

**THE STUDENTS' ABILITY IN USING PUNCTUATION MARKS IN
PARAGRAPH WRITING: A CASE STUDY AT THE SECOND
GRADE STUDENTS OF SMPN 2 KEDIRI IN ACADEMIC YEAR
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RATIFICATION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLEPAGE	1
RATIFICATION	2
TABLE OF CONTENTS	3
ABSTRACT	4
I. INTRODUCTION	6
II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	7
III. RESEARCH METHODS	8
IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	9
V. CONCLUSION	10
REFERENCES	13

**THE STUDENTS' ABILITY IN USING PUNCTUATION MARKS IN
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SMP Negeri 2 Kediri in Academic Year 2016/2017**

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Abstract

The thesis entitled “The Students’ Ability in Using Punctuation Marks in Paragraph Writing: A Case Study at the Second Grade Students of SMPN 2 Kediri.” This study is focused on finding out the students’ ability in using punctuation marks in paragraph writing at the second grade students of SMPN 2 Kediri. This research used descriptive quantitative method to collect the data from class VIIIA consisted of 25 students’ selected using purposive sampling. To analyze the data this research used two kinds of instrument: test and interview. The result showed found students’ mean score in using punctuation marks is 70.84, which is categorized “Good” level of students’ ability in using punctuation marks in paragraph writing. The result of interview showed that students’ difficulties caused were by their lack of vocabulary mastery, their weakness of the text content mastery, their less paying attention to their teacher’s explanation, their being lazy to practicing writing, and also their less knowledge about the use of punctuation mark.

Key word: Ability, Writing Skill, Punctuation Marks.

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Abstrak

Skripsi ini berjudul “kemampuan siswa dalam menggunakan tanda baca dalam penulisan paragraf: sebuah kasus di kelas dua SMP Negeri 2 Kediri.” Penelitian ini berfokus pada mencari tahu kemampuan siswa dalam menggunakan tanda baca dalam penulisan paragraf: sebuah kasus di kelas dua SMP Negeri 2 Kediri. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kuantitatif untuk mengumpulkan data dari kelas VIIIA terdiri dari 25 siswa yang terpilih menggunakan purposive sampling. Untuk mengumpulkan data penelitian ini menggunakan dua jenis instrument yaitu tes dan wawancara. Dari hasil tes yang di tunjukan jumlah dari skor siswa dalam menggunakan tanda baca adalah 70.84, jadi padat di kategorikan level “Bagus”, sedangkan hasil dari wawancara menunjukan bahwa penyebab kesulitan siswa terdapat pada lemahnya penguasaan kosa kata, mereka lemah dalam penguasaan teks, mereka kurang memperhatikan penjelasan dari guru, mereka malas untuk berlatih menulis, dan juga mereka lemah dalam pengetahuan tentang menggunakan tanda baca.

Kata kunci: Kemampuan, keterampilan menulis, tanda baca.

I. INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the important skills to be mastered by the students. They use it to communicate to each other, as means of ideas and emotional expression, because when they write their ideas, emotion, and creativity, they are communicating on paper in their very best way and purpose. Therefore, writing is the most difficult skill which requires wide perception and thinking process, and needs a good understanding of grammar, with appropriate punctuation marks. The more students learn how to use this process efficiently, the more they can express themselves efficiently (Tompkins 2004).

Based on the description above, the basic competence in learning a writing skill in the Junior High School curriculum 2006, students are expected to write some texts, such as letters, short messages, greeting cards, monologues in descriptive, recount, narrative, procedure and report texts. To produce such writing products, especially monologues, students have to follow the writing steps. It means that the curriculum is arranged to drill students starting from the beginning of the semester. This matter is expected to help students to be advanced in their writing.

Based on the researcher experience, the most difficult skill to be learned is writing with correct punctuation marks. The researcher has done an observation about it during *Program Pengalaman Lapangan (PPL)* activity at SMPN 2 Kediri, West Lombok. There are some difficulties faced by Class A8 students in the second semester of the academic year 2016/2017 in writing class. First, many of them are low in using punctuation marks. They forgot to put full stop at the end of the sentences or did not use a comma to separate a phrase, and to connect the words or parts of the words. Second, they got confused in organizing the writing. Third, they often make some mistakes due to the lack of grammar knowledge. It caused them to not pay attention to the punctuation marks, which can change the meaning in a sentence. Certainly this can make the reader fail in reading and understanding the meaning of the text. This fact shows that punctuation marks are very important in constructing a sentence.

