

# **An Analysis of the Second Year Students' Learning Strategy of English Department at Bung Hatta University in Writing Descriptive Paragraph**

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## ***ABSTRACT***

The purpose of this research was to describe how do the second year students of English Department at Bung Hatta University employ language learning strategies in writing a descriptive paragraph. The design of this research was descriptive. The subject of this research was the second year students of English Department at Bung Hatta University in academic year 2012/2013. The total number of the population was 102 students. They were divided into three classes. The writer used cluster random sampling technique to choose the sample, and class B had been chosen to be the sample. The instrument used to get the data was questionnaire. To find out the reliability, the writer tried out the questionnaire. It was found that the reliability of questionnaire was high (0.70). It means the instrument was reliable. Based on the data analysis, the data showed that the students' learning strategy was moderate. In specific, the percentage of each learning strategies were; 60% had moderate learning strategy in mnemonic, 91.4% had moderate ability in learning strategy in cognitive, 62.9% had moderate learning strategy in compensatory, 74,2% had moderate learning strategy in metacognitive, 82.8% had moderate learning strategy in affective, and 71,4% had moderate learning strategy in social. The finding of this research lead the writer to conclude that the students' learning strategies should be improved in order that they can get good learning achievement. For the future research is suggested to investigate how students can show moderate performance in applying learning strategies.

**Key word: Analysis, Learning Strategy, Descriptive Paragraph,**

## **INTRODUCTION**

One of language skills that students will acquire in learning English is writing skill. This skill can be related to the other skills: listening, speaking, and reading. Writing skill has a role to

help students in developing their English. Harmer (1998: 23) says that one of reasons to teach writing is that writing is useful for language development. It means that writing

activity can be done by students to increase their English.

In writing skill, there are several kinds of paragraph. One of them is descriptive paragraph. It describes the condition of something\g. Oshima & Hogue (2007: 61) state that descriptive paragraph tells how something looks, tells, smells, tastes, and/or sounds. Alwasilah & Alwasilah (2005: 114) say that descriptive paragraph is a verbal picture of human, object, performance, view, or event. From two theories, it can be concluded that descriptive paragraph shows something naturally without exaggeration.

To master writing skill well, the role of language learning strategies cannot be ignored because it contributes to the success of language learners. Oxford (2001: 223) states that learning strategies contribute to make learning more effective and to increase students' independence and autonomy as learners.

Furthermore, Oxford (2001:167) classifies language learning strategies into six types. They are cognitive strategies, mnemonic strategies, metacognitive strategies, compensatory strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies.

Cognitive strategies help learners make and strengthen association between new and already-

known information. In writing skill, these strategies consist of practicing writing system, using different objects, using resources, and translating and transferring.

Mnemonic strategies help learners link a new item and something known. In writing skill, these strategies consist of placing new words into a context, structured reviewing, and using mechanical technique.

Metacognitive strategies help learners manage themselves as learners, general learning process, and specific learning tasks. In writing skill, these strategies consist of overviewing and linking with already known material, paying attention, identifying the purpose of language task and planning for a language task, and seeking practice opportunities.

Compensatory strategies help learners make up for missing knowledge when using English in oral or written communication. In writing skill, these strategies consist of selecting topic and coining words.

Affective strategies include identifying one's feeling (e.g anxiety, anger, and satisfactory). In writing skill, these strategies consist of making positive statement and rewarding themselves.

Social strategies facilitate learning with others and help learners understand the culture of the language which is learnt. In writing skill, these strategies consist of cooperating with others for correction and becoming aware of other's thought.

Talking about language learning strategies and writing skill reminds writer of problem that existed in Writing II which she was attending. At that time, she found that some students didn't show the good learning strategies; they came into the classroom without bringing dictionary, exercise book, or pen. Even, there was a student who came into the classroom without bringing anything.

Based on the reality stated above, the writer wanted to know more deeply how did the second year students of English Department at Bung Hatta University employ language learning strategies in writing descriptive paragraph.

In writing, there are many kinds of paragraph. They are descriptive, narrative, explanatory, definition, comparison or contrast, and persuasive. In writing those paragraphs, there are several aspects related to students which can be analyzed. They are students' writing ability, students' writing

problem, students' language learning strategy, and etc.

