An Analysis of Students' Ability in Writing Discussion Text at English Education Study Program in Universitas Negeri Padang

Silvia Husna[1] and Fitrawati[2]

[12]English Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Padang
Correspondence Email: silvanareine@gmail.com

Abstract

This research was conducted to see the students' ability in writing discussion text and the problems faced by the students. This research sample is 22 second-year students of English Education Study Program academic year 2018 in Universitas Negeri Padang. This research used a content analysis method. The results showed that the students' ability in writing discussion text was in Fair condition. It can be seen from the students' writing test results, more than 60% of the students had a score below 60. As for the students' problems in writing the discussion text, researcher used the results of students' writing that had analyzed based on the text structure and language features. From the results, developing ideas, lack of preparation and data in written arguments, lack of advice conveyed in recommendations, irregular text structure and not related to each other in expressing information are becoming a problem experienced by students in writing discussion texts.

INTRODUCTION

Writing is generally about composition. It means either the ability to tell or retell pieces of information in the form of narration or description, or the ability to convert information into new texts as in the exhibitory or debate essay. Harmer (2001:79) says writing is a form of communication through written form to convey thought or express feeling. It means writing is the abilities about how writer convey their feeling through written communication. Also, Brown (2001: 336) describe writing as a process of putting ideas on paper to translate thought into words, sharpen, arrange and organize key ideas in a coherent manner.

Moreover, in writing, a writer also needs to be able in building a good. It is because of a good writing skill make the readers easily understand and get the message or ideas of the writer within the text. Urquhart and Mclver (2005:21) support that the primary purpose of content writing is to deliver a message to the readers. It means that in writing, the writer should make their ideas clearly so that the readers can get the point of the writer. In addition, communication will be effective if the readers understand what the writer means within the written form. If they cannot get the point

with the words using, the readers will not get the purpose what the writer tend to express.

Although writing is one of the difficult English skills, but students should be able to master and apply it. Writing is not easy to be mastered because writing needs time and process in order to get good writing. As Knapp and Watkins (2005:14) state that learning writing could be a tough and complicated series of processes that need a range of specific teaching methodologies throughout all the stages of learning. Moreover, writing skills are also needed in the future for students to get a job when graduate from college. In short, writing is not easy and does not happen instantly, but it requires a lot of process and practice in order to get good writing results.

The students have to write different texts in each grade based on syllabus in English Department. For instance, in English Department's curriculum, essay writing is one of the courses that need to be learned and understood by the second-year students. In essay writing, at the end of the third semester, students are required to be able to write various kinds of texts: narrative, explanation, hortatory exposition, analytical exposition, discussion and review. Moreover, each type of texts has its own characteristics that differentiate one text from the others.

In the Essay writing syllabus, discussion essay become one of the topics that need to master by students. Discussion text is an assignment in college that requires students to present two sides of an argument. According to Refnaldi (2010:268), Discussion text is a text which discusses all sides of the case (reasons for and arguments against) and concluding by making a suggestion or recommendation in favor of one side. Tukan and Palupi (2008:13) imply that discussion text is a form of writing that deals with a contentious topic on both sides in the same essay, both in favor and against argument. it can be concluded that the discussion text is a text dealing with the today's controversial issue that needs to be written in all ways of the point of view (for and against).

Similar to the other texts, there are also three essential parts of the discussion text. Discussion text has special text elements which consist of: general statement, arguments for and against, and recommendation. Refnaldi (2010:268) explains that general statement presents a statement as a general response to a subject of discussion that is social. *Second*, arguments for consists of responses or general views from the societies which pro or agree with the issue and arguments against consists of responses or general views from the societies which con or disagree with the issue because of several consideration. *Last*, recommendation is given after presenting both sides of argument (arguments for and arguments against) as the responses to the phenomena, present your suggestion or recommendation as the follow up or what to do related the issue.

Then, discussion text mechanics (lexico-grammatical feature and rhetoric grammar) is the element of language that is involved in a text. Discussion text is type of essay which usually uses declarative sentences (both positive and negative in present tense). Conjunctions are used to indicate pro and contra arguments. It is usually used 'verb of being, verb of having, and verb of doing' as predicates (Refnaldi, 2010:269).

Hence, the researcher is interested to conduct the research related to discussion text. Moreover, an analysis of the ability in writing discussion text by the second year

students of English Education Study Program in Universitas Negeri Padang need to be conducted. This research will investigate the student ability in writing a discussion text about Cyber-Bullying according to the rhetorical structure and lexico-grammatical feature of the text. So, this research will take the second year students of English Education Study Program in Universitas Negeri Padang.