The problems in learning writing above make me interested in conducting this study entitled “The Students’ Ability in Using Punctuation Marks in

Paragraph Writing: A Case Study at the Second Grade Students of SMPN 2 Kediri”.

1.1. Statement of the Problems

This particular writing hopefully can provide the answer of the following research questions: What are the abilities of second grade students at SMPN 2 Kediri in using punctuation marks in paragraph writing?

1.2. Purpose of the Study

This study is aimed at finding out the ability of the level in second grade students of SMPN 2 Kediri in using punctuation marks in paragraph writing.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURES

Punctuation is the names given to the varieties of punctuation devices to help readers understand the written text (Fairbrain and Winch 1996). In other words, punctuation refers to a sign or a mark used to clarify the writer’s ideas using punctuation correctly, which will help the reader understand the writer’s intention to communicate. Punctuation is place in a text to make the meaning clear and to make reading easier (Mc Caskill 1998). It means that punctuation can help the writer expresses their meaning in writing. In conclusion, punctuation is the signs or the marks which are written to make the writer’s ideas clear.

Langan (2008:216: 373) classifies punctuation marks into punctuation at the end of the sentence: full stop (.), question mark (?), exclamation mark (!); and punctuation within a sentence: comma (,), semicolon (;), apostrophe (’), dash (-), quotation mark (“...”), and brackets (()). In addition, Bram (1995: 92-97) classifies punctuation into full stop or period (.), question mark (?), comma (,), exclamation mark (!), quotation mark or inverted comma (“...” or ‘...’), semicolon (;), colon (:), dash (-), apostrophe (’), slash (/) and brackets (()).

This research was focus on some punctuation: period (.), question mark (?), comma (,), apostrophe (’), and quotation mark (“....”) because doing punctuation commonly used in the students English textbook for second grade students at SMPN 2 Kediri.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Method of the Research

This method used in this study was descriptive quantitative method.

3.2 Population and Sample of the Study

The population of this study was all of second year students of SMPN 2 Kediri in Academic Year 2016/2017. The total number of all classes was four classes, in which class A, B, C and D had 25 students. Thus, the total number of the students was 100 students. This means that the total number of students more than one hundred.

In this study used purposive sampling to obtain the sample. According to Arikunto (2010: 183), purposive sampling is the process of selecting sample by taking subject that is not based on the level or area, but it is taken based on the specific purpose. From the whole population this research took only 25 % from 100 students as sample. The writer used 25 students as sample of this research. Because this class had highest knowledge than other class and also had serious problem in using punctuation marks, so this research decides to choose class A as sample of this research. Arikunto (1992) says that if the subject more than one hundred, the sample would taken 10 - 15% or 20 - 25%. But if the population less than one hundred, it does not suppose to take sample, it is called as population research.

3.3. Method of Collecting Data

This research used a test and interview as instrument to collect the significant data for this research, and used a narrative text. The writer gave the test to the students to put some punctuation marks in the paragraph then interview related to the find out what the problem of using punctuation marks in paragraph writing.

3.6 Data Analysis

This study applies the descriptive quantitative method to explain the level analysis the data collected through arranged test:

1. Collecting and Scoring the test
2. Shorted the result into rate of percentage (table) connecting with level students
3. Analysis the total of score students

$$\bar{X} = \frac{X}{N}$$

Which: \bar{X} : The mean score of the student

X: The total number of students' score

N: The total number of the students

The scale used this research to classify the students' score each level, is arranged as follows:

- a) (90.6) to (100) is classified as "excellent"
- b) (80.9) to (90.5) is classified as "very good"
- c) (70.6) to (80.5) is classified as "good"
- d) (60.6) to (70.5) is classified as "fair good"
- e) (50.6) to (60.6) is classified as "fair"
- f) (30.6) to (50.5) is classified as "poor"
- g) (0) to (30.5) is classified as "very poor"

(Arikunto, 1986: 120)

4. The last is interview to support the data.

IV. RISULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Result

The results of the test are presented in the following table.

