

THE ABILITY OF THE FOURTH SEMESTER ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS OF FKIP UR IN WRITING A PERSUASIVE ESSAY

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Abstract. This research based on the students difficulty found in essay writing in English study program of FKIP UR when she studied in her writing subject. The purpose of this research is to describe the student's ability in writing persuasive essay and to find out the aspects of a persuasive essay that is the most difficult and the easiest for the students. The result of the research showed that, the most difficult aspects is grammar/spelling where the students got 59,49 which is the lowest score, and the easiest is capitalization/punctuation, which is 69,91 as the highest score. The students still get low score in Grammar/ Spelling even though they have already studied about grammar. Moreover, from the data of each student scores, the writer found that the students got average to good, that is 64,81. So the ability of the fourth semester English Department student of FKIP UR in writing a persuasive essay still needs to improve.

Keywords: Ability, Writing, Essay, Persuasive Essay

INTRODUCTION

According to the fourth semester students at English Study Program, writing is more difficult than other skills, especially essay writing. As the writer interviewed students of the sixth semester students, and students of the eighth semester, about 40% of them are confused in writing persuasive essay, 20 % of them still confused what persuasive essay really is, and 20% of them still have difficulty in tailoring the paragraph in unity and coherence. The problems of the fourth semester students of 2009 English study program FKIP UNRI that they were difficult to create good thesis statement and to express their ideas into good essay writing. It is a fact that writing skill is more difficult than other English skills as Heaton (1991) states that writing skill is complex and difficult to teach. When the writer shares the ideas in writing form, all aspects of writing should be included in that writing. The writer has to be able to decide or choose what aspects should be included in the writing. Those aspects have to be in the correct form and order. On the other hand, Bambang (1997) states that writing is the most complicated one among other language skills because learners are expected to be able to master the components of writing and express their ideas clearly and efficiently in written form. In writing, the students develop their thoughts based on the purpose of writing. Moreover, writing encourages students to explore many aspects in language learning process. Raimes in Yusdi (1983) states that writing help students to learn for some reasons: writing reinforces grammatical structures, idioms and vocabularies;

when the students write, they also have chance to be adventurous with the language, to go beyond what they have just learned to say; when the students write, they necessarily become very involved with the new language. On the contrary, many linguists defined writing as a difficult activity. Angelo in Khairiyani (2010) states that writing is a form of thinking, but it is thinking for a particular audience, and for a particular occasion. He says that writing can help someone to think critically. It enables him or her to perceive relationships, to deepen perception, and to solve problems. He also adds that writing can help one to discover what someone really thinks and feels about people, ideas, issues, and events only in the actual process of writing. So, writing is a process of communication which uses conventional system to convey the meaning to the reader.

One purpose of writing is to persuade. Simmons (1976) defines persuasion as an action to influence the reader in preferred ways. In addition, he says that persuasion is an act of human communication; whether verbal or nonverbal, oral or written, or via indirect medium such as television. Therefore, writing can be adopted as communication to persuade. Meanwhile experts propose that persuasive writing has some values for students. First, students can learn how to persuade people in their life and work in the future. Second, they can learn how to give evidences and examples of an issue in their life communication with others. Last, persuasive writing is important when they are being a writer.

Attempting to influence is done in persuasion. Influence refers to alter human behavior in preferred ways. Here, persuasion is manipulative of acts, but it also leaves receivers with the perception of choice. This is the effort to change the readers' thought and feelings. It is an effect that may be produced by messages, whether intended or not. Therefore, persuasion is acts of human communication to invite, whether verbal or non-verbal, oral or written, explicit as a process of attempting to influence by leaving receivers with the perception of choice. The purpose is to change attitude of the receivers by proposing belief and value. According to Angelo (1980) argumentation is the giving of reasons to support the truth or falsity of a proposition. Proposition is a statement upon which an argument is based from which a conclusion is drawn. It is statement that the truth can be proved or rejected because of the supporting reason or related evidence. The statement can be accepted if the supporting statement is true and rejected if the supporting statement is false. Proposition is always statement. But not all statements are proposition. Only declarative statement is proposition (Keraf, 1985).

