

# **IMPROVING STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPH USING OUTLINE TECHNIQUE**

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## **Abstract**

This study deals with the improvement of the students' achievement by using Outline technique. This research was conducted by applying classroom action research in two cycles. The subject of this research was one of a class in the first year student of SMU Yayasan Pendidikan Sultan Iskandar Muda. There were 35 students that participated in this research. The quantitative and qualitative data were gathered in administering writing test and diary notes. The result of quantitative data obtained that the score of the students improved from cycle I to cycle II which the mean of the pre-test was 70.6, the test of cycle I was 75.8, and the test of cycle II was 85.2. The result of the qualitative data described that the using of the Outline technique help to improve the students' achievement in writing descriptive paragraph.

**Key Words :** writing, writing achievement, paragraph, outline, references.

## **Introduction**

Language is the important part of human existence and social process that has so many functions to perform the life of human beings. Language approach integrates the four skills, they are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Writing is a skill that needs practice, because writing is a productive skill.

Furthermore, writing is a skill to expose facts and ideas which are interpreted in a clear, effective, and organized way. Mary (1988: 3) states that writing should reinforce the structural and lexical items. It means that in writing, we need to know many of vocabulary, arrangement of words, proficiency in grammar, and mastering the paragraph is needed. That is why the teacher must help the students to make a good writing.

One of the ways to help students in writing is making the outline. An outline is a tool to make the writing easier, because the main point is listed as the topic to discuss. In the other words, the writer will be led by the main point, and will focus on the topic, from the first until the last paragraph. According to Stanley (1988: 286) the definition of outline is the pattern of meaning that emerges from body of you taken. After you have

given much thought to your notes and the main ideas under which you arranged these notes. You will begin to see how the main ideas are related to another and which main ideas should precede or follows others.

There are many kinds of paragraph in writing, one of them is descriptive. The writer chose descriptive paragraph because in descriptive paragraph the students have to describe the object and make the reader can see, feel, hear, and touch the object. It means that the students use their imagination and knowledge in their writing. Besides, based on the writer's experience, when she did the Field of Teaching Practice (PPL), most of the students think that writing is difficult and it makes them not like English. They do not know how to transfer their idea, even how to arrange a sentence. So, it makes the teacher have to find another method which interests the students. By using outline technique, it will make them easier to understand how to arrange the words and focus to the topic, and the teaching-learning process will be more interesting.

### **The Identification of The Problem**

Most of the students have problem in making a good writing, they are worry about the vocabularies, and the tenses. So, they are not interested in writing. They always afraid of making mistakes, and they do not know how to transfer their idea into a piece of paper. Besides, the teacher's technique is still conventional, only giving exercises. Whereas, writing is not the same with the other assignment. Which has a certain answer, writing have to be learned step by step. Firstly, we have to know the topic, and then we have to recognize it. After that, we can describe all of the points. That's why, the researcher inform a technique to motivate the students in making a good writing. The researcher hopes that this technique can improve their writing.

### **The Scope of The Study**

This research focuses its study on the improving the students' ability in writing paragraph by using Outline Technique. In this case, the writer limits only in writing descriptive paragraph.

### **The Problem of The study**

The problem of the study is formulated as follows: ” *Does the Outline Technique significantly improve students' achievement in writing descriptive paragraph?*”

### **The Objective of The Study**

This study is aimed to find out whether or not Outline Technique significantly improve students' ability in writing descriptive paragraph

### **The Significance of The Study**

The result of the study would be very useful for the English teacher and others who are concerning to the assessment of teaching English, especially about descriptive paragraph. The result of the analysis can be used by other researchers as resourceful information how to write a descriptive paragraph.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Theoretical Framework**

In conducting this research, theories are needed to explain some concepts or terms, to avoid misunderstanding and to make the same perception between the researcher and the reader, the terms need to be clarified. The terms function is to give limited concept, which specially meant in particular context. Theoretical Framework of this research is presented and discussed as the following:

## 1. Writing

Writing is one of the four languages skills in English. In doing writing, we transfer the idea into words, as Ruggles (1985:12) defines that writing is the skill to develop the thinking. It means writing is representation of what we think to communicate by using the words. So, we describe the subject based on our point of view to other people, explaining all about the object to make the readers understand and got the purpose of the writing.

