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## SKILLS IN WRITING ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

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### ABSTRAK

*Menulis adalah media komunikasi manusia untuk mempresentasikan pikiran dan perasaan mereka kedalam kertas agar orang bisa mengertidengannya. Secara umum, siswa tidak memberikan argumen yang mendukung posisi mereka dan tidak memberikan bukti untuk meyakinkan pembaca dalam menulis, terutama dalam menulis argumentative essay. Siswa diminta untuk memahami tentang bagaimana pengembangan ide-ide mereka berdasarkan unsur-unsur argumentative essay sebagai panduan mereka dalam menulis dalam bahasa Inggris dan menerapkan kemampuan berpikir kritis dalam menulis bahasa Inggris. Berdasarkan masalah di atas, peneliti menganalisa kemampuan berpikir kritis siswa dalam menulis argumentative essay di STKIP Abdi Pendidikan Payakumbuh pada Tahun Akademik 2017/2018.*

*Peneliti menggunakan desain deskriptif kuantitatif dalam penelitian. Peneliti memilih mahasiswa tahun kedua Jurusan Bahasa Inggris sebagai peserta di STKIP Abdi Pendidikan Payakumbuh, dengan peserta sebanyak 13 siswa. Untuk mengumpulkan data, peneliti memberikan tes tulis dan meminta peserta untuk menulis argumentative essay sekitar 300 kata selama 60 menit. Instrumentasi dalam penelitian ini memiliki isi validitas berdasarkan SAP dari STKIP Abdi Pendidikan Payakumbuh Tahun Akademik 2017/2018, karena semua peserta telah mempelajari argumentative essay dalam mata pelajaran menulis. Untuk reliabilitas data, peneliti menggunakan inter-rater reliabilitas dan koefisien reliabilitas dari pemeriksa 1 dan pemeriksa 2. Telah diketahui bahwa skor rata-rata siswa tahun kedua adalah 60, yang berarti kemampuan berpikir kritis mereka rata-rata baik (average to good).*

**Key words:** *Writing, Critical Thinking, Argumentative Essay*

## INTRODUCTION

Writing is a medium of human communication that represents their thought, feeling into the paper in order people can get the message. Writing is one of the basic skill subject should be learnt by students. As we know, students are always use writing skill, such as: exercises, final examination and fulfill the administration requirement. In writing there is argumentative essay.

Argumentative essay is a genre of writing that requires the students to investigate a topic; generate, and evaluate evidence; and establish a position on the topic in a concise manner. So, the college students are hoped to be critical in argumentative essay. Because they have to bring up the issue that familiar by people and have their own argument before and how they can guide the readers into the writer's argument and believe it.

Critical thinking is the ability to analyze and evaluate information Duron et al (2006:160). So, critical thinking is really important for the writer. Basically, if the critical thinkers faces the issues, they will not just receive the message but they analyze it first. After that, they will compare that to the existed information and come to the conclusion. (Moon :2008).

In writing, critical thinking is really needed. The more critical people are, the more quality their writing is going to be. Because it depends on how the writers bring the issue, give their thought on it but not judge at the same time and make the readers consider and even believe at the writers.

According to Nunan(2003:88) states that writing is both a physical and a mental act. At the most basic level, writing is the physical act of committing words or ideas to some medium, whether it is hieroglyphics inked onto parchment or an e-mail message typed into a computer. Which means, writing is the mental work of inventing ideas, thinking about how to express them, and organizing them into statements and paragraphs that will be clear to a reader.

In addition, according to Harmer (1998:79) states that writing is a form of communication to deliver through or to express feeling through written form. Which means, writing is a tool to communicate with people and also a tool to express their feeling to someone else.

Hyland (2004:88) adds that writing is a way of sharing personal meaning and writing courses emphasize the power of the individual to construct his or her own view on a topic. So, writing is a way to show people ability to develop a topic in written form.

According to Bassham et al (2011) states that critical thinking is the general term given to a wide range of cognitive skills and intellectual dispositions needed to effectively identify, analyze, and evaluate arguments and truth claims; to discover and overcome personal preconceptions and biases; to formulate and present convincing reasons in support of conclusions; and to make reasonable, intelligent decisions about what to believe and what to do.

In addition, Innabi (2003:124) states that critical thinking is that sort of thinking that deals with what should believe or do in any situation or event. Two main features mark this thinking. The first is that it is reasonable thinking that leads to deductions and sound decisions justified and supported by acceptable proofs. The second is that it is reflective thinking that shows a complete awareness of the thinking steps that leads to the deductions and the decisions.

