

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reveals the research background, the research questions, the research purposes, the research significance, the research scope, the conceptual framework, and the previous study.

A. Research Background

Paragraph writing is one of the important aspects of writing in an academic context. In a study by Mulyani and Sobari (2023), Heaton (1988) argues that writing is a challenging and complex talent. Before moving on to more complex writing activities, the first thing to learn is to write a paragraph. Wali and Madani (2020) define a paragraph as a sequence of closely related phrases constructing a single theme. Furthermore, Haerazi and Irawan (2019) emphasize that the composition process involves merging sentence structural elements into a bigger paragraph or text and ensuring cohesive and consistent structure. Therefore, writing good paragraphs requires a deep understanding of structure, coherence, and clarity of ideas, which are core skills in conveying thoughts effectively. Students should have lots of opportunities to practice writing regularly. In other words, students may overcome challenges via practice.

Based on a preliminary survey of several fifth-semester students in the English Education Department academic year 2022 at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung who have taken writing subjects, the students encounter difficulties when writing paragraphs. Students frequently get confused when combining sentences within the section. Students have also been given assignments in the form of essays; this is interesting to be researched. Sari (2019) stated writing is considered a complex development endeavor using a process approach. The writing process can be expressed in several ways, but the core principle is still the same (Wali and Madani, 2020). This suggests that students' paragraph writing abilities must be qualified because they have frequently been learned in writing class at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung over the fourth semester and assigned identical tasks.

Despite the curriculum in the Department of English Language Education

at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung emphasizing writing skills, it is necessary to assess how effectively the writing courses in the department enhance students' paragraph writing performance. Hassan, Kazi, Shafqat, and Ahmed (2020) explained the effectiveness of such an approach can be attributed to regular testing of written texts by students, peers, and professors. Siddiqui (2020) indicates that teachers' methodology and feedback significantly impact students' writing skills. This understanding is important to ensure that the English language education curriculum at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia. It can meet the demands of today's academic and professional world development.

Some literature reveals a wealth of research on the impact and challenges of writing a paragraph on students' perceptions. One of them was revealed by Siddiqui (2020) investigated the elements that influence paragraph arrangement in intermediate students' English language writing at Sukkur, Pakistan. Pane and Sanchez (2023) researched the difficulties encountered by freshmen students in the English Education Department of the University of Widya Gama Mahakam Samarinda Indonesia when composing English paragraphs. Man (2023) examined faults in written English paragraphs of non-English major students at Thu Dau Mot University, Vietnam. It can be concluded that the literature presents the factors and difficulties regarding the writing of the paragraph.

While previous research has explored the factors that influence paragraph organization, the problem faced by students, and the errors in paragraph writing, this study sought to analyze this gap by focusing on the students' paragraph-writing skills in essay assignments especially students' paragraph structure used by students. The aim of this research originates from a desire to gain a better knowledge of the efficacy of the curriculum and its contribution to the development of students' paragraph writing skills at UIN SGD Bandung in Indonesia. This study seeks to address this gap by conducting a detailed investigation within the department.

B. Research Questions

Here are the research questions for this study:

1. How are students' paragraph structure in their essay assignments?

2. What are the challenges faced by students while writing a paragraph in their essay assignment?

C. Research Purposes

The following is the purpose of this study:

1. To analyze students' paragraph structure in their essay assignments.
2. To find out the challenges faced by students while writing a paragraph in their essay assignment.

D. Research Significances

The following are the theoretical and practical significances of this research:

1. Theoretical

Theoretically, this research adds to the body of knowledge on writing pedagogy by providing empirical data on students' paragraph structures and the challenges they encounter. In pedagogical insight, teachers can gain insight into the elements that affect students' writing ability, enabling more targeted and successful instructional tactics. Additionally, this study can provide a framework for examining paragraph structure and writing obstacles, which can be utilized in future studies to compare different student demographics or educational situations.

2. Practical

Practically, this research provides students with practical benefits in terms of identifying and overcoming the obstacles, which can improve students' overall academic achievement and performance in the English Education Department UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia. Besides that, this research can help educators identify common strengths and weaknesses in students' paragraph structures, enabling them to tailor instructional strategies to address specific areas of need. By pinpointing the challenges students face while writing paragraphs, educators can develop targeted interventions and support mechanisms to enhance students' writing skills. The study's findings can be used to build targeted interventions and support systems to address the identified issues, potentially leading to a better learning experience.

Furthermore, this research provides practical benefits for learners and educators.

E. Research Scope

This study analyzes the students' paragraph writing skills, especially their paragraph structure, and their challenges while writing a paragraph in an essay assignment. This study explores students in the 5th semester of the English Education Department at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung in the academic year 2023-2024.