According to Harry (1981 : 430) “ writing refers to the skills in using graphic symbols ( letter, word, phrase, sentences), which has to be arranged to certain convention”. It means in writing we have to be able to use and organize the lexical items, to express our ideas in the form of written production. There are some certain arrangement element of paragraph, they are:

- a. Unity : every sentence contributes to develop one central idea concerning in topic sentence
- b. Completeness : the writing have enough information, the facts, details, examples, quotation, and reason
- c. Order : the organization of the information is presented in a desirable sequences
- d. Coherence : the relation of each paragraph to make the reader can take the ideas logically and smoothly.

In teaching learning process, the teacher has to give some exercises to practice the students' ability in writing. The teacher also gives the student one topic and asks them to make a short composition, and then checks their work, based on the elements above.

Beside the elements there are some components of writing, they are:

- a. Grammatical skills : the ability to write correct sentences
- b. Mechanical skills : the ability to use correctly those conventions peculiar to write language e.g function and spelling
- c. Stylistic skills : the ability manipulate sentences, paragraph, and the use of language effectively

- d. Judgment skills : the ability to write in appropriate manner for a particular audience in mind together with an ability to select, organize, and other relevant information.

To make the students have these skills, the teacher has to give them many exercises to make their writing be better. Because eventhough they have found many information but if they do not understand the skill, they will confuse when they arrange their writing. So, the teacher has to explain and practice how to use the skills in making a good writing.

## 2. Writing Achievement

The word achievement is derived from, 'achieve' (Hornby, 1986 : 7) means to gain or to reach by effort then it becomes to noun word furthermore. According to Oxford (1995:10) 'achievement' means a thing is done successfully, especially with efforts and skill.

Writing achievement can be measured through the quality of the writing. A good writing must have ideas, organization, word choice, sentence fluency and conventions (Carol, et,al,2001). So, if the writing has all of these qualities it means the writer has reached the achievement in writing.

## 3. Paragraph

A writing, need idea to describe the details of the topic, and we use words to explain it. We arrange word by word become sentences, and then we arrange them become a paragraph. It means paragraph is some sentences which has one idea. As what Oshima and Hogue (1988:55) state "a paragraph is a group of related sentences that develop one main idea. Through a paragraph, the idea will be explained, so the reader will be more understand the topic.

### a. Parts of paragraph

Paragraph have three parts, they are : topic sentence,supporting sentence, and concluding sentence.

1). Topic sentence

A topic sentence usually becomes the first sentence in a paragraph, but not necessarily. And it consists of main idea to control the whole paragraph; and then the body of the paragraph will be explained, developed and supported with the evidence.

2). Supporting sentence

Supporting sentence comes after the topic sentence, and makes up the body of a paragraph. It gives the supporting details to explain the topic sentence, or explain the evidence to emphasize the topic. So that, the reader will understand the topic.

3). Concluding sentence

Concluding sentence is also called as the closing sentence, because it comes at the end of the paragraph. This sentence consists of conclusion and short explanation of the main idea. Usually it is a restated of the main idea using different words.

b. Types of Paragraph

According to Pardiyono (2006: 163 – 175), there are 10 types of writing text. They are:

1. Narration : tells world events, which can be informative or entertaining, and can be past world events or present happenings.
2. Recount (Spoof) : contains of the chronology of activities done in the past time.
3. Information Report : contains of present information presentation about a thing or fact supported by data presentation, characteristics description, and classification or tabulating.
4. Discussion : presents information or opinions about a present hot issue which is sometimes controversial. Text is commonly ended with a conclusion or recommendation based on the presented data after presenting adequate arguments for the controversial issue.
5. Explanation : explains a thing or an object according to character, the procedure, etc.
6. Exposition : contains of an argument, point of views, a matter or a certain thing.

