

**USING THEME- RHEME NEGOTIATION MODEL  
TO IMPROVE WRITING SKILL  
OF THE THIRD SEMESTER STUDENTS  
OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OF UTM  
IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2011/2012**

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**Abstrak**

*Menulis adalah salah satu keterampilan berbahasa yang harus dikuasai oleh mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Tidar Magelang. Namun kenyataannya sebagian besar mahasiswa masih menjumpai kesulitan khususnya dalam mengembangkan paragraf. Penelitian ini yang merupakan Classroom Action Research meneliti tentang keefektifan Theme- Rheme Negotiation Model untuk meningkatkan kemampuan menulis mahasiswa.*

**Keywords:** *Theme, Rheme, writing.*

**A. INTRODUCTION**

Language is a resource for making meanings. Literacy in language education, in this case English, should develop the students' ability or skill to negotiate meanings or to communicate through the creation and interpretation of text in various contexts. As we know in Competency- Based Curriculum, the goal of English teaching and learning process is that the students are expected to be able to communicate in English. According to competency models developed by Murcia, Dornyei and Thurrell (1995), basically the

competency or the ability to communicate is the ability to create and understand a discourse. A discourse can be defined as texts, either spoken or written texts in a certain context (context of situation and context of culture). The discourse competence is supported by linguistic competence, actional, socio-cultural and strategic competence.

Writing skill is one of the language skills that must be mastered by English Department students of Tidar University of Magelang. Writing which is taught in ten credits and a compulsory subject is as MKK subject (mata kuliah keilmuan dan keterampilan) – MKK subjects provide students with basic knowledge and skill.

Related to the implementation of Competency- Based Curriculum in SMP and SMA, English Department of Tidar University of Magelang always tries to adjust the curriculum and syllabus of writing. It is because the outputs of this department are English teachers who are expected to be ready to teach English especially in SMP and SMA.

Conveying written message is not simple. The students still found difficulties especially in developing a paragraph. It is based on my observation during I taught writing class in second semester. 75 % of the students were confused in organizing the messages. In this case, some of the students could not develop the next clause from the preceding clause. They did not refer the subject of the next clause from the previous one. As a result, the students cannot write the paragraph coherently. Besides that, some students always wrote subject as the Theme of the clause. It makes the text/ paragraph look monotonous.

A good organization of Theme and Rheme in a paragraph will make the paragraph coherent. The definition of Theme and Rheme as stated by Halliday (1994: 37) is as follows: Theme is the element which serves as point of departure of the message; it is that with which the clause is concerned. The reminder of the message, the part in which Theme is developed is called Rheme. As a message



structure, therefore, a clause consists of a Theme accompanied by a Rheme; and the structure is expressed by the order, whatever is chosen as a Theme is put first.

Being aware of the problem above, I want to introduce the students Theme- Rheme negotiation in teaching writing. Hopefully, by introducing them Theme-Rheme Negotiation, the students can be able to organize the messages in writing a paragraph in order that they write the paragraph coherently.

This research addresses the following questions:

1. Does the students' writing skill improve after being introduced Theme-Rheme negotiation model?
2. How is the development of students' writing skill after being introduced Theme-Rheme negotiation model?

The purposes of the research are:

1. to know whether or not the students' writing skill improve after being introduced Theme- Rheme Negotiation model.
2. to know the development of students' writing skill after being introduced Theme-Rheme Negotiation model.

The research hopefully

1. gives benefits to the teaching of writing where students were given exercise to organize the messages in a paragraph;
2. overcomes problems faced by students in writing texts;
3. contributes a little knowledge about how to develop a paragraph;
4. helps the students of writing class in teaching- learning process.

## **B. RESEARCH METHOD**

### **1 Research Design**

In this research, I applied Classroom Action Research approach with two cycles to treat the students to improve the students' writing skill. Each cycle consisted of four stages. They are Planning, Acting, Observing and Reflecting.

## **2 Object and Subject of the Research**

Since the study was devoted to investigate the development of the students' writing skill by introducing them Theme-Rheme Negotiation, Theme-Rheme negotiation of the Students' written texts were the objects of this research. They were in the form of paragraph in which there were more than five sentences in each paragraph. The subjects of this research were the students of English department of UTM. The students here refer to the students of English Department of Tidar University of Magelang who took writing 2 subject in 2011/2012 academic year. There are 33 students who are involved in the research. All of them had to write a paragraph.

## **3. Technique of Data Collection**

As this research is Classroom Action Research as one of the approaches of qualitative, the writer as the researcher become the main instrument of obtaining the data. The data gathered were in the form of test ( the students' written texts) and observation.

## **4. Performance Indicator**

The performance indicators of this research are as follows.

- a. At least 70% of the students can organize the message in the paragraph (can write coherent paragraph).
- b. At least 70% of the students are active.

## **5. Data Analysis**

In this study, for quantitative data, the writer analyzed the Students' writing tests using Brown's theory (2004). The components to be scored are organization including introduction, body and conclusion, logical development of idea (content),



grammar, Punctuation, spelling and mechanics and also the style and quality of expression.(Brown, 2004:244). For qualitative data, the writer used descriptive analysis. In this case, she followed Milles and Huberman model (1992: 100). The model consists of data reduction, data presentation, conclusion and verification. She observed the development of the students in organizing the message in their paragraphs. She compared the paragraph before treatment, first cycle and second cycle paragraph.