Verderbar (2006) in Amminatuzzuhriya (2007) classifies three kinds of proposition in persuasion: (1) Proposition of facts: A statement designed to convince the reader or the audience that something is true or is not true, exist, or happen; (2) Proposition of value: A statement designed to convince the reader or the audience that something is good, bad, desirable, undesirable, sound

beneficial, important, or unimportant; (3) Proposition of policy: A statement designed to convince the readers or they should take a specific course. Three different mode statements above could not be believed before supported by evidence. Relevant evidence is needed to prove the truth in the effort of persuading the readers. Such attempting to prove the truth is termed as reasoning. It is the chance to convince the readers that the declarative statements are true.

Moreover Bossone (1977) states that in trying to influence someone, we should consider some points. They are: **Audience**. Whom you are trying to persuades. Once you know your audience, you will find it easy to make your audience accept your essay; **Tone**. Tone means the way in which you express yourself—the words you use and how you use them. You have to decide which kind of tone would be most helpful in convincing the people you are trying to persuade. For example, if you were writing to convince a friend to think as you do, your tone would not be as formal as it would be if you were writing to someone else; **Evidence**. You should support your position with good reasons that are arranged in logical order. You should think your position so that you can present it in a way that will make sense to other people. Moreover, you should give enough evidence; **Clear and Convincing Expression**. You have to express in a clear convincing manner. The readers can follow your points easily without being interrupted by mistake you have made in grammar, punctuation, mechanics, and spelling.

Meanwhile, (Bossone, 1977) States that persuasive essays express an opinion or belief held by the writer. The purpose of the writer is to persuade the reader to share this opinion or belief. In writing a persuasive essay, the writer cannot just tell the reader to do what she/he wants or believe what she/he believes. The writer must use logic to convince the readers. She/ he must give reasons, and must support her/his belief or opinion with example and evidence.

In addition, Bossone suggests major elements such as: (a) Audience: Whom you are trying to persuades. Once you know your audience, you will find it easy to make your audience accept your essay; (b) Tone: Tone means the way in which you express yourself—the words you use and how you use them. You have to decide which kind of tone would be most helpful in convincing the people you are trying to persuade. For example, if you were writing to convince a friend to think as you do, your tone would not be as formal as it would be if you were writing to someone else; (c) Evidence: You should support your position with good reasons that are arranged in logical order. You should think your position so that you can present it in a way that will make sense to other people. Moreover, you should give enough evidence; (d) Clear and Convincing Expression: You have to express in a clear convincing manner. The readers can follow your points easily without being interrupted by mistake you have made in grammar, punctuation, mechanics, and spelling.

According to Syafi'i.cs, (2007), the purposes of persuasive essay are: to present an opinion to the reader, to explain, clarify, and illustrate that opinion, to persuade the reader that your opinion is valid, to move the reader to action, to convince the reader that your opinion is correct or, for a hostile audience, to persuade the reader that your opinion is at least worth considering.

As the other types of writing, persuasive essay has language features such as, focus an generic human and non human, use of mental processes, material processes, rational processes, use of simple present tense. Moreover, persuasive essay has generic structure, such as, focus, where the topic/subject established by the writer in response to the writing task, organization, refers to the progression, relatedness, and completeness of ideas, support and elaboration, that refers to the the extension and development of the topic/subject, style is the control of language that is appropriate to the purpose, audience, and context of the writing task, and conventions that involves to correctness in sentence formation, usage, and mechanics.

There are some steps that the writer considered before writing an essay: (1) Identify the main idea or point of view. The purpose will be to persuade the audience to accept this idea or point of view; (2) Identify the audience. To write an effective persuasive essay, try to understand the audience. For example, are our readers undecided about our issue? Or are our readers hostile to our point of view? ; (3) Considering our audience, identify the strongest supporting points for our persuasion; (4) Identify the most significant opposing view. Explaining and then refuting the opposing view strengthens the credibility and scope of our essay. (<http://www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us/yorba/persuasivewriting.html>).