Furthermore, Duron et al (2006:160) states that critical thinking is, very simply stated, the ability to analyze and evaluate information. Critical thinkers raise vital questions and problem, formulate them clearly, gather and assess relevant information, use abstract ideas, think open-mindedly, and communicate effectively with others.

According to Rami et al in Wingate (2011) states that an argumentative essay is a style of writing that need to investigate a topic, gather, generate, and evaluate evidence; and establish a

position on a controversial issue in a concise manner, and you try to clarify some points and present evidence in favor of your position. Which means, students should bring up the issue, and also bring the evidence in their argument to make it more convincing.

Wingate (2011:145) states that the “argumentative essay” is the most common genre that undergraduate students have to write particularly in the arts, humanities and social science. Although the nature of the essay varies considerably across and even within disciplines, the development of an argument is regarded as a key feature of successful writing by academics across disciplines.

## METHODOLOGY

The design of the research was descriptive quantitative. In this research, the researcher wants to analyze students critical thinking skills applied in writing argumentative essay of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year students at STKIP Abdi Pendidikan Payakumbuh in 2017/2018 Academic Year.

Population is the group of interest to the researcher, the group to which she or he would like the result of the study to be generalized (Gay and Airasian, 2000: 121). Population of this research was students on the second year of STKIP Abdi Pendidikan Payakumbuh. There were 13 students on the second year in writing class.

Sample is the process of selecting a number individual for a study in such a way that the individuals the present the large group from which they were selected (Gay, 2000: 122). In choosing sampling, researcher used total sampling. It means, the researcher took all of the population as sample. So, the researcher took all of the second year students of STKIP Abdi Pendidikan Payakumbuh as the sample of this research. There were 13 students on the second year in writing class.

The instrument of this research was writing test. The researcher asked the learners to write argumentative essay based on the topics given by researcher.

Validity refers to the degree to which a test measures what it is supposed to measure, consequently, permits appropriate interpretation of scores. The researcher used content validity, it means that the degree to which a test measure an intended content area (Gay et al, 2012 : 160). The instrument in this research has content validity because all of the students had learnt Argumentative essay subject in third semester before. So, it can be said that instrument has content validity.

According to Gay et al (2012 : 165), “Reliability is the degree to which a test consistently measures whatever it is measuring.” After researcher got the written of argumentative essay from every participants, researcher analyzed students critical thinking skill in writing argumentative essay used inter – rater reliability. To score the students’ critical thinking skill, the researcher used two scorer, the researcher himself and one of the lecturer of (STKIP) Yayasan Abdi Pendidikan Payakumbuh. And then, to know the coefficient reliability of those scores, the researcher calculated it by using Pearson Product Moment formula as suggested by Sudijono (2010:219). The formula can be seen as below:

$$r_{xy} = \frac{N \sum XY - (\sum X) (\sum Y)}{\sqrt{[N \sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2][N \sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}}$$

Where :

$r_{xy}$  =index number correlation r product moment

N = number of students

X = score from scorer 1

Y = score from scorer 2

Then, in interpretation the correlation between scores from scorer 1 and scorer 2, the researcher used the table of coefficient of correlation suggested by Sudijono (2010 : 193) as follow :

Table 2. The Coefficient Correlation

CRITERIA	INTERPRETATION
0.00-0.20	Very Low
0.20-0.40	Low
0.40-0.70	Average Correlation
0.70-0.90	Strong Correlation
0.90-1.00	Very Strong Correlation

If the coefficient of correlation is 0.00-0.20, it means there is a very low correlation between scores from scorer 1 and scorer 2. If the coefficient of correlation is 0.20-0.40, it means there is a low correlation between scores from scorer 1 and scorer 2. If the coefficient of correlation is 0.40-0.70, it means there is an average correlation between scores from scorer 1 and scorer 2. If the coefficient of correlation is 0.70-0.90, it means there is a strong correlation between scores from scorer 1 and scorer 2. If the coefficient of correlation is 0.90-1.00, it means there is a very strong correlation between scores from scorer 1 and scorer 2.

The researcher analyzed the score from the writing argumentative essay of the second year students of STKIP AbdiPendidikanPayakumbuh and their score was 0,51. It means that the coefficient had Average Correlation. So, the test was reliable.

