

STRATEGY IN WRITING IN CONSTRUCTING PARAGRAPH IN THE ESSAY AT UKI TORAJA

by

Judith Ratu Tandi Arrang

[ORCID ID](#)

Christian University of Indonesia Toraja / English Education Department

judithratu@ukitoraja.ac.id

Yizrel Nani Sallata

Christian University of Indonesia Toraja / English Education Department

yizrelnani@ukitoraja.ac.id

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Abstract:

All the sentences in a paragraph should be organized well to support the main idea which is stated in one sentence called topic sentence. In fact, the sixth semesters students of English Department of Christian University of Indonesia Toraja can write an essay but the paragraph in the essay sometime still far from a good paragraph. It is still difficult for students to construct a good paragraph. This is caused by the lack of skill in constructing paragraph. The objective of this research is to produce teaching writing strategy based on the identified errors by Satayatam and Pongrat criteria (2008). This research is designed as quantitative descriptive research. The result of the analysis shows that using outline is the strategy developed based on the result.

Keywords: error, paragraph, writing essay, strategy

INTRODUCTION

We cannot deny that many people are good at speaking English, but only a few of them are good at writing. Writing skill is more important nowadays. The researcher realizes that it is important to improve students' skill in writing. Most of writings are in the form of paragraphs as (Boardman & Frydenberg's 2008, p.3) opinion that students who want to study in a college or university need to learn how to write a paragraph because all other

types of academic writing, such as essays, reports, compositions and research papers, are based on the paragraph, a group of sentences that develop one topic or idea (Kocaeli University 2015, p. 2). Students' skill in writing good paragraphs needs more attention. In terms of ESL and EFL instruction, writing helps students learn (Sattayatham and Ratanapinyowong 2008, p. 19). First, writing reinforces the grammatical structures, idioms, and vocabulary that they were taught to students. Second, when the students write, they also have a chance to be adventurous with the language, to go beyond what they have just learned to say, to take risks. Third, when they write, they necessarily become involved with the new language; the effort to express ideas and the constant use of eyes, hand, and brain is a unique way to reinforce learning. But sometimes students struggle with what to put down next or how to put it down on paper. That is because writing is a complex activity (Penuelas 2012, p. 78, Alves 2008, p. 3). At the same time, they possibly make errors in their writing. Furthermore, Rajatanum in Khansir, et al (2013) said that a paragraph is a unit of writing, which expresses one central idea or main idea (Adelaide.edu.au 2014, p. 1) and consist of two kinds of sentences: a topic sentence and a number of supporting statements.

From the preliminary research showed that the sixth semester students of UKI Toraja encounter problems relating to building up paragraphs that are parts of longer pieces of writing. There are four types of paragraph errors; error in paragraph unity, error in paragraph development, error in paragraph coherence, and error in paragraph consistency in point of view (Arrang, 2017). Errors have become the biggest headache to all sides that are involved: learners, teachers, raters, or any other readers (Liu and Wang 2011, p. 584). Based on the explanation above this research is intended to be conducted to find out the teaching writing strategy that can be developed based on the identified errors.

METHOD

Design

This research is designed as quantitative research. Descriptive research determines and describes the way things are (Gay 2006, p. 159). He further explains that descriptive

research may focus on individual subjects and go into great depth and detail to describe them. The instrument of this research was written test.

Participant

The population of this research was the sixth semester students of English department of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of Christian University of Indonesia Toraja. The cluster sampling technique was used to choose two groups. The purpose of choosing two groups is that this research applied quasi experimental, so one group was treated as experimental group (18 students) and the other one as control group (16 students).

Data and Source of Data

The data for this research was taken from the writer's previous study about the paragraph errors made by the sixth semester students at UKI Toraja(Arrang,2017), and the data after giving the students post testalso some library sources.