Moreover, in organizing persuasive essay, the writer writes introductory paragraph, body paragraphs, and concluding paragraph. The introduction has a "hook or grabber" to catch the reader's attention. Some "grabbers" include: (a) Opening with an unusual detail, for example: Manitoba, because of its cold climate, is not thought of as a great place to be a reptile. Actually, it has the largest seasonal congregation of garter snakes in the world! (b) Opening with a strong statement, for example: Cigarettes are the number one cause of lighter sales in Canada!; (c) Opening with a Quotation, for example: Elbert Hubbard once said, "Truth is stronger than fiction." ; (d) Opening with an Anecdote. An anecdote can provide an amusing and attention-getting opening if it is short and to the point; (e) Opening with a Statistic or Fact. Sometimes a statistic or fact will add emphasis or interest to your topic. It may be wise to include the item's authoritative source. The introduction should also include a thesis or focus statement. There are three objectives of a thesis statement: (1) It tells the reader the specific topic of your essay, (2) It imposes manageable limits on that topic, (3) It suggests the organization of your paper. Through the thesis, you should say to the reader: "I've thought about this topic, I know what I believe about it, and I know how to organize it."

The writer then provides evidence to support the opinion offered in the thesis statement in the introduction. The body should consist of at least three paragraphs. Each paragraph is based on a solid reason to back your thesis statement. Since almost all issues have sound arguments on both sides of the question, a good persuasive writer tries to anticipate opposing viewpoints and provide counter-arguments along with the main points in the essay. One of the three paragraphs should be used to discuss opposing viewpoints and your counter-argument.

A piece of persuasive writing usually ends by summarizing the most important details of the argument and stating once again what the reader is to believe or do. In the conclusion, The writer could do the followings: (1) Restate the thesis or focus the statement, (2) Summarize the main points: The conclusion enables your reader to recall the main points of your position. In order to do this you can paraphrase the main points of your argument, (3) Write a personal comment or call for action, by applying one of the following:

- With a Prediction: This can be used with a narrative or a cause and effect discussion. The conclusion may suggest or predict what the results may or may not be in the situation discussed or in similar situations.
- With a Question: Closing with a question lets your readers make their own predictions, draw their own conclusions.
- With Recommendations: A recommendations closing is one that stresses the actions or remedies that should be taken.
- With a Quotation: Since a quotation may summarize, predict, question, or call for action, you may use a quotation within a conclusion for nearly any kind of paper.

[\(http://www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us/yorba/persuasive-writing.html\)](http://www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us/yorba/persuasive-writing.html)

The explanations above caused the writer tried to investigate the students' persuasive writing that is taught by using process approach. Based on Trupe (2001), in the process approach of teaching writing the teacher lets the students do their writing in enough time so that they can think their topic well, and encourage them to use prewriting before they start to write in order to make them more understand about their topic then the teacher gives feedback to the students' writing.

METHODOLOGY

This research is a descriptive study, which has only one variable. Gay (1987:11) stated that the description research is collecting the data to test the hypothesis or to answer the question concerning the current status of the subject of the study. In this case, the researcher wants to describe the fourth semester students' ability of FKIP UR in writing persuasive essay. The specific objective of this research was to know the students ability in writing persuasive essay. This research was conducted in FKIP UR on the fourth semester students from April-June 2010. The population of this study is the fourth semester students of FKIP UR in 2008/2009 academic years. They have two classes with 70

students. The reason for choosing the fourth semester students as the subject of this research is those students have already taken writing I, II, and III. They have already learned about argumentation which it could develop essay to persuade. It means they have already understood how to write persuasive essay. In this research, the writer would analyze students' persuasive writing who are taught using process approach, there are 46 students but there were 36 students who did the test. The writer decided to use all the population as the sample in this research. The technique of collecting the data plays an important role in conducting a research. In getting the data, the writer uses the writing test as the instrument in order to find out the students' ability in writing persuasive essay. The test is administered to the fourth semester students of English study program FKIP-UR. The writer asked the students to write a persuasive essay based on the titles given. The writer gave a writing test to the sample students. Then, the writer gave them time about 90 minutes. The students' writing test was scored based on components of writing. After collecting the data, the writing sheets would be scored. In scoring the students' composition, the writer would use the scoring based on Orlace Corporation (2007). It can be seen as follow:

Table 1. Marking Criteria for Writing a Persuasive Essay

The Components of Persuasive Writing	The Score Range
A. Introduction/Proposition (organization)	4 : 3 : 2 : 1
B. Sequencing/Reasoning(Organization)	4 : 3 : 2 : 1
C. Focus on Topic (Content)	4 : 3 : 2 : 1
D. Conclusion/Suggestion (Organization)	4 : 3 : 2 : 1
E. Grammar/Spelling (Convention)	4 : 3 : 2 : 1
F. Capitalization & Punctuation (Convention)	4 : 3 : 2 : 1

Orlace Corporation, 2007. (www.think.com/iste/market/docs/persuasive_paragraph_rubric)

To analyze the level of students' writing ability, the writer uses the following formula:

$$\text{Total Score (TS)} = I + S + FT + C + GS + CP$$

Where, I = students' ability in Introduction/Proposition (organization)

S = students' ability in Sequencing/Reasoning (Organization)

FT = students' ability in Focus on Topic (Content)

C = students' ability in Conclusion/Suggestion (Organization)

GS = students' ability in Grammar/Spelling (Convention)

CP = students' ability in Capitalization & Punctuation (Convention)

To classify the respondents' score the writer used Harris' score classification, and the

formula that the writer used is Hatch and Farhady's formula.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research was conducted to find out how good are the Fourth Semester Students of the English Study Program of FKIP-UR in Writing Persuasive Essay. For the research purpose, there were 36 students who did test as the data. The writer gave a writing test for the students. Then, the students' writing was scored by using analytic method which was quoted from Orlace Corporation (2007). The aspects of writing which were evaluated, were Introduction/Proposition (organization), Sequencing/Reasoning (Organization), Focus on Topic (Content), Conclusion/Suggestion (Organization), Grammar/Spelling (Convention), and Capitalization & Punctuation (Convention). Azhar et al (2004:2) say that the test in the form of essay needs two or more raters. In this case, the writer chose three raters; they are Dahnilsyah, SS.Dipl.Appl, MA (English Lecturer of Riau University), Kurnia Yanti, S.Pd (English Lecturer of UIN SUSKA), and Siti Khadijah, S.Pd (English Teacher of SMK Labor).

The students' writing ability are obtained from the students' score in writing persuasive essay as tested and evaluated by three raters. The score range among 1-4. After getting the score of the students from the raters, the writer classified the students' score based on each component of writing as shown in the following tables:

Table 1. The Students' Scores on the Introduction/Proposition Aspect

The Score Range	The Aspects of Writing Evaluated (Introduction/Proposition)					
	Rater I		Rater II		Rater III	
	Frequenc	%	Frequenc	%	Frequenc	%
4	2	5,6	6	16,7	3	8,3
3	21	58,3	12	33,3	15	41,7
2	13	36,1	13	36,1	16	44,4
1	0	0,0	5	13,9	2	5,6

There were 36 students who took the writing test. By looking at the result of Introduction/Proposition in table 1, Based on rater 1 there are 2 students (5,6%) who got point 4,21 students (58,3%) who got point 3, 13 students (36,1%) who got point 2, and there is no student who got

point 1. Based on Rater 2, there are 6 students (16,7%) who got point 4, 12 students (33,3%) who got point 3, 13 students (36,1%) who got point 2, and 5 students (13,9%) who got point 1. And, based on rater 3, there are 3 students (8,3%) who got point 4, 15 students (41,7%) who got point 3, 16 students (44,4%) who got point 2, and 2 students (5,6%) who got point 1.

