

AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' ABILITY IN WRITING CAUSE AND EFFECT ESSAY AT SMAN 1 KEDIRI

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| SUBMISSION TRACK | A B S T R A C T |
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| Submitted : 24 February 2022 Accepted : 10 March 2022 Published : 18 March 2022 | This study aims to find the ability, the problems as well as how they solve them in writing cause and effect essay. This research used descriptive qualitative. The data were obtained by analyzing the students' essay writing based on Jacobs et al, assessing rubric instrument, calculating questionnaire from 32 respondents, and transcribing interview from the English teacher. The subject is the students of eleventh-grade SMAN 1 Kediri. The result showed that the ability of students in writing cause and effect classified as "Good" based on the means score of the students' cause and effect essay. It was found twelve students had problem in language use, seven students had problem in mechanics, there were six students had problem in content, five students had problem in organization and two students had problem in vocabulary. Also, there were three kinds of solutions offered by the students such as using internet to access various source, using dictionary, and practice writing more. |
| KEYWORDS | Writing Ability, Cause and Effect Essay |
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Introduction

Writing skill is considered as a complex language skill because students need to not only acquire some components to be able to write well, those components are vocabulary and grammatical mastery. (Huda, 2019). Students should have enough writing practices to acquire this skill. The following practices are intended to stimulate the skill in writing and expressing ideas in a good paragraph. (Kartawijaya, 2018) In order to write correctly, the students have to understand how to produce a good writing. It deals with the students' ability in understanding every component of writing, For instance: how to organize the essay writing, how to use the correct grammar and sentence structure when writing, how the content is, how to use the appropriate mechanics ways and how to use the vocabulary correctly of the writing (Gusman, Mukhiyar & Kusni, 2014).

The first step is to select the topic, organize the structural framework, express the theories, ideas, opinions and form them into a text or essay for the readers that is understandable and readable. Therefore, students should learn and master English because they have many benefits for students' present and future lives. Mastering English helps you increase your educational opportunities, participate in discussion, improve the quality of life by providing job opportunities. (Fareed, Ashraf, & Bilal, 2016). In this case, the researcher did the preliminary and asked the teacher related to writing ability. It was found that the students' ability in writing was lacking because they still made a lot of errors in their writing. The students could not write correctly in English because they did not understand the theory. Based on the teacher, they had problems mostly in using the correct grammar and sentence structure.

Cause and effect essay focuses on why or how things happen and what the results or consequences are (Julie Robitaille, 2007). Cause and effect are one of essays in which students need to correlate two or more variables in cause, effect, or both patterns. As any other text, cause and effect essay involves choosing topic and gathering ideas related to the topic. It also requires students to use correct grammar and suitable vocabulary in order

to deliver their ideas clearly. More importantly, students need to pay attention to its structure and purpose thus their essay has clear direction. In writing essay, students need to develop their thesis statement through some orderly paragraphs. Moreover, each paragraph has to have clear main idea and supporting ideas.

Although that writing essay is important and needed in school, essay written by students is still categorized as average. A study showed that students' ability to write cause and effect by using the theory of block organization was average. This study assessed the essay using Jacob's (1981) scoring rubric, which consist of five aspects, namely content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics (Ningsih, Nurcholis & Saputra, 2020). The other study aimed to find out the ability of Students in writing cause and effect had also been done (Rozalinda, Rozimela, & Anwar, 2020). The researcher scored the essay based on its text structure, namely introductory, body, and the last is concluding paragraph. The result showed that the students' ability in writing introductory paragraph was categorized as good, the body paragraph was categorized as poor, and the concluding paragraph was categorized as good.

This study aimed to describe the students of SMAN 1 Kediri abilities in writing cause and effect. It also describes the problems faced by eleventh grade of SMAN 1 Kediri in writing cause and effect, and the solution to solve the case.

Research Method

This research used descriptive qualitative as the method to describe and interpret the data. The descriptive method was implemented because the data analysis was presented descriptively. This method is appropriate since the researcher analyzed the ability of the students in writing cause and effect essay, found out problems faced by students, and the solutions to overcome their problems in writing cause and effect essay. The subject was on eleventh grade students of SMAN 1 Kediri. The researcher chose XI MIPA D because the teacher has given them a task to write cause and effect essay. The subject consisted of 36 students in one class. Instrument is the tool used to collect the data (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012). The instruments used in this study is in form of documentation and questionnaire.