F. Conceptual Framework

Writing is one of the skills that must be mastered by students. Jamoom (2021) qualifies aspects of writing ability into five, namely content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. Gill and Janjua (2020) mention that students have difficulty in writing English text, especially in several paragraphs of an essay such as organizing the text. Batalla and Persley (2019) state that students struggle because they do not pay attention to the type of essay they write. Cer (2019) states that there are three effective phases for overcoming difficulties in writing, including planning, drafting, editing, and revising. In conclusion, writing is an important activity because several factors must be addressed while writing, one of which is the formation of paragraphs.

Likewise, the paragraph is an important part of the writing. Rohim (2019) states that a paragraph is a collection of sentences that discuss a particular topic or idea. Geisa (2022) also explains a paragraph is a group of two or more sentences that discuss a single topic, theme, or idea. It consists of three primary sections namely topic sentence, supporting sentence, and concluding sentence (Wali and Madani, 2020). Leki (1998) claims that the way a writer expresses or even thinks about a writer's key topic has a significant impact on what the writer writes about in the paragraph. Nafiah (2019) emphasizes the importance of a clear and focused approach to writing, ensuring that the main ideas are well-defined and easy to follow. Thus, a paragraph is crucial to study because it greatly influences the composition of English text.

Similarly, paragraph structure are one of the essential parts of writing a paragraph. Yamin (2019) explains that writing quality begins with the topic sentence, followed by supporting sentences, and ends with the concluding sentence. Melati (2020) describes that a topic sentence presents the primary concept of a paragraph by defining and narrowing down the subject using a governing notion while supporting sentences add to the topic by providing explanations, arguments, instances, or proof, and the paragraph concludes with a statement that provides important takeaways for the reader. Rahayu, Senjahari, and Gusmuliana (2022) state that weaving sentences together in such a way can produce a coherent paragraph, allowing readers to easily transition from one sentence to the next and read the paragraph as a unified one. In essence, the paragraph structure is an important point to enhancing the overall quality of the writing English text.

Furthermore, essays are one of the assignments that help students enhance their writing skills, particularly in the context of paragraphs. Bulqiyah, Mahbub, and Nugraheni (2021) explain that the essay's key features are (1) an introductory paragraph that presents enticing assertions to the readers' attention, (2) body paragraphs that explore sub-topics of the issue in each paragraph, and (3) a conclusion paragraph that restates the main points and includes additional quotations. In short, this essay assignment is closely related to paragraphs, whereas paragraphs in an essay are related to one another.

Moreover, when composing paragraphs, particularly essays, things may not always proceed seamlessly. Nenotek, Tlonaen, and Manubulu (2022) describe the most dominant difficulty in writing an essay as paragraph organization, including elements such as the thesis statement, related ideas, topic sentences, and sources. Students who struggle with sentence organization and attention are more likely to write paragraphs that fall short in these areas. Prihatmi (2017) mentions one of the problems faced by students in writing essays, namely structuring and cohorting of paragraphs. According to Alfaki (2015) cited in Budjalemba and Listiyani (2020), writing challenges can be caused by internal factors and external factors. In addition, it is necessary to monitor the results of students' writing paragraph abilities because this can involve analysis of paragraph structure in the essay assignment.

G. Previous Study

Siddiqui (2020) analyzed factors influencing paragraph organization in the English Language Writing of Intermediate students. This research was conducted in the English language writing of intermediate students in Sukkur, Pakistan. A qualitative research approach was used in this research to obtain an in-depth understanding of factors influencing paragraph organization. This study found that most of the student's written work lacked an adequate conclusion statement. Concluding phrases were either overly vague, departed from the paragraph's theme, or suddenly ended on the last detail in the list. Additionally, no transitional words were used to indicate the end of sentences.

Pane and Sanchez (2023) carried out a study on the problem faced by English education department freshmen students in writing English paragraphs. This research used a descriptive qualitative approach. The freshmen students of the English education department of the University of Widya Gama Mahakam Samarinda. The study revealed students have difficulties in determining the topic, main idea, and also the rest of the content, grammatical errors, vocabulary difficulties, brainstorming phase, forgetting to conduct to determine a conclusion, punctuation, translation, and coherence problems, mistakes in language such as sentence structure, spelling, and word choice.

Man (2023) researched an analysis of errors in written English paragraphs. This study was carried out on non-English major students at Thu Dau Mot University, Vietnam. This study identified, synthesized, and classified the errors in the paragraphs. The study found that the most common errors were in tenses, spelling, singular/plural form, prepositions, word order, and fragments. The study provides recommendations and pedagogical consequences for EFL lecturers to improve English paragraph writing skills among learners.

Through these three studies, it is revealed different aspects of paragraph writing, including factors influencing paragraph writing organization, problems faced while paragraph writing, and errors in written paragraphs. This research analyzes in-depth research about the students' paragraph writing skills after taking a writing course for the fourth semester in student essay assignments in other

courses. What differentiates this research from previous research is the cross-cultural comparison and the objective of the study. This study was conducted on 6th-semester students at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. This study gap provides an opportunity for further investigation which can help design strategies and interventions to improve learning and writing strategies in educational settings.