Table 2. The Students' Scores on the Sequencing/Reasoning Aspect

The Score Range	The Aspects of Writing Evaluated (Sequencing/Reasoning)					
	Rater I		Rater II		Rater III	
	Frequenc y	%	Frequenc y	%	Frequenc y	%
4	1	2,8	5	13,9	3	8,3
3	20	55,6	10	27,8	14	38,9
2	14	38,9	18	50,0	18	50,0
1	1	2,8	3	8,3	1	2,8

Based on table 2, the result of Sequencing/Reasoning can be seen that based on rater 1 there are 1 students (2,8%) who got point 4, 20 students (55,6%) who got point 3, 14 students (38,9%) who got point 2, and 1 students (2,8%) who got point 1. Based on Rater 2, there are 5 students (13,9%) who got point 4, 10 students (27,8%) who got point 3, 18 students (50,0%) who got point 2, and 3 students (8,3%) who got point 1. And, based on rater 3, there are 3 students (8,3%) who got point 4, 14 students (38,9%) who got point 3, 18 students (50,0%) who got point 2, and 1 students (2,8%) who got point 1.

Table 3. The Students' Scores on the Focus on Topic Aspect

The Score Range	The Aspects of Writing Evaluated (Focus on Topic)					
	Rater I		Rater II		Rater III	
	Frequenc y	%	Frequenc y	%	Frequenc y	%
4	1	2,8	9	25,0	2	5,6
3	21	58,3	13	36,1	16	44,4
2	14	38,9	11	30,6	16	44,4
1	0	0,0	3	8,3	2	5,6

From the table above, we can see that the result of Focus on Topic based on rater 1 there are 1 students (2,8%) who got point 4, 21 students (58,3%) who got point 3, 14 students (38,9%) who got point 2, and no one student who got point 1. Based on Rater 2, there are 9 students (25,0%) who got point 4, 13 students (36,1%) who got point 3, 11 students (30,6%) who got point 2, and 3 students (8,3%) who got point 1. And, based on rater 3, there are 2 students (5,6%) who got point 4, 16 students (44,4%) who got point 3, 16 students (44,4%) who got point 2, and 2 students (5,6%) who got point 1.

Table 4. The Students' Scores on the Conclusion/Suggestion Aspect

The Score Range	The Aspects of Writing Evaluated (Conclusion/Suggestion)					
	Rater I		Rater II		Rater III	
	Frequenc y	%	Frequenc y	%	Frequenc y	%
4	1	2,8	8	22,2	2	5,6
3	22	61,1	16	44,4	13	36,1
2	13	36,1	8	22,2	20	55,6
1	0	0,0	4	11,1	1	2,8

In Table 4, on Conclusion/Suggestion aspects, Based on rater 1 there are 1 students (2,8%) who got point 4, 22 students (61,1%) who got point 3, 13 students (36,1%) who got point 2, and there is no students who got point 1. Based on Rater 2, there are 8 students (22,2%) who got point 4, 16 students (44,4%) who got point 3, 8 students (22,2%) who got point 2, and 4 students (11,1%) who got point 1. And, based on rater 3, there are 2 students (5,6%) who got point 4, 13 students (36,1%) who got point 3, 20 students (55,6%) who got point 2, and 1 student (2,8%) who got point 1.

Table 5. The Students' Scores on the Grammar/Spelling Aspect

The Score	The Aspects of Writing Evaluated (Grammar/Spelling)		
	Rater I	Rater II	Rater III

Range	Frequenc y	%	Frequenc y	%	Frequenc y	%
4	1	2,8	0	0,0	2	5,6
3	12	33,3	8	22,2	17	47,2
2	23	63,9	27	75,0	16	44,4
1	0	0,0	1	2,8	1	2,8

From table 5, we can see that based on rater 1, on Grammar/Spelling aspects, there are 1 students (2,8%) who got point 4, 12 students (33,3%) who got point 3, 23 students (63,9%) who got point 2, and there is no student who got point 1. Based on Rater 2, no one student who got point 4, 8 students (22,2%) who got point 3, 27 students (75,0%) who got point 2, and 1 students (2,8%) who got point 1. And, based on rater 3, there are 2 students (5,6%) who got point 4, 17 students (47,2%) who got point 3, 16 students (44,4%) who got point 2, and 1 students (2,8%) who got point 1.