No	Name	The students' Ability Score	
		Score	Level
1	MN	94	Excellent
2	MS	91	Excellent
3	FB	94	Excellent
4	EN	91	Excellent
5	RR	84	Very Good

6	SD	88	Very Good
7	SS	88	Very Good
8	SA	84	Very Good
9	MR	78	Good
10	DY	65	Fair Good
11	LU	65	Fair Good
12	HA	52	Fair
13	HU	55	Fair
14	WH	59	Fair
15	HF	39	Poor
16	AA	49	Poor
17	HR	52	Fair
18	FN	65	Fair Good
19	MI	78	Good
20	AY	88	Very Good
21	AS	97	Excellent
22	TA	94	Excellent
23	BC	65	Fair Good
24	RA	33	Poor
25	RH	23	Very Poor
Total		1.771	

4.1.1 Data Analysis from Test

This research uses a narrative text as an instrument. To collect the significant data for this research, the researcher used a test. The researcher gave the students a copy of the paragraph narrative text. The researcher asked the students to use punctuation marks in the text. Then to scoring the students' answer, the researcher used seven intervals value of standard score.

The percentages of the students score can be seen in the table 2. The seven intervals value standards of students' score as follows:

- a) (90.6) to (100) is classified as "excellent"
- b) (80.9) to (90.5) is classified as "very good"
- c) (70.6) to (80.5) is classified as "good"
- d) (60.6) to (70.5) is classified as "fair good"
- e) (50.6) to (60.6) is classified as "fair"
- f) (30.6) to (50.5) is classified as "poor"
- g) (0) to (30.5) is classified as "very poor"

The test consisted of 1 paragraph with 15 full stop, 7 commas, 4 quotation marks, 3 apostrophe, and 2 question marks. The researcher decided to use “one hundred” as the highest score. The researcher sorted the result of the test and then determined how the score was tabulated into rate of percentage (table) connected with the students’ ability in using punctuation marks. This can be seen in table 2 bellow.

Table 3. The Classification of Students’ Ability in Using Punctuation Mark in Paragraph Writing.

No.	Classification	Standard Score	Number of Student	Percentages
1	Excellent	90.6-100	6	24%
2	Very Good	80.6-90.5	5	20%
3	Good	70.6-80.5	2	8%
4	Fair Good	60.6-70.5	4	16%
5	Fair	50.6-60.5	4	16%
6	Poor	30.6-50.5	3	12%
7	Very Poor	0.30.5	1	4%
Total			25	100%

To obtain the students’ mean score the researcher applied following formula:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{X}{N}$$

Which: \bar{X} : The mean score of the student

X: The total number of students’ score

N: The total number of the students

Notation:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{1771}{25} = 70.84$$

The basic calculation above shows the students’ mean score of using punctuation marks. Based on the seven scales of seven intervals, the result is in the “Good” Level of students’ ability in using punctuation marks in paragraph writing at the second grade students of SMPN 2 Kediri.

4.1.2 Students’ Problems in Using Punctuation Marks in Paragraph Writing

After conducting an interview with some students, the researcher found that students have some problems in using punctuation marks in paragraph writing. The problems found were (1) Students do not really like English language subject, (2) Their lack of vocabulary mastery, (3) Their weakness of the content mastery, (4) Their being lazy of practicing writing, (5) Their less knowledge about the use of punctuation mark.

4.2. DISCUSSION

As presented on the first chapter, this study was focused on answering the research question as follow:

What are the abilities of second grade students at SMPN 2 Kediri in using punctuation marks in paragraph writing?

According to scores gained, it was obtained that the students' mean score was 70.84. It showed that the students' ability in using punctuation marks was in good category based on the classification of the students' score range. In other words, it can be said that majority of the students 68% were capable in using punctuation marks. The problems are: (1) Students do not really like English language subject, (2) Their lack of vocabulary mastery, (3) Their weakness of the content mastery, (4) Their being lazy of practicing writing, (5) Their less knowledge about the use of punctuation mark.

English is not well-liked by the students because some of them are new to the subject and because they have already passed their golden period that they found it hard to learn new language. The materials were also not really given much portion in the syllabus which made it not really focused and just taught in general. This resulted in them being confused about the position and the meaning of usefulness of punctuation mark. It was also made worse by the fact that many students did not really pay attention to be teacher explanation because they thought the teaching method was monotonous and made them easily bored. The teacher never talked about the usefulness or importance of using punctuation marks each paragraph writing so that the students never practiced to make a paragraph writing in using punctuation correctly.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the study, the researcher concluded that:

The students' mean score in using punctuation marks is 70.84. It can be said, the majority of the students 68% are capable in using punctuation marks in paragraph writing. Therefore, it can be classified into "*Good*" level of students' ability in using punctuation marks in paragraph writing at the second grade students of SMPN 2 Kediri.

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