METHOD

This research used content analysis as quantify and analyze the presence, meanings and relationships of such words and concepts, then make inferences about the messages in writing discussion text. According to Berelson (1952), content analysis reveals; 1) international differences in communication content, 2) detect the existence of propaganda, 3) identify the intentions, focus or communication trends of an individual, group or institution. The population of this research was the second year students of English Education Study Program in Universitas Negeri Padang. There were 151 students from five classes. The technique sampling that was used in this research was random sampling. Test selection is entirely out of the researcher's control; rather, the sample is chosen through a mechanism of randomness or chance (Gay, et Al , 2012: p. 131). So, the researcher chose 22 students as the sample/representative through lottery system from the 151 second year students of English Education Study Program academic year 2018 and have learned about a discussion text.

In the test, researcher will use a google form as a media for students to write their writing. Researcher will give students a topic about today's issue, which is about cyber-bullying. The students will be asked to write 600 words in 90 minutes time allocation. And then, the researcher collected students' discussion text to score by using writing rubric to find out students' ability in writing discussion text. The research was done at Universitas Negeri Padang on July 2nd – 10th, 2020 for the second-year students of English Education Study Program academic year 2018.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Research Finding

The data of this research were the discussion texts that were written by the 22 second-year students of English Education Study Program in Universitas Negeri Padang. The students wrote various specific discussion in their discussion text. Actually, each discussion was related to topic given. So, it can help them to develop their ideas while writing the text. The data was analyzed deeper based on the rhetorical structure and lexico-grammatical feature of the discussion text. The data consists of the students' ability in writing the discussion text based on its rhetorical structure and lexico-grammatical feature. The rhetorical structures of discussion text are the general statement, arguments for and againsts, and recommendation. Then, text organization and discussion text mechanics which consists the lexico-grammatical features and rhetoric grammar. Furthermore, the data also showed the students' lacking understanding of writing a discussion text.

General statement is General statement is the important part of the text. In this part, writer presents a statement as general response toward a social which become topic to be discussed. The mean score of students' ability in writing the general statement of the discussion texts was 2.27 (fair). It was proved by eight from 22

students got the lowest score or 1. It means that the students still lacks in writing the general statements. Then, there were six students who scored 2. The students stated the thesis but does not adequately explain the background of the problem. The problem is stated, but it lacks of detail. There were four students who scored 3. It means that students wrote introductory paragraph which contained some background information and states the problem, but does not explain using details. But their writing states the thesis of the text. Last, there were four students who scored 4. It means that the students stated all aspects in writing the general statements. The data means almost all of them need to learn and improve their ability to fulfilled the aspects of writing the general statement of the discussion texts.

Arguments for consists of responses or general views from the societies which pro or agree with the issue while arguments against consists of responses or general views from the societies which con or disagree with the issue because of several consideration. The mean score of students' ability in writing the arguments for and against of the discussion texts was was 2.27 (fair). There were three students who scored 4. It means that students wrote the arguments for and against of discussion texts correctly. Then, there were four students who got scored 3. It shows that the students wrote the well-developed main points with quality supporting details and quality supporting details and quantity. There were ten students that got 2. It means that almost students still lacks in writing the arguments for and against of discussion texts. Last, there were five students who got scored 1. It is because students wrote lack detailed main point development and the ideas that they write were vague with little evidence of critical thinking. The data shows the students need to learn and read information in order to write a good arguments for and against.

Recommendation is given after presenting both sides of argument (arguments for and arguments against) as the responses to the phenomena, present your suggestion or recommendation as the follow up or what to do related the issue. The mean score of students' ability in writing the recommendation of the discussion texts was 2.45 (fair). There were only four students who scored 4 in writing the recommendation. They stated all aspects in writing recommendation. There were four students who scored 3. The students summarized main topics and give some suggestions for change are evident. Then, there were eleven students who scored 2. The students summarized main topics, but it is repetitive. There were no suggestions for change or opinions are included. Last, there were three students who scored 1. It is because their recommendation did not adequately summarize the main points. There were no suggestions for change or opinions are included.

Organization refers to the order of your ideas and the way you move from one idea to the next. The mean score of students' ability in organize their writing of the discussion texts was 2.22 (fair). There were three students who scored 4. The students fulfilled all aspects in order to organize their writing became a good discussion text.Then, there were three students who scored 3. The students The progression of ideas in text makes sense and moves the reader easily through the text. There were eleven students who scored 2. It is because in their writing, some points remain misplaced and stray from the topic. Last, there were five students got 1. It means that students' writing lacks logical organization. It shows some coherence but ideas lack unity.