Table 6. The Students' Scores on the Capitalization/Punctuation Aspect

The Score Range	The Aspects of Writing Evaluated (Capitalization/Punctuation)					
	Rater I		Rater II		Rater III	
	Frequenc y	%	Frequenc y	%	Frequenc y	%
4	1	2,8	3	8,3	5	13,9
3	23	63,9	17	47,2	29	80,6
2	12	33,3	15	41,7	2	5,6
1	0	0,0	1	2,8	0	0,0

From table 6, we can see that based on rater 1, on Capitalization & Punctuation aspects, there are 1 students (2,8%) who got point 4, 23 students (63,9%) who got point 3, 12 students (33,3%) who got point 2, and there is no student who got point 1. Based on Rater 2, there are 3 students (8,3%) who got point 4, 17 students (47,2%) who got point 3, 15 students (41,7%) who got point 2, and 1 students (2,8%) who got point 1. And, based on rater 3, there are 5 students (13,9%) who got point 4, 29 students (80,6%) who got point 3, 2 students (5,6%) who got point 2, and there is no student who got point 1.

Table 7. The Total Score of each aspect of writing based on 3 raters

The Aspects of Writing	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3	The Average Score of the Three Raters
Introduction/Proposition	67,36	63,19	63,19	64,58
Sequencing/ Reasoning	64,58	61,81	63,19	63,19
Focus on Topic	65,97	69,44	62,50	65,97

Conclusion/ Suggestion	66,67	69,44	61,11	65,74
Grammar/ Spelling	59,72	54,86	63,89	59,49
Capitalization/ Punctuation	67,36	65,28	77,08	69,91

From the table above, we can see the average score of each aspects of writing based on the three raters. On the Introduction/Proposition aspects, the average score is 64,58. Moreover, on the Sequencing/Reasoning aspect, the average score is 63,19. On the Focus on Topic aspect, the average score is 65,97. On the Conclusion/Suggestion aspect, the average score is 65,74. Then on the Grammar/Spelling aspect, the average score is 59,49. And the last, for Capitalization & Punctuation aspect, the average score is 69,91. Therefore, we can see that the aspect of writing that is the most difficult for students is grammar/ spelling. It is proven by the average score of 59,49 which is the lowest one. Then for the easiest one for students to do is in the aspect of capitalization/ punctuation, which the average score is 69,91.

After analyzing the data, the writer made the percentage of students' ability in writing as the following table:

Table 8. The Percentage of Students' Ability in Writing Test

No	Score	Ability Level	R1		R2		R3	
			Frequenc y	%	Frequenc y	%	Frequenc y	%
1	80-100	Good to Excellent	1	2,778	6	16,67	4	11,11
2	60-79	Average to Good	25	69,44	13	36,11	15	41,67
3	50-59	Poor to Average	9	25	12	33,33	15	41,67
4	0-49	Poor	1	2,778	5	13,89	2	5,556
Total			36	100	36	100	36	100

Table 9. The Students' Score and their Categories in Writing Persuasive Essay

Rater	Average	Ability Level
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I	65,28	Average to Good
II	64,00	Average to Good
III	65,16	Average to Good
Total	194,44	
Average	64,81	Average to Good

From the table above, we can see that the students' score and ability level in writing based on the three raters. The table shows that the average score of the students based on the first rater is 65,28, which is considered as Average to Good. The average score of the students based on second rater is 64,00, which is considered as Average to Good. And, the average score of the students based on third rater is 65,16, which is considered as Average to Good. The average score of the three raters is 64,81, which is considered as Average to Good.

Based on the findings and the presentation of the data above, the writer found that the ability of the fourth semester students of Riau University in writing persuasive essay is Average to Good. It is proven by the mean score of the students' ability that is 64,81 (see table 9), which is considered as Average to Good.

Furthermore, from the six aspects of writing evaluated, the writer found that the highest mean score obtained by the students in writing persuasive essay is capitalization/punctuation aspect which is 69,91. It means that they have good ability in writing, especially in capitalization/punctuation aspect although they still make some lack of capitalization/punctuation. However, the students got the lowest average score on grammar/spelling aspect that is 59,49. It means that their writing is lack of grammar/spelling in writing persuasive essay.

The research findings above proved that the teaching learning proces of writing subject need teaching strategy for improving/increasing the students' essay writing. Besides, students should develop their grammar their selves. Doing practices or exercises individually or in group, outside of class would be helpfull.

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