## C. RESULT

### 1. Description of Pre- Cycle Condition

The previous condition; before the writer applied Theme-Rheme negotiation model, the abilities of the students in developing the paragraph of written report texts were still low. In this case the students did not perform positive attitude, and thinking about developing the paragraphs of written report texts. Many of them looked confused because they did not know how to develop paragraph coherently. They could develop the paragraph but their paragraph were not coherent. One of the examples of their paragraphs is as follows.

- I was born in Kalinegoro village. Now, I am 20 years old. There are many farms and farmers. There is no any pollution in my village. When I was still a child, I liked to play football with my friends. Either friends or I ever become a winner.

From the above example, it can be seen that the students could develop the paragraphs but their paragraphs were not coherent. There is no relationship among sentences.

Based on writing test, theoretically only 45 % of the students

knew well on how to develop coherent paragraphs. The data are supported by the results of the interview and observation. Based on the result of the observation, it was found that 55 % of the students were confused on how to develop the paragraph coherently. The components to be scored are organization including introduction, body and conclusion, logical development of idea (content), grammar, Punctuation, spelling and mechanics and also the style and quality of expression.(Brown, 2004:244). The scale for each component can be seen in the following table.

No.	Score	Criteria
1.	20-18	Excellent to good
2.	17-15	Good to adequate
3.	14-12	Adequate to fair
4.	11-6	Unacceptable
5.	5-1	Not college level work

#### The result of pre-cycle test

N o.	Class	Mastery on writing	Number of students	The gained result		
				Average	Master	Percentage
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Semester of C class.	95 – 100	1 2 10 2 15 3	65.24	15	45.45 %
		89 – 94.9				
		83– 88.9				
		77-82.9				
		71-76.9				
		65-70.9				
	60-64.9					
		55 -59.0				

Note: mastery learning: 71

The result of pre-test shows that only 15 students (45.45%) from all students who have fulfilled mastery learning of writing test and 18 students (54.55%) haven't fulfilled mastery learning of writing skill.

The low mastery learning of writing skill of the students in C



class (The third semester students of English Department of UTM) motivates the writer to try to improve the students' writing skill through introducing them Theme- Rheme negotiation model in developing the paragraph.

## 2. Description of First Cycle Condition

This cycle was early action research by introducing the students Theme- Rheme negotiation model in developing the paragraph. This action was as an effort to solve problem in pre-cycle. After cycle I ends, the researcher collected all data and then analyzed them to know whether the treatment was successful or not. The result of cycle I test

### The result of first -cycle test

No.	Class	Mastery on writing	Number of students	The gained result		
				Average	Master	Percentage
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Semester of C class.	95 - 100				
		89 - 94.9				
		83 - 88.9	3			
		77 - 82.9	2			
		71 - 76.9	15	67.97	20	67.97 %
		65 - 70.9	1			
		60 - 64.9	10			
	55 - 59.0	2				

Note: mastery learning: 71

The result of cycle 1 has not satisfied, because only 20 of all students who have got good score (67.97 %). And the average score increases. The average score of cycle I test has not fulfilled the mastery learning. So the writer tried again to apply the Theme-rheme negotiation model in developing the paragraph.

The above data was also supported by the result of the observation and interview. Based on the observation of Cycle I, it was there was an improvement in the abilities of the students in developing the paragraph. The writer found that found 68 % of the students were active and they could develop the coherent paragraphs. The results of the observation is as follows.

### The Result of Observation in Cycle I

No	Behavioral	Observation focus	Total	Max.	Percentage
1	The activeness of students to listen teacher's explanation.	1. Student gives attention to teacher's explanation	25	33	75.76
		2. Student asks about the material lesson	20	33	66.67
		3. Student comments about the material lesson	23	33	69.70
		4. Student answers teacher's questions	20	33	66.67
		5. Student makes note	20	33	66.67
2	The activeness of students during	1. All students have spirit in studying the material	25	33	75.76



	learning material (developing the paragraph)	2.	All students ask questions about the material	20	33	66.67
3	The activeness of students do the duty that was given by teacher	1.	All students do the duty to write the paragraph	33	33	100
		2.	All students can write the paragraph well	20	33	66.67

### 3. Description of Second Cycle Condition

This cycle was the second cycle of the action research. It was done by introducing the students Theme- Rheme negotiation model in developing the paragraph. This action was as an effort to solve problem in previous cycle. After cycle II ends, the researcher collected all data and then analyzed them to know whether the treatment was successful or not and whether there was an improvement or not. The result of cycle II test is as follows.

#### The result of second -cycle test

No	Class	Mastery on writing	Number of students	The gained result		
				Average	Master	Percentage
3 <sup>rd</sup> Semester of C class.	95 – 100	2	73.85	24	72.73 %	
	89 – 94.9	5				
	83– 88.9	7				
	77-82.9	10				
	71-76.9	2				
	65-70.9	7				
60-64.9						

		4.	Student answers teacher's questions	30	33	90.91
		5.	Student makes note	30	33	90.91
2	The activeness of students during learning material (developing the paragraph)	1.	All students have spirit in studying the material	30	33	90.91
		2.	All students ask questions about the material	30	33	90.91
3	The activeness of students do the duty that was given by teacher	1.	All students do the duty to write the paragraph	33	33	100
		2.	All students can write the paragraph well	24	33	72.73

#### D. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that Theme- Rheme negotiation model is effective. It can improve the students' writing skill especially in paragraph development. Besides that, by introducing Theme- Rheme negotiation model, it can improve the activeness of the students in writing class.



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