Mechanics of the discussion essay consist of lexico-grammatical features, punctuation, capitalization and rhetoric grammatical. The mean score of students' ability in writing discussion text mechanics was 2.52 (good). There were two students who scored 4. The students' text are free of distracting spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors; absent of fragments, comma splices and run-on. Then, there were seven students who scored 3. The students' text showed that the lexico-grammatical features are generally correct. Some awkward sentences did appear and there are one or two errors in punctuation and/or capitalization. There were eleven students who scored 2. The students' text contained structural weaknesses and grammatical errors. There are three or four errors in punctuation and capitalization. Last, there were two students who scored 1. It means that the text contained multiple incorrect sentence structures. It can be concluded that the students had already understood in writing lexico-grammatical feature and the rhetoric grammar of discussion text.

In conclusion, the ability of the second-year students of of English Education Study Program in Universitas Negeri Padang in writing a discussion text was 2 (Fair) (see Table 1). In detail, there were two students got 4 (very good); six students got 3 (good); 10 students got 2 (fair), and four students got 1(poor). It is concluded that the students have already understood how to write a good discussion text. Hence, they also have already fulfilled the elements of the rhetorical structure of the discussion text. And also they have already completed the lexico-grammatical feature of the text.

Table 1. The Students' Ability in Writing Discussion Text

Stu-dent	General State-ment	Main Points	Recommen-da-tion	Organi zation	Mechani cs	Score	Total Score	Rating Scale
1	2	1	2	2	2	9	45	Fair
2	4	4	4	4	2	18	90	Very Good
3	1	1	1	1	2	6	30	Poor
4	3,5	4	4	2	3	16,5	82,5	Good
5	1	2	2	2	2	9	45	Fair
6	4	3	2	2	2,5	13,5	67,5	Good
7	3,5	3	3	1	3	13,5	67,5	Good
8	2	2	3	2	3	12	60	Fair
9	1	2	2,5	1	1	7,5	37,5	Poor
10	2	2	2	2	2	10	50	Fair
11	2	3	4	3	3,5	15,5	77,5	Good
12	2	2	2	2	2,5	10,5	52,5	Fair
13	1	1,5	1	2	2,5	8	40	Fair
14	4	2	2	3	3	14	70	Fair
15	1	1	3	2	4	11	55	Fair

16	4	3	2,5	4	3	16,5	82,5	Good
17	2	2,5	3	2,5	2,5	12,5	62,5	Fair
18	3	4	4	4	4	19	95	Very Good
19	1	2	2	1	1	7	35	Poor
20	1,5	2	2	2	2	9,5	47,5	Fair
21	3	2	2	3,5	3	13,5	67,5	Good
22	1,5	1	1	1	2	6,5	32,5	Poor
Mean Score	**2.27**	**2.27**	**2.45**	**2.22**	**2.52**	**11.75**	**58.75**	**Fair**

Discussion

The findings of this research show that the students had already written the discussion texts which shows that they still lack in fulfilled the aspects of every rhetorical structure and the language feature of the text. This indicated that students need to learn more about how to write a discussion text in English based on the standard of discussion text's organization and language feature that was stated in the syllabus.

However, based on the findings, the researcher noticed the lack of understanding in writing a discussion text. They were related in writing general statements, arguments for & against and text organization. *First,* the students mostly wrote the general statement without caring about the logical and the coherence in each sentence and details of the information so that the sentence did not relate to each other. And also, the students wrote incomplete ideas in their sentence. So, the researcher found that the students only wrote the sentences without paying attention of how well they arrange the sentences in the general statement.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

Based on the research findings in chapter IV, there are several conclusions that can be drawn. First, the students' ability in writing the rhetorical structure of discussion text was 2.33 (fair); general statements was 2.27 (fair), arguments for and against was 2.27 (fair), and recommendation was 2.45 (fair). It means that the students got a good grade in fulfilling the elements of rhetorical structure.

Moreover, almost all of students have problems in writing discussion text. Especially in writing general statements and arguments for & against of discussion text. So, it was indicated that students' ability in writing discussion textwas the most difficult aspect of students in writing discussion text.

Suggestion

Based on the findings, there are some suggestions that the researcher offered to the students, teachers, and the next researchers. First, it can be suggested that the second-year students of English Education Study Program need to be more aware in

writing the general statements, arguments for & against, and text organization. They need to understand more in those parts writing.

Second, this test was done to find out the ability of students in writing the discussion text, without testing their language ability in writing it. Although the recipients can understand the information in the general statements of the text, there are some misspelled and the sentences are not arranging in good grammar. So, the researcher suggested that the English lecturers should give more examples and explanation about how to write a good sentence in writing a text.

Third, the suggestion for the next researcher who is may be interested in the research about the discussion text. The next researcher can do this research on senior high school or college, especially the ones who are in Education major. They need to analyse how the students write the discussion text or another argumentative text because the research can show how much they understand the theory that they will teach to their students later on

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