The researcher collected the result of students' writing. The researcher used questionnaire to find students' problems in writing cause and effect. The researcher adapted 20 questions from English as a Second Language Program (ESLP) "Self - Assessment of English Writing Skills and Use of Writing Strategies" of Marquette University (2008). the questionnaire consists of five aspects, including content, organization, language use, vocabulary, and mechanics. The Questionnaire was taken from Internet site of Marquette University. Through this Questionnaire, the researcher attempted to gain the data on the problem they faced in writing cause and effect essay. Questionnaire consists of five scales' those are: 1 described as strongly disagree up to 5 which indicates strongly agree. The second section was an open-ended question which consisted of 1 question. The researcher used one directly interview. The interview of this direct face to face means as a data collection process in which the researcher asks questions and records the students' answers from only a participant. The researcher had 5 questions related to the solution to overcome the students' problem of writing cause and effect.

The researcher used triangulation to check the validity. The researcher analyzed the ability of students in writing cause and effect essay by using inter rater reliability after the researcher collected the students' cause and effect essay from the teacher. In this

research, the researcher was the first rater, and the English teacher was the rater 2. The researcher used scoring rubric to evaluate students' ability in writing cause and effect essay. The researcher used two scorers to score the writing ability of the students. Then, the researcher calculated the coefficient of reliability of those scores using SPSS Pearson Product Moment. Then in interpreting the correlation between scores from scorer 1 and scorer 2, the researcher used the correlation coefficient table suggested by Sudijono (2010).

The procedure of data analysis was described as follows: The researcher used Jacobs' et al. (1981) assessment rubric instrument in analyzing students' ability in writing cause and effect essay. After that, the researcher categorized the quality of the students' essay based on the following table from Depdikbud (2009). The researcher identified whether the students have problem in writing or not based on the following criteria (Jacobs' et al., 1981):

| No. | Classification | Score |
|-----|----------------|----------|
| 1 | Excellent | 96 – 100 |
| 2 | Very Good | 86 – 95 |
| 3 | Good | 76 - 85 |
| 4 | Fairly Good | 66 – 75 |
| 5 | Fairly | 56 – 65 |
| 6 | Poor | 36 – 55 |
| 7 | Very Poor | 0 – 35 |

Table 1. Students' Ability Categories

This study assessed the essay using Jacob's (1981) scoring rubric, which consist of five aspects, namely content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics (Ningsih, Nurcholis & Saputra, 2020). The other study aimed to find the ability of the students at English Department in writing cause and effect had also been done (Rozalinda, Rozimela, & Anwar, 2020).

Result and Discussion

1. The Eleventh Grade Students' Writing Ability of Cause-and-Effect Essay.

| No. | Identification of errors | Correct sentences |
|-----|---|---|
| 1. | They <u>bulldoze</u> other students in school by <u>utilizing</u> intimidation and verbal abuse. (Student 21's Essay) | They <u>bully</u> other students in school by <u>using</u> intimidation and verbal abuse. |
| 2. | Some parents <u>bring up</u> children by <u>availing</u> to them too much power (Student 21's Essay) | Some parents <u>raise</u> children by <u>giving</u> them too much power |
| 3. | They will be <u>in sleep condition</u> (Student 10's Essay) | They will be <u>sleepy</u> |
| 4. | This can make bullying <u>more likely</u> (Student 6's Essay) | This can make bullying <u>worse</u> |
| 5. | Online learning also makes students more <u>economical</u> (Student 17's Essay) | Online learning also makes students more <u>economically efficient</u> |
| 6. | They don't <u>have</u> any attention at home | They don't <u>get</u> any attention at home |

| (Student 28's Essay) | | (Student 31's Essay) |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| 7. | They will not be okay with this <u>pandemic behaviors</u> | They will not be okay with this <u>health protocols</u> |

Table 2. Students' Errors in Vocabulary

The result of the students' writing has been explained that one class consisted of 36 students but only 32 students' essays were analyzed because the other 4 students' essays were copying from the internet. The mean score of the students' cause and effect essay is 79.38. Based on the score classification of Students' abilities categories by Depdikbud (2009), this score is classified as "Good". There are eight students in fairly good grade, twenty students in good grade and four students in very good grade.

The researcher noticed, while analyzing the essays, that the writing of the students was not organized. In organization, most of the students were in good to fair criteria. There was no specific thesis statement in most of the essays and if there was a thesis statement in some of the essays, no supporting information was provided. The students should refer to each question form each topic of a sentence; however, the thesis statement was not placed on the opening paragraph therefore the ideas in every paragraph did not link each other. Students wrote and constructed a paragraph with some random information on the topic.

The students' ability in organization were in average to very good criteria. The students did not begin writing a paragraph with indented line. The length of paragraphs was not sufficient since there were actually too many sentences were written, making it too long and unreadable and some of them wrote incomplete sentences which cannot make sense in the paragraph. On the other hand, some of the students only wrote one sentence for a paragraph which did not meet the standard required number of sentences in each paragraph.

