The findings is indicated by the fact that the students had mistake in putting transition signals in a paragraph, essay; write sentences using transition given, and combine the sentences by adding transitions. Besides, based on research which has been done, there were 3 students with Good categories, 11 students with Average categories, 4 students' poor categories, and 4 students' very poor categories. It can be found that most students can use transitions well although; some of them had errors and some transition never used by the students. Those transition signals are: to emphasize or clarify a point, to show the definition, to show the clarification, and to show the concession. It is four of thirteen (4 of 13) transition signals which already discussed in the chapter 2.

Above all, there are factors that caused the students do not know how to apply the transition signals correctly and could not master on it. First, many students still do not know how to use transition signals in a sentence; second, limited of knowing the transitions; third, they do not know where the placement of transitions is; and the last, many of them ignore the use commas when they put transitions. Indeed, the second semester English Department students of Universitas Negeri Padang who education program should be careful and learn how to use transition because from the data and findings, it proves that more than half students are classified into excellent and good.

B. Suggestion

1. For the lecturers

The lecturers should explain in details how to put transitions well in a paragraph, how to write transitions in sentences, and how to combine sentences by adding transitions. Specifically, on the transition to introduce contrast idea like: *on the other hand*, students still think that *on the other hand* is to add the information but in fact is to show the contrast idea. The lecturers also should prepare various kind of exercise to improve the student's ability in the use transition. Last, is better they can give time to the study more independently and optimize the media as a source to get exercises to make them fluent and accustomed to using transition signals.

2. For the next researcher

Because of limited time and limited data, this research cannot deeper, only analyzed the students' ability in using transition signal. Thus, the next research can be focused in findings the different problem, the students' ability in using transition signals in writing essay or the errors students made in using transition signals.

3. For the students

The students should learn more and have a lot of practice in using transition signals; especially put transition in a paragraph, use the transition in sentences, and combine sentences by adding transitions. They must pay attention to the placement of transitions in using them in sentence or paragraph.

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