7. Procedure: contains of instruction about a sequence of actions, or a procedure to do thing.
8. Anecdote: contains of a meaning or shares about a ridiculous, shameful, funny, very special, or extraordinary event.
9. Advertisement – Persuasive Exposition : tries to seduce, attract, and catch the readers eyes.
10. Description : describes an object, both living things and the dead things, including human and animals.

### c. Descriptive Paragraph

Descriptive paragraph is a paragraph that paints a picture with words. A paragraph is quite visual (sharp and colorful details) and includes lively details taht help and show what an object, event, or a person looks like. Most of details will make an image in reader's mind.

According to Przybyla (2009) descriptive paragraphs have elements as follows:

- 1) Information : descriptive paragraphs describe ideas, and things, as well as inform about their functions.
- 2) Context : the information is always contextualized. Moreover the context in which given piece of info is presented is also subject to description and evaluation.
- 3) Description language : description paragraphs use considerable amount of vocabulary denoting value and attributes of things (nouns, adverb, and adjective).

Furhter, Alice (1994: 33) explain that description gives a mental picture of something, usually according to what can be seen, but any impression of the other sense-smell, taste, hearing, and touch make description more vivid and therefore more effective. So, we can conclude that, descriptive paragraph is a form of paragraph which contain of the description of the subject,to make the reader understand the details of the subject that is explained in the paragraph.

#### d. Types of Descriptive Paragraph

Jolly (1984: 47) says that a descriptive paragraph is a paragraph that describes something. Therefore, we can say that a descriptive paragraph is used to describe what a person looks and acts like.

Descriptive paragraph consist of five components, namely : describing process, event, object, person, and place.

##### 1. Describing a person

In describing a person, the first thing that should be done is to recognize the individual characteristic, such as : physical attribute (eyes, hair, skin), emotional (warm, calm, nervous), moral attitudes (kind, stingy), and intellectual (smart, clever).

##### 2. Describing a process

Describing a process is describing how something is happened or done.

##### 3. Describing a place

Describing a place is by presenting something like school, a field or garden.

##### 4. Describing thing (object)

Describing an object is by providing the physical characteristic of an object, such as : the color, shape, forms, and so on.

##### 5. Describing an event

Describing an event is explaining all details related to the event clearly.

#### e. Parts of Descriptive Paragraph

According to Blanchard (2005 : 34 ), in writing descriptive paragraph, several things should be understood, namely social function, writing focus, generic structure, and linguistics features.

1) . Social Function : the social function of writing descriptive paragraph is to describe a particular person, place, or animal by using adjectives or attributes.

2) . Writing focus : description of qualities, conditions, characters of an object.

3). Generic Structure : Gerrot (1994 : [http:// www. Nebi.nlm.nih. gov/pmc/articles/ PMC 1472640/](http://www.Nebi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1472640/), accessed on March, 27 th 2012 writes generic structure of descriptive writing are :



- a) Identification, which identifies phenomenon that will be described
- b) Description, which describes about parts, qualities or characteristics of something or someone in details.

These were basic data for evaluation.

4) Linguistics Features : according to Knapp and Watkins (2006: (<http://www.nebi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1472640/>), accessed on March, 27th 2012).

- a) In descriptive writing, the present tense is predominantly used. The past tense is used to describe something in the past.
- b) The use of action verbs are needed in describing especially for describing behaviours.
- c). When describing feelings, mental verbs are used. Adjective, adverb, and adverbial phrase are used often

#### f. The Example of Descriptive Paragraph

##### **Borobudur Temple**

Borobudur is Hindu – Buddhist temple. It was build in the ninth century under Sailendra dynasty of ancient Mataram kingdom. Borobudur is located in Magelang, Central Java, Indonesia.