Students' Ability in writing a paragraph is one of objects that can be investigated in teaching learning process. Here, a researcher can focus on students' ability in writing a paragraph in different types of paragraph. In addition, the researcher can focus on students' ability in developing each component of a paragraph.

Another aspects that can be analyzed in writing is students' writing problem. Some of students may have problem with grammar, vocabulary, ideas in writing, etc. As we know, writing cannot be separated from grammar, vocabulary and ideas. In writing, grammar is needed to arrange writer's sentences in order to be acceptable grammatically. According to Frodesen (2001:247), grammar in writing is to support the view that second language writers need attention to form in developing writing proficiency and the attention to form for communicative goals. Vocabulary in writing is also the important thing to be considered because without vocabulary, it is impossible to write effectively. In a web

(<http://www.time4writing.com/writing-resources/vocabulary/>), it is stated that

one tool that can “power up” your writing is a strong vocabulary. Simple vocabulary can make our ideas sound simple. Errors with vocabulary can make our writing sound awkward because we have either misused words or we have not used the words that native speakers would use. Finding ideas in writing is also needed because by having idea students can explore their writing well.

The next aspect is students’ language learning strategies. Based on Oxford (2001:167), there are six types of language learning strategies. They are cognitive strategies, mnemonic strategies, metacognitive strategies, compensatory strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. These of language learning strategies are applied in all language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing).

Based on the identification of the problem above, the writer limited her study on learning strategy applied in writing activities, specifically in writing descriptive paragraph. The writer tried to find these learning strategy as stated by Oxford above which was employed by the second year students of English Department at Bung Hatta University in writing descriptive paragraph.

The problem of this research was formulated as follows: “How did the second year students of English Department at Bung Hatta University employ learning strategies in writing a descriptive paragraph?”

In accordance with the formulation above, the writer proposed some research questions that should be answered. They were as follows:

1. How do the second year students of English Department at Bung Hatta University employ cognitive strategy in writing a descriptive paragraph?
2. How do the second year students of English Department at Bung Hatta University employ mnemonic strategy in writing a descriptive paragraph?
3. How do the second year students of English Department at Bung Hatta University employ metacognitive strategy in writing a descriptive paragraph?
4. How do the second year students of English Department at Bung Hatta University employ compensatory strategy in writing a descriptive paragraph?
5. How do the second year students of English Department at Bung Hatta

University employ affective strategy in writing a descriptive paragraph?

6. How do the second year students of English Department at Bung Hatta University employ social strategy in writing a descriptive paragraph?

The general purpose of the study was to describe how well the second year students of English Department at Bung Hatta University employ language learning strategies in writing a descriptive paragraph. In detail, the purposes of the study were as follows:

1. To find out students' cognitive strategy in writing a descriptive paragraph.
2. To find out students' mnemonic strategy in writing a descriptive paragraph.
3. To find out students' metacognitive strategy in writing a descriptive paragraph.
4. To find out students' compensatory strategy in writing descriptive a paragraph.
5. To find out students' affective strategy in writing a descriptive paragraph.
6. To find out students' social strategy in writing a descriptive paragraph.

The research was significant theoretically and practically. The research theoretically would be one of additional

resources which were related to students learning strategy. Practically, the teacher can refer to the result of the research as an input to develop students' learning strategy. If the finding of this research shows the good result, the teacher can facilitate students to keep good learning strategies that students have got. If the students do not have good learning strategies, the teacher can find solution to improve students learning strategies.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The design of this research was descriptive. In this research, the writer investigated and described the students' learning strategies in writing descriptive paragraph.

According to Gay (1987: 102), population is a group to which a writer would like the result of the research to be generalized. The subject of this research was the second year students of English Department at Bung Hatta University in academic year 2012/2013. There were about 102 students who were grouped into three classes (A, B, and C). The writer took them because they had studied Writing I, and Writing II subject.

In this research, the writer used cluster random sampling. Gay (1987: 110) states that cluster random sampling is sampling in which groups, not individuals are randomly selected. All the members of

selected groups have similar characteristics. It means that they were in the same class and all of them were in the same level. In this research, the writer took one of classes from (A, B, and C) as the sample.