Table 3. Holistic Critical Thinking Scoring Rubric:

After scoring, the researcher analyzed the data by using formula that suggested by Sudijono (2009:318) as follow:

$$Mark = \frac{Raw\ Score}{Score\ Maximum\ Ideal} \times 100$$

Where:

Mark = Students Ability

Raw Score = Number of correct answer

Score Maximum Ideal = Total items

Then, it categorized into Harris rating scale (1969:134) as follow:

Table 4. Range of the qualities

Test Scores	Probably class performance
80 – 100	Good to excellent
60 – 79	Average to good
50 – 59	Poor to average
0 – 49	Poor

In addition, if the students get score between 80 until 100, it belongs to Good to excellent category. Then , the students who get the score 60 until 79, it means that average to good category. The students who get score 50 until 59 are in poor to average category. Finally, the students who get score 0 until 49 are in poor category.

After that, the researcher found the percentage of each category or criteria by used formula suggested by Sudijono (2010 : 43) as follow :

$$\rho = \frac{f}{N} \times 100\%$$

Where :

$\rho$  = Percentage of students in each category

F = Frequence of students' category

N= Total of students

Finally, after analyzing the ability of students in each category, the researcher analyzed the category of all students included into sample by using formula suggested by Sudijono (1987:183) as follow:

$$Mx = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

Which:

Mx = Average of students ability

$\sum X$  = Total score

N = Total of students

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

After researcher analyzed the data based on Facione's et al category, researcher found that there were students who got average to good critical thinking skill and poor to average critical thinking skill, then there were no students who got good to excellent and poor critical thinking skill category. It can be seen on students' answer sheet, there were no students who has no mistake in their writing argumentative essay paper, also there were no students who completely biased in their writing argumentative essay paper.

It can be seen, researcher only found two category of critical thinking skill in writing argumentative essay at the second year of STKIP Abdi Pendidikan Payakumbuh 2017/2018 academic year. There was Average to good and Poor to Average category, and the final result was Average to good category.

In average to good critical thinking skill category in range 60 -79, there were 7 students in this category. It means 53,85% students in this category. Duron et al (2006:160) states that critical thinking is, very simply stated, the ability to analyze and evaluate information. Critical thinkers raise vital questions and problem, formulate them clearly, gather and assess relevant information, use abstract ideas, think open-mindedly, and communicate effectively with others. It can be concluded that critical thinking is the action of how someone faces the claims. They will not just accept all of that but filter it first what should be believed and not by doing research.

In the end they will make the conclusion “alternative thinking”. From the students answer sheet, it can be seen that they actually have alternative thinking, but sometimes they forgot to gave an accurate reason.

From range 50-59, there were 6 students get poor to average critical thinking skill category. It means 46.15% of students in this category. Vyncke (2012:10) states that when critical thinking applied in writing, the abilities or the skills that stated previously are expressed through the process of argumentation, producing argument. It is regarded as the primary expression of critical thinking in higher education, Which means, to make a good writing the writer need to be critical thinking. Also, critical thinking can be seen by process of argumentation in writing. Based on the students answer sheet, it can be seen from their process of argumentation was almost poor, that was because they often forgot to gave the evidence to support their argument, their critical thinking skill almost reach the poor category.

Finally, researcher found that the critical thinking skill in writing argumentative essay at the second year of STKIP AbdiPendidikanPayakumbuh 2017/2018 academic year was in **average to good critical thinking skill**. After analyzing, researcher found there was no students are in good to excellent category, 7 student are in poor to average critical thinking skill category, 6 of them are in average to good category and there was no students are in poor category. Which means, in writing argumentative essay, they need to have an alternative thinking when analyzed the information in their process of argumentation.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the data before, the main concern of this research was to the student’s critical thinking skills in writing argumentative essay on the second year students of STKIP AbdiPendidikanPayakumbuh. The student’s critical thinking skills in writing argumentative essay was 60, it belong to “**average to good critical thinking skill category**”.

The result of this research shows that there were no students who got good to excellent and poor category. While, there were 53,85% of the students got average to good critical thinking category, and 46,15% of the students got poor to average critical thinking category. It means the student’s critical thinking skills in writing argumentative essay on the second year students of STKIP AbdiPendidikanPayakumbuh was in average to good critical thinking skill category.

The researcher would like to offer some suggestions. For the students, they have to increase their ability in writing argumentative essay by understanding step by step in writing argumentative essay process. They also have to read English book more to increase vocabularies. Also, they have increase their critical thinking skill by giving an accurate evidence after gave an argument. Then, they should accurately interprets evidence, statements, relevant argument, procedures, explains and reasons.

Then, researcher expected the lecturer could give more exercise and task of argumentative essay to the students in order to increase the students’ critical thinking skill in writing argumentative essay.

Finally, for the next researcher should comprehend more about the critical thinking skill. So, the next researcher probably can do a research about the aspect of students lack of critical thinking skill.

Note : The journal is written based on the skripsi in STKIP Abdi Pendidikan Payakumbuh with

the Advisors:

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