Borobudur is well-known all over the world. Its construction is influenced by the Gupta architecture of India. The temple is constructed on a hill 46 m high and consist of eight step like stone terrace. The first five terrace are square and surrounded by walls adorned with Buddhist sculpture in bas-relief. The upper three are circular.

Each of them is with a circle of bell shape-stupa. The entire adifice is crowned by a large stupa at the centre at the centre of the top circle. The way to the summit extends through some 4.8 km of passage and starways. The design of borobudur which symbolizes the structure of universe influences temples at Angkor, Cambodia.

Borobudur temple which is rededicated as an Indonesian monument in 1983 is a valuable treasure for Indonesian people.

#### 4. Technique

Anthony ( 1963 ) stated in Brown (2000 : 14) that techniques were the specific activities manifested in the classroom that were consistent with a method and therefore were in harmony with an approach as well technique could include playing baroque music while reading a passage in the foreign language, getting the students to sit in the yoga position while listening to a list of words, or having learners adopt a new name in the classroom and role play that new person.

Further Anthony (1963) declares that technique defines what actually happens in the classroom. Technique is implementation that actually takes place in a classroom. It is the narrowest term, meaning one single procedure.it is a particular trick, stratagem, or contrivance used to accomplish in immediate objective. Technique must be consistent with a method, and therefore in harmony with approach as well.

##### a. Kinds of Technique

There are many techniques in teaching English. But in this case, the writer explains some techniques in teaching writing, as Ann Rimes says that “ there is no one way to teach writing”. That is why she suggest to use some techniques in writing. They are :

##### 1) Using pictures

In this technique, the teacher gives a picture. The picture can be a photograph, posters, maps, etc. Then the teacher shows the picture to the students, and asks the students’ opinion about the picture. When the students have given their own opinion, the teacher lead the students to make their writing based on what they think about the picture.

##### 2) Interview

The teacher asks the students to do an interview. They have to find any information about a certain topic from their classmates. The topic is given by the teacher. After the students get the record of the interview, they have to change it into a good writing.

##### 3) Discussion

The teacher will divide the students into groups. Then, gives some themes or topics to discuss. The students discuss the topic given in their groups, the teacher lead and observe the process of discussion. Finally, every group make a report of their discussion in a good writing.

#### 4) Outline

Outline is a tool to lead the writer finishing the writing. By using outline, the writing will focus on the topic. A more detailed, Reinking (1981:289) states, “an outline is the blue print that shows the division and subdivision of your paper, order your ideas, and relationship between the idea and supporting details. It means that, the listed idea which are collected to arrange the paragraph consist of main idea and supporting details. Further, Wishon and Burks state, “ outline will lead to writing a better composition, as the subject of the composition and its purpose are clearly stated. It will help the writer stick to the subject and force the writer to list the ideas that will be presented. Thus, the outline assures that the composition will be completed in logical order”. It means, outline is very useful to make a good writing, especially in describing the details of the subject.

Before making the subject, firstly, the students have to find many information. Because in an outline, all of the information found must be arranged based on the hierarchical relationship. The students have to find many details to support the outline and make the writing understandable. After that, it will be easy for the students to arrange the composition, which part will be explained at the first, middle, or the last paragraph. Because outline is only a tool to help the students to arrange the main idea and the supporting details in the writing.

As Elyssa Tardiff & Allen Brize (2010) write that there are primary reasons for creating an outline :

- Aids in the process of writing
- Helps you organize your ideas

So, we can conclude that outline is a rough draft or summary of the paragraph, in order to get a good writing.

##### (a) How to Make an Outline

Based on the website <http://www.psych.uw.edu/psych.php/p:339>, accessed in March, 17th 2012 there are some steps in making an outline, they are:

- 1) Figure out the most logical flow information, the best order for the information to be in using the subtopics you created earlier. You can put your note cards in this order now. There is always more than one to do this, so figure out what you like best.
- 2) Put your subtopics with the key points that support them, in words or short phrases, into a list or diagram that shows how they will flow from the beginning to end. There are many different types of outline diagrams.
- 3) Start with an introduction and end with a conclusion.