The procedure to select the sample was the writer took a piece of paper then the writer wrote the name of each classes with A, B, and C in each piece of paper. After that, the writer put the 3 pieces of paper into a box. Then, the writer shook them and took one of them by closing eyes. The name of the class chosen was the sample of this research.

The writer used questionnaire as the instrument of this research. The reason for using questionnaire was that learning strategy is something abstract to be identified in detail. Therefore, the questionnaire can be used to identify the learning strategy by providing items that reflect the learning strategy. Based on Tuckman's ideas in Sari (2008:24), questionnaire can be used to discover the experience that will be taken place and what is occurring at present. The questionnaire of this research was developed based on theory of learning strategy by Oxford (1990:327).

The questionnaire responds reflect the tendency of occurrence of learning strategies which were applied by students. The system of Likert Scale was

used. Sugiono (2008: 93) says that Likert Scale is used to find someone attitude, perception and suggestion about some issues. The writer used 4 possible answer for questionnaire:

- a. Always
- b. Often
- c. Sometime
- d. Never

The writer tried out the validity and reliability of questionnaire. The validity of instrument in this research came from the instrument employed. To fulfill validity of the questionnaire, it was constructed based on indicators as shown on the following table (Adopted from Oxford: 327):

To find out reliability of questionnaire, the writer used Variant formula (Arikunto, 2012:123) as follow:

$$\sigma^2 = \frac{\sum x^2 - \frac{(\sum x)^2}{N}}{N}$$

Where:

- $\sigma^2$  = Variant
- $\sum x^2$  = Total quadrate score for each question
- $\sum x$  = Total score for each item,
- N = Number of item

To get the reliability, the writer used Alpha formula suggested by (Arikunto, 2012:122).

$$r_{11} = \left( \frac{n}{n-1} \right) \left( 1 - \frac{\sum \sigma_i^2}{\sum \sigma_t^2} \right)$$

Where:

$r_{11}$  : The reliability of instrument

$\sum \sigma_i^2$  : Calculation of variants score for each item

$\sum \sigma_t^2$  : Variants total

n : Number of item

Finally, the writer used the degree of coefficient correlation based on Arikunto's Ideas (2012: 89):

0.81-1.00 : Very high

0.61-0.80 : High

0.41-0.60 : Enough

0.21-0.40 : Low

0.00-0.20 : Very low

The writer had done a try out test to the students out of the sample on 17 until 19 June at Bung Hatta University Padang. The writer allocated 30 minutes for the student to do questionnaire. The instruction given was first the writer gave the test of questionnaire to the students and then counted the score. After applying that formula, it was found that the reliability of questionnaire was 0.70. It means that the questionnaire had high reliability.

The data of this research was the students' learning strategy in writing

descriptive paragraph. The data was collected by using questionnaire.

To collect data, the writer did some activities as follows:

- a. The writer read the students' questionnaire sheet
- b. The writer gave score for all items of questionnaire. Always is scored 4, often is scored 3, sometimes is scored 2, and never is scored 1.
- c. The writer counted the scores total of students

In data analysis, the writer did the following procedures:

- a. Calculated the mean by using the formula ( Arikunto, 2012:301).

$$M = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

Where:

M = Mean

$\sum x$  = The students 'total score

N = Number of the sample

- b. Calculated the standard deviation by using formula (Arikunto, 2012: 305).

$$SD = \sqrt{\frac{\sum x^2}{N} - \frac{(\sum x)^2}{N}}$$

Where:

SD = Standard Deviation

$\sum x$  = Sum of all scores

N = Number of the students

- c. Classify the students' learning strategy into high, moderate, and

low by using the following criteria.  
(Arikunto, 2012:301).

High learning strategy = > M + 1SD

Moderate learning strategy =  
between (M-1SD) and (M + 1SD)

Low learning strategy = < M – 1SD

- d. Calculated the percentage of the students who get high, moderate, and low ability by using the following formula:

$$P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100 \%$$

Where:

P = percentage of  
students score.