In addition, another problem was vocabulary. In vocabulary, the students were in fair to very good criteria. The students had difficulties when selecting the correct word for certain context. The composition of the students was still limited in the aspect of vocabulary, word choice was often incorrect and therefore the meaning was obscured. The students were then encouraged to use more specific academic word choice to convey the intention on their sentences.

| No. | Error Classification | Identification of errors | Correct sentences |
|------------|-----------------------------|---|---|
| 1. | Singular/Plural | There are a lot of <u>difference</u> (Student 22's Essay) | There are a lot of <u>differences</u> |
| 2. | | Using media has many <u>benefit</u> (Student 10's Essay) | Using media has many <u>benefits</u> |
| 3. | | They <u>will not having</u> time for outdoor activities (Student 10's Essay) | They <u>will not have</u> time for outdoor activities |
| 4. | Verb Tense | Everyone is unable <u>to doing</u> their normal activities and <u>must doing</u> all activities from home (Student 7's Essay) | Everyone is unable <u>to do</u> their normal activities and <u>must do</u> all activities from home |

| | | | |
|-----|-------------------------------|---|--|
| 5. | Subject-Verb Agreement | <u>People</u> wants attention (Student 22's Essay) | <u>People</u> want attention |
| 6. | | <u>They</u> feels important so that they must always be cared for (Student 16's Essay) | <u>They</u> feel important so that they must always be cared for |
| 7. | Preposition | The bully acts as an escape <u>in</u> the home environment that makes him helpless (Student 13's Essay) | The bully acts as an escape <u>from</u> the home environment that makes him helpless |
| 8. | | Social media is a computer based netword that enables people to interact with families <u>through on</u> internet (Student 6's Essay) | Social media is a computer based netword that enables people to interact with families <u>through</u> internet |
| 9. | Word Order | Their brains <u>also will</u> not work effectively (Student 10's Essay) | Their brains <u>will also</u> not work effectively |
| 10. | Article | They are going to think that it is <u>a</u> acceptable behavior (Student 1's Essay) | They are going to think that it is <u>an</u> acceptable behavior |

Table 3. Students' Errors in Language Use

In language use, it was said that they were in fair to very good criteria. There were still major problems in verb tense, singular/plural, subject-verb agreement, preposition word order, article and the meaning confused or obscured. The assessment rubric proves that almost all students received a good to poor criteria in mechanics. Usually, after an introductory word or sentence, comma was not placed by the students. Most participants had errors in spelling. Furthermore, the students faced misspelling vocabulary problem due to phonetics perception and carelessness. The students spell the words by referring to the sound of the words.

According to the analysis of the eleventh-grade students' cause and effect essay, it can be concluded that the students' ability in writing cause and effect essay is good because the means score is 79.38 and it is categorized as good. Almost all students had difficult in establishing thesis statement that can be developed in the body paragraph. Some students used inappropriate vocabulary in their essay. Moreover, they lacked in grammar.

The result of inter-rater test stated clearly on point 0.927. It could be inferred that the result was reliable. The coefficient was categorized as "Very High" based on the correlation coefficient table suggested by Sudijono (2010). Wiersma and Jurs (2009) stated that there was a reliability coefficient that rate was on value 0 to 1.0. In this information, value 0 meant that there was no "true" component in the observed score. On the other hand, if the reliability was 1.0. that indicates that there was nothing error and by mean that the following observed score was true.

2. The Eleventh Grade Students' Problems in Writing Cause and Effect Essay.

In this section, the result aimed to identify whether the students have problems in writing or not based on the criteria from Jacobs' et al., (1981). It was found that 12 students had problems with language use. They had problems in constructing sentences. There are some errors in agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions. There are seven students that had problem in mechanics. They were confused about how to spell the words correctly and where to put commas and full

stops. There are six students that had problem in content. Their essays were not relevant to the topic and the thesis statement was not clearly stated or fully developed. There are five students had problem in organization. The paragraphs in the essay did not relate well to each of the paragraphs or there are no logical sequencing and the paragraphs somewhat choppy. There are two students that had problem in vocabulary. Errors in the form, choice, and usage of words/idiom are found in their essay.

The findings on the eleventh-grade students' essay writing above were crosschecked and triangulated to their questionnaire results. The questionnaire was in form of Google Form. The questionnaire was distributed on 31st March 2021 via WhatsApp. The result is shown below.

The data from question 1 to question 20 from 32 students participating in the research. It can be seen that most of the respondents agree and strongly agree that they have written cause effect essay that is suitable with the topics that have been given. It also indicates that the majority of students strongly agree that they have written a cause-and-effect essay that has a completed generic structure. In relation to the statements 'I have limited English vocabulary.' There are half of them agree with it. They agree that they use simple words in writing cause and effect essay. Additionally, most of them feel that they lack in constructing a good sentence. Based on the students' questionnaire result and document analysis, it can be concluded that most of the students lack sentence structure and the students still have difficulties in the other cause and effect essay writing aspects such as vocabulary, content, mechanics, organization.