#### b. Types of outline

There are some types of outline, they are:

##### 1) Alphanumeric Outline

This type is the most common type of outline. Alpha as in alphabet and Numeric as in Numerals - it's the one that uses a combination of numbers and letters to organize your thoughts. The form is like the example below:

Title : The College Application Process

#### I. Choose Desired Colleges

A. Visit and evaluate college campuses

B. Visit and evaluate college websites

1. look for interesting classes

2. note important statistics

a. student/faculty ratio

b. retention rate

#### II. Prepare Application

## 2) Decimal Outline

The next type of outline is the decimal outline. This uses numbers, and each sub-heading has the number of the heading as part of it. This outline is used if you have a long, complicated outline and need to instantly be able to tell exactly where each section goes in the whole picture. For example:

Title: Choose Desired College

1.1 Visit and evaluate college campuses

1.2 Visit and evaluate college websites

1.2.1 Look for interesting classes

1.2.2 Note important statistics

## 3) Family Tree outline

Family Tree outlines are used to show people, their spouses and their children in chronological order.

1. Gregory CURIOUS

:: A. Patricia JONES (1st marriage)

::: 1. Chloe CURIOUS

::: 2. Lola CURIOUS

B. Katie HOGLEG (2nd marriage)

::: 3. Jenny CURIOUS

A. Paul SMITH (1st marriage)

::: 1. John SMITH

2. Jill SMITH

3. Vincent CURIOUS

Here you can see that Gregory had two wives (Patricia and Katie) and 4 children (Chloe, Lola, Jenny and Vincent) and you can see who he had each child with. You can also see his son-in-law (Paul Smith) and his 2

grandchildren who are Jenny's and Paul's. This is very useful in graphing descendants rather than ancestors.

#### 4) Outlining stories

Outline is also a name for a prose telling of a story to be turned into a screenplay. Sometimes called a one page (one page synopsis, about 1 - 3 pages). It is generally longer and more detailed than a standard synopsis (1 - 2 paragraphs), but shorter and less detailed than a treatment or a step outline. There are different ways to do these outlines and they vary in length.

#### 5) Plot Outline

In comics, an outline--often pluralised as outlines--refers to a stage in the development where the story has been broken down very loosely in a style similar to storyboarding in film development.

The pencils will be very loose (i.e., the sketch rough), the main aim being to lay out the flow of panels across a page, ensure the story successfully builds suspense and to work out points of view, camera angles and character positions within panels. This can also be referred to as a plot outline or a layout.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Writing is the process of thinking to represent the ideas or thought in form of arranged symbols. It is a skill that should be practiced many times to create a good writing since it is a complex process. Writing is not only to share your ideas into the paper but also to develop it become a good paragraph.

There are many kinds of genres in writing that should be learned by the students. One of the genre is descriptive. Students feel difficult to write a descriptive paragraph. They lack of vocabulary and confuse to determine what they should write. By applying outline technique in writing paragraph, the students will be motivated to find many vocabularies or knowledge that related to the subject in their writing. They can write

and arrange all of the information, so that they will be helped in making the descriptive paragraph.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Time and Location**

This research had been done in one month, starting from April 26th to 30th May 2012, Yayasan Perguruan Iskandar Muda Jl. T. Amir Hamzah Pekan I Sunggal, Medan.

### **The Subject of The Study**

The subject of this study is the tenth grade students of SMU Sultan Iskandar Muda Medan. Between six parallel classes, the writer just chooses one class as the subject in this research. There are 35 students in one class.

### **Research Design of The Study**

This study is designed as an action research because it involves a substantive act with a research procedure to find the improvement. A classroom action research is conducted because it results the improvement of students' skill. An action research is an action disciplined by inquiry in which a personal attempt at understanding while engage in a process of improvement and reform (Hopkins, 1993 : 44).