R = the sum of the students  
who get high, moderate  
and low learning  
strategy

T = the sum of the student.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this chapter, the writer presents findings and discussions. They are student's learning strategy of Mnemonic, Cognitive, Compensatory, Metacognitive, Affective, and Social.

### • **Students' Learning Strategy in Mnemonic**

Based on data analysis, the writer calculated the score and got 9.3 for mean and 1.62 for standard deviation. It was

supported by the questionnaire. After that, the writer classified the students' learning strategy into three groups: high, moderate, and low. If the scores were higher than 10.92, the students' ability was categorized as high. It belonged to moderate when the scores in the range 7.68 until 10.62, and it belonged to low if the students' scores were lower than 7.68. Finally, the writer calculated the percentage of the students' learning strategy. The result was that 9 students (25.7%) had high learning strategy, 21 students (60%) had moderate learning strategy, and 5 students (14.3%) had low learning strategy.

It means that the students' learning strategy in mnemonic was moderate. It was supported by the fact that majority of the students (60.6 %) had moderate learning strategy.

### • **Students' Learning Strategy in Cognitive**

Based on data analysis, the writer calculated the score and got 15.6 for mean and 4.08 for standard deviation. It was supported by the questionnaire. After that, the writer classified the students' learning strategy into three groups: high, moderate, and low. If the scores were higher than 19.68, the students' ability was categorized as high. It belonged to moderate when the scores in the range 11.52 until 19.08 and it belonged to low if the students' scores

were lower than 11.52. Finally, the writer calculated the percentage of the students' learning strategy. The result was that 2 students (5.7%) had high learning strategy, 32 students (91.4%) had moderate learning strategy, and 1 students (1.29%) had low learning strategy.

It means that the students' learning strategy in mnemonic was moderate. It was supported by the fact that majority of the students (91.4 %) had moderate learning strategy.

- **Students' Learning Strategy in Compensatory**

Based on data analysis, the writer calculated the score and got 5.68 for mean and 1.26 for standard deviation. It was supported by the questionnaire. After that, the writer classified the students' learning strategy into three groups: high, moderate, and low. If the scores were higher than 6.94, the students' ability was categorized as high. It belonged to moderate when the scores in the range 4.42 until 6.26, and it belonged to low if the students' scores were lower than 4.42. Finally, the writer calculated the percentage of the students' learning strategy. The result was that 7 students (20%) had high learning strategy, 22 students (62.9%) had moderate learning strategy, and 6 students (17.1%) had low learning strategy.

It means that the students' learning strategy in mnemonic was moderate. It was supported by the fact that majority of the students (62.9%) had moderate learning strategy.

- **Students' Learning Strategy in Metacognitive**

Based on data analysis, the writer calculated the score and got 14.3 for mean and 2.77% for standard deviation. It was supported by the questionnaire. After that, the writer classified the students' learning strategy into three groups: high, moderate, and low. If the scores were higher than 17.07, the students' ability was categorized as high. It belonged to moderate when the scores in the range 11.53 until 16.77, and it belonged to low if the students' scores were lower than 11.53. Finally, the writer calculated the percentage of the students' learning strategy. The result was that 5 students (14.3%) had high learning strategy, 26 students (74.2%) had moderate learning strategy, and 4 students (11.4%) had low learning strategy.

It means that the students' learning strategy in mnemonic was moderate. It was supported by the fact that majority of the students (74.2%) had moderate learning strategy.

- **Students' Learning Strategy in Affective**

Based on data analysis, the writer calculated the score and got 8.4 for mean and 1.95 for standard deviation. It was supported by the questionnaire. After that, the writer classified the students' learning strategy into three groups: high, moderate, and low. If the scores were higher than 10.35, the students' ability was categorized as high. It belonged to moderate when the scores in the range 6.45 until 9.95, and it belonged to low if the students' scores were lower than 6.45. Finally, the writer calculated the percentage of the students' learning strategy. The result was that 5 students (14.3%) had high learning strategy, 29 students (82.8%) had moderate learning strategy, and 1 students (2.8%) had low learning strategy.