Data Collecting Technique

The students from control class treated with reading at home and free writing. In other hand, the students from experimental class also was given making outline strategy. After six times treatment the samples were given a written test. They were required to write essays based on the chosen topic after giving them treatment. The researcher provided two topics, and the students could choose on topic that they liked best.

Data Analysis Technique

Then to measure the significance of using the developed teaching writing strategy, the researcher used t-test. This was taken after all of the students' answer sheets were scored by grading system from zero to 100 point. The score was then put in the table of data score using interval model. It was then calculated by statistical calculation to know the result of t-test.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Table 1. Proportion of paragraph errors found in the essay in pre-test by control and experimental group

No	Kinds of Paragraph Errors	Frequency	
		Control Group	Experimental Group
1	EPU	0.56	0.53
2	EPD	0.48	0.53
3	EPC	0.03	0.15
4	EPV	0.03	0.07

EPU: errors in paragraph unity; EPD: error in paragraph development ; EPC: error in paragraph coherence ; EPV: errors in paragraph consistency in point of view

Table 1 above displays the data based on the calculation to state the frequency of occurrence of every type of paragraph error in the students' composition. It shows the comparison between the two groups; experimental and control group in pre-test. The essays written by the students in the control group contain 0.56 times occurrence of EPU while the essays written by the students in the experimental group contain 0.53 times occurrence of EPU. Then the essays written by control group contain 0.48 and control group contain 0.53 of EPD. Besides that, the essays written by the students in the control group contain 0.03 occurrence of EPC in every paragraph while the essays written by the students in the

experimental group contain 0.15 times of occurrence of EPC in every paragraph. And the last is the occurrence of EPV that the students made of the control group in writing the essays is 0.03 times per paragraph while in the essays of the experimental group contain 0.07 times of occurrence of EPV in every paragraph.

Table 2. Proportion of paragraph errors found in the essay in post-test by control and experimental group

No	Kinds of Paragraph Errors	Frequency	
		Control Group	Experimental Group
1	EPU	0.68	0.02
2	EPD	0.53	0.12
3	EPC	0.00	0.00
4	EPV	0.00	0.00

EPU: errors in paragraph unity; EPD: error in paragraph development ; EPC: error in paragraph coherence ; EPV: errors in paragraph consistency in point of view

Based on the table 2 above, it can be seen that there are twenty two out of thirty two paragraphs that contain error in paragraph unity or the frequency of the error in paragraph unity is 0.68 times per paragraph. Seventeen paragraphs contain error in paragraph development or the frequency of the error in paragraph development is 0.53 times per paragraph. And none of the paragraph contains error in paragraph coherence and paragraph

consistency point of view. It can be concluded that the dominant error that students made in the post test of the control group is error in paragraph unity.

Discussion

From the finding above we can conclude that after giving the treatment for both groups there was no student who got error in EPC and EPV. But further the researcher had to test whether those strategies are effective or not. It can be shown by the figure below from t-test between control and experiment group:

Table .3 t-test result of control and experiment class

Group Statistics					
	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
pretest score	Experimental group	18	67.7639	19.63948	4.62907
	Control group	16	58.3750	32.81844	8.20461
post test score	Experimental group	18	95.5833	10.76248	2.53674
	Control group	16	69.8125	14.30836	3.57709

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
pretest score	Equal variances assumed	4.100	.051	1.026	32	.313	9.38889	9.15385	-9.25689	28.03467
	Equal variances not assumed			.997	23.930	.329	9.38889	9.42040	-10.05686	28.83464
post test score	Equal variances assumed	1.904	.177	5.976	32	.000	25.77083	4.31207	16.98743	34.55424
	Equal variances not assumed			5.877	27.700	.000	25.77083	4.38527	16.78362	34.75805

In the table of Levene's Test for Equality of variances, it can be seen that in pre-test, both groups have the same variance that is $0.313 > \alpha (0.05)$. The scores in experimental group do not vary too much more than the score in the control group. It means that the variability in the two conditions is not significantly different. The sig. (2-Tailed) value in the table is 0.000. This value is less than 0.05. This can be concluded that there is a statistically significant different between the mean errors of the post test of the experimental group after being treated by using making a list and outline technique.