According to Kemmis and R. Mc Taggard , as quote by Wallace (1998), action research has 3 conditions that must be exist. Firstly, project relates to social practice, regarding as form of strategy action susceptible of improvement. Secondly, it proceeds through a spiral of cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. Thirdly, it involves those responsibility for the practice in each of the moments of the activity, widening participation in project is gradually to include others affect by the practice and maintaining collaboration of the process.

### **The Technique for Data Collection**

To collect the data, the writer uses writing test as the instrument. The writer asks the students to write a descriptive paragraph. Teacher gives only 45 minutes for students to write a good paragraph. In scoring the writing, the writer uses five categories, there are the content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanism.

Beside the writing test, the writer also uses interview and diary notes or field note to record everything about the observation, feeling, comment, and certain behavior that happen during the observation.

### **The Procedure of Data Collection**

The procedure of data collection in this research is conducted by two cycles. Each cycle will be done in three meetings. Every meeting includes four steps of cycle namely Planning, Action, Observation, and Reflection.

### **The Technique for Analyzing The Data**

The technique of data analysis of this study is using qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data is analyzed from the interview sheet and diary note during the teaching-learning process. In addition, quantitative data is analyzed from the score of the students that will be given to them. The criteria of the test are content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics.

In finding the mean of the students' score, the writer uses the following formula:

$$X = \frac{\sum x}{N} \times 100 \%$$

Where :

X = The mean of the students

$\sum x$  = The total score

N = The number of students

Further, in categorizing the number of students who got score up to 75, the writer uses the following formula:  $P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100\%$

P = the percentage of students who get 75

R = the member of students who get 75 up



T = the total number of students who will do the test

## THE DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS

### The Data

This research analyzed the data from diary note and the test result, which were done within two cycle. The research had been done about two weeks in five meetings. First cycle consisted of three meetings and second cycle consisted of two meetings. Every cycle included the four steps of action research. The teaching learning process of writing was done by using Outline technique. The research results were qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data were taken from diary note and interview, while the quantitative data were taken from the mean of the students' score.

### Data Analysis

The data comprised two sources namely qualitative and quantitative data. The data of this research was taken from the writing test, interview, observation sheet and diary note. And the improvement of the students can be seen in the table below:

NO.	NAMA	PRE TEST	POST TEST CYCLE I	POST TEST CYCLE II
1	MER	69	75	79
2	TOM	73	74	83
3	APN	73	77	85
4	DHU	79	82	89
5	VEB	78	82	90
6	KEV	81	85	92
7	REZ	66	70	76
8	DIN	80	85	93
9	NOV	70	75	82
10	FRA	75	76	88
11	WIL	72	75	85
12	YOG	72	76	89
13	DAN	78	81	88
14	ADY	77	79	83
15	IKS	81	83	83
16	DWI	79	81	90

17	ICH	76	80	89
18	VER	75	80	88
19	VAN	71	73	83
20	NUR	74	76	83
21	RIV	68	72	78
22	NAN	69	71	82
23	SAR	68	70	85
24	PUT	73	75	83
25	SYA	78	80	95
26	LIN	75	77	92
27	BAM	75	79	85
28	ANI	60	68	80
29	MAY	71	75	82
30	JOH	73	75	81
31	DWR	46	65	75
32	STE	43	67	75
33	CHA	55	70	87
34	RAD	52	75	83
35	STV	67	70	81
	TOTAL	$\sum = 2472$	$\sum = 2654$	$\sum = 2983$
	MEAN	$X = 70.6$	$X = 75.8$	$X = 85.2$

The score of the students improved better from treatment to treatment, the score in the second cycle was higher than the first cycle. By using Outline technique the students' writing achievement was improved and they could express their ideas easier in English.

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

By looking the result of the students' improvement above, the researcher can conclude that the Outline technique could improve the students' achievement in writing descriptive paragraph. So, for the English teacher it is better to use Outline technique in teaching writing and for the students, it can make them know more about vocabulary and how to arrange the paragraph. The last, for the reader this technique will make the writing process become easier.

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