3. The Solution to Overcome the Students' Problems in Writing Cause and Effect Essay

To identify the students' solutions to solve the problems in writing cause and effect essay, the data were taken from open-ended questionnaire and interview transcript which the results as displayed below. It reveals that the respondents stated that they used the internet to solve their problems in writing cause and effect by accessing various sources. As student 30 stated:

“I'm having trouble finding the right words for my sentences. I searched for references on google scholar and confirmed my sentences on google translate.”

They used dictionary to help them solve their problem. As student 9 stated:

“If I don't know the English of some words, I will search with the help of a dictionary.”

Furthermore, the respondents claimed that they need to practice more. As student 34 stated:

“I have difficulties in using third person point of view. I overcome the difficulties by practicing over and over again.”

Based on the result, the students had difficulties in vocabulary and grammar. Most of them tried to seek help from the internet either by using Google to translate the words or practicing writing more. There was a need to collect as much significant data as possible from the English teacher in order to be able to accomplish a deeper understanding of how to solve the students' problems in writing cause and effect essay. Therefore,

interview was conducted with the English teacher was interviewed on 29th March 2021. The data obtained from the teacher is presented as follows:

“I would like to suggest to my students to practice writing again and again. We have very limited time to study in the class. I advise my students to practice writing more outside the class. It’s the most important. I used to give them feedback for them but it is very hard for me to give them feedback personally during online class because it takes a lot of time.”

The teacher gave the students a solution by practicing more. During online learning, according to the teacher, it is the best time to practice writing more because writing is a very complex task which only can be mastered by a lot of practice. Writing helps people communicate with one another precisely. Nowadays, we can get a great deal of information, namely; on the internet, television, radio, and books. In some ways, students can solve the writing problems.

This research has a purpose to clearly find the eleventh-grade ability of the students in writing cause and effect at SMAN 1 Kediri based on Jacobs' (1981) theory in scoring the essay. The theory stated that the students' ability can be evaluated by using five aspects. Those aspects are content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. After the researcher analyzed the students writing by using Jacobs' theory, the researcher categorized their ability based on Depdikbud (2009). There are seven categories such as “Excellent”, “Very Good”, “Good”, “Fairly Good”, “Fairly”, “Poor”, “Very Poor”. Based on the findings, the means score of the students' cause and effect essay is which is considered as “Good”. There are eight students in fairly good grade, twenty students in good grade and four students in very good grade.

This result is different from the previous study conducted by Ningsih, Nurcholis & Saputra in 2020. The previous studies showed that students' ability in writing cause and effect essay by using block organization was average criteria.

Based on the document analysis and questionnaire, the students have difficulties in vocabulary and constructing a good sentence. They were confused about how to use the appropriate words and sentence structure. The result was the ideas of the sentences cannot be understood easily. This finding has the same result as the study conducted by Gusman, Mukhaiyar, Kusni (2014). The study showed that the students were having difficulties in grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary. This is supported with the theory of Oshima (2005), which explained that sentence is a group of words formed to communicate ideas or to express a complete thought. Therefore, without appropriate sentences, the ideas within a text will be difficult to understand.

Furthermore, regarding the problems students faced in writing cause and effect essay, the solutions were provided to improve the students' ability in writing cause and effect essay. The solutions were collected from open ended questionnaire and interview. They needed more practice in writing, they needed to read other references as much as possible, and they needed the help of online dictionary to help them in writing essay. Those are the solutions offered by the students. Those results were in line with the result of interview with the teacher. The teacher also said that the solution could be practicing writing more.

A study conducted by Barua (2017) revealed the solution to solve the problems of English writing skill students. Based on the study, the students must learn grammar, learn vocabulary, practice, and use technology. The students should learn rules of verb, tense,

agreement, articles, pronoun, preposition, etc. Students should make time to learn vocabulary. They should learn at least 10 words per day. If they know many vocabularies, they can write many sentences. Students should be encouraged to do home assignment or homework as much as possible. Using technology as a tool in learning processes may be interesting for young learners. The students could use electronic dictionary to help them with vocabulary problems and to help them to explore their ideas in writing tasks.

Conclusion

After analyzing the students' cause and effect essay writing, the researcher has found some results that there are eight students in fairly good grade, twenty students in good grade, and four students in very good grade. It can be concluded that the students' ability in writing cause and effect is good because it is categorized as good.

The result of the students written task based on the criteria from Jacobs' et al., (1981) showed there are twelve students that had problem in language use, there are seven students that had problem in mechanics, there are six students that had problem in content, there are five students that had problem in organization and there are two students that had problem in vocabulary.

The use of internet dictionary and practice are the solutions to improve the students' ability in writing cause and effect essay offered by the students. In line with the result, the teacher also suggested that the students should practice writing more.

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