This research provided two strategies to treat the students. They were reading and free writing to control group. Wells in Brizee (2009) stated that those strategies to improve students' writing skills but it is opposite with the result of this study. Furthermore, making outline to experimental group was treated to experimental group. According to Houge (1995, p.34), outline is a plan for writing assignment. That means before you write, you shall plan what you are going to write. An outline helps you organize your ideas and put them in logical order. The idea is supported by Siahaan (2007) a paragraph outline is the blue print of the paragraph. It must be written as simple as possible. It can be concluded that outline is the plan of writing some ideas by using logical order.

1. Result of the previous research

Researcher	Year	Title of the research	Result
Sattayatham and Ratanapinyowong	2008	Analysis of Errors in Paragraph Writing in English by First Year Medical Students from the Four Medical School at Mahidol University	Students had errors in standard format of paragraph writing
Nguyen Van Phuong	2011	An Error Analysis of English Paragraphs written by students at Phu Cat 3 High School in Binh Province: A Discourse Analysis Perspective	The errors belong to some categories: morphological errors, lexical errors, syntactic errors, and mechanical errors

Abboodi Ali	2011	Iraqi EFL Learners at Department of English at College of Arts at University of Baghdad	most of EFL learners had difficulty in paragraph writing especially in the use of coherent sentences and certain grammatical structures of department of English at College of Arts at University of Baghdad
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2. The differences and similarities

Compared to the previous studies, this research has similarities as well as differences. The similarity between the previous studies and this research can be concluded as follow. The similarities between Sattayatatham and Ratanapinyowong and also Nguyen Van Phuong’s research and this research lies on the purpose to find out the types of errors in paragraph writing. The difference lies on the object of the research. Sattayatatham and Ratanapinyowong did a research on writing an opinion paragraph in English on medical ethics based on a reading passage chosen from the internet and Nguyen Van Phuong did a research on writing English paragraphs by students at Phu Cat 3 High School in Binh Province: A Discourse Analysis Perspective while this research focuses on the paragraphs that are parts of essays.

The similarity between Abboodi Ali’s research and this research lies on the purpose to find out the errors most commonly made by the students in paragraph writing. The difference lies on the object of the research. Abboodi Ali did a research on writing one paragraph at three levels of difficulty (simple, intermediate, and advanced) in three parts respectively while this research focuses on the paragraph that contains in the essay.

After comparing and contrasting the result of the previous research and the present research, it can be concluded that there are still some kinds of errors in terms of writing paragraphs that seem to be neglected and need special strategy to reduce the errors.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

There are two major problems that students encounter in writing paragraphs that are parts of essays. They are error in paragraph unity and error in paragraph development. Making list and using outline are proper teaching writing strategy developed to help students reduce error in paragraph unity and error in paragraph development. Using outline is effective used to develop students' writing skill.

Because writing a single paragraph that stands alone is not as simple as writing a paragraph that is a part from a longer piece of writing, it is suggested to the teacher to apply the strategy of making a list and outline in teaching writing. Special for the students, in order to avoid the errors in writing a longer piece of writing it is important to do these techniques first. For further researcher in the same field, other research should be conducted to reduce the other two paragraph errors.

The result of this study can be benefit for teaching and learning English especially in teaching writing. The lecturer can apply the strategy to teach students how to make a good paragraph in essay. And that strategy is making outline.

BIO-PROFILE

Judith Ratu T.A was born in Pasele, Toraja Utara on June 20, 1987. For this moment, she is teaching at English Department of Education and Teacher Training of Christian University of Indonesia Toraja (UKI TORAJA) . She has been teaching there for 8 years. Sometimes, she teaches Phonology and Pronunciation.

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