It means that the students' learning strategy in mnemonic was moderate. It was supported by the fact that majority of the students (82.8 %) had moderate learning strategy.

- **Students' Learning Strategy in Social**

Based on data analysis, the writer calculated the score and got 8.4 for mean and 1.45 for standard deviation. It was supported by the questionnaire. After that, the writer classified the students' learning strategy into three groups: high, moderate, and low. If the scores were higher than 7.3 the students' ability was

categorized as high. It belonged to moderate when the scores in the range 4.4 until 6.45, and it belonged to low if the students' scores were lower than 4.4. Finally, the writer calculated the percentage of the students' learning strategy. The result was that 5 students (14.3%) had high learning strategy, 25 students (71.4%) had moderate learning strategy, and 5 students (14.3%) had low learning strategy.

It means that the students' learning strategy in mnemonic was moderate. It was supported by the fact that majority of the students (71.4%) had moderate learning strategy.

Based on the result of the data analysis, the writer discusses about the second year students' learning strategy of English Department at Bung Hatta University in writing descriptive paragraph as follow:

- **The Students' Learning Strategy in Mnemonic**

Based on the finding, the students' learning strategy in mnemonic was moderate. There were 60.6 % students in moderate. It means that there are many students who still did not apply the learning strategy of mnemonic totally. This can create unsatisfactory achievement.

- **The Students' Learning Strategy in Cognitive**

Based on the analysis, it was found the finding, the students' learning strategy in cognitive was same with mnemonic strategy. There were 91.4% students in moderate. It means that there are many students who still did not apply the learning strategy of cognitive maximally either.

- **The Students' Learning Strategy in Compensatory**

Based on the finding, the students' learning strategy in compensatory was not different from mnemonic and cognitive strategy (62.9% students in moderate). This implied that there are many students did not apply the learning strategy of compensatory properly.

- **The Students' Learning Strategy in Metacognitive**

Based on the finding, the students' learning strategy in metacognitive was moderate. There were 74.2% students in moderate. It means that there are many students who still did not apply the learning strategy of metacognitive well.

- **The Students' Learning Strategy in Affective**

Based on the finding, the students' learning strategy in affective was moderate. There were 82.8% students in

moderate. It means that there are many students who still did not apply the learning strategy of affective fully.

#### **4.2.6 The Students' Learning Strategy in Social**

Based on the finding, the students' learning strategy in social was moderate. There were 71.4% students in moderate. It means that there are many students who still did not apply the learning strategy of social.

Based on the explanation above, it was found that the level of applying the learning strategies was different one each other. In hierarchy, the level of moderate was mnemonic, compensatory, social, metacognitive, affective, and cognitive. It means that cognitive had the highest level of moderate.

Based on the explanation above, it was found that the level of applying the learning strategies was different one each other. In hierarchy, the level of moderate was mnemonic, compensatory, social, metacognitive, affective, and cognitive. It means that cognitive had the highest level of moderate.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

After having discussed in the previous chapter, the writer drew six conclusions about research that has been conducted. They are as follows:

1. The learning strategy of the second year students of English Department at Bung Hatta University in mnemonic was moderate. It was proved by the fact that 60% of the students had moderate ability.
2. The learning strategy of the second year students of English Department at Bung Hatta University in cognitive was moderate. It was proved by the fact that 91.4% of the students had moderate ability.
3. The learning strategy of the second year students of English Department at Bung Hatta University in compensatory was moderate. It was proved by the fact that 62.9% of the students had moderate ability.
4. The learning strategy of the second year students of English Department at Bung Hatta University in metacognitive was moderate. It was proved by the fact that 74.2% of the students had moderate ability.
5. The learning strategy of the second year students of English

Department at Bung Hatta University in affective was moderate. It was proved by the fact that 82.8% of the students had moderate ability.

6. The learning strategy of the second year students of English Department at Bung Hatta University in social was moderate. It was proved by the fact that 71.4% of the students had moderate ability.

Based on conclusions stated above, the writer proposed some suggestions. They are as follows:

1. The students' learning strategy should be improved in order that they can get good learning strategy achievement.
2. The future research is suggested to investigate how the students can show moderate performance in applying learning strategy.

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