

Error monitoring Strategy in writing activities of English Department Students

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Abstract: The term of writing can not be separated from English Department Students. It is a part of students' skill to see whether they are able to use English well or not in their daily life. Moreover, They are not only able to use in spoken language but also are able to express their ideas in writing form. Writing ability is specific ability which helps students to put their ideas into words in meaningful form and interact with the message. It can not be denied, there are some problem faced by students in writing. It may be related to grammatical form, coherence and cohesion of paragraph, spelling, etc. However, it is still a process. The problem right now is how to make students aware about their mistake or error in writing. Therefore, in this article writer will discuss about the strategy that can be used by students. It is Error Monitoring Strategy. Error monitoring strategy is a learning strategy that helps students systematically question themselves regarding capitalization, overall appearance, punctuation, and spelling errors in their written products, as well as correct them, before submitting the assignment to the lecturer.

I. Introduction

Writing is an important activity to express and convey our ideas, messages, and thoughts in the form of any type of writing, such as letter, memo, poem, short story, and etc. On the other hand, It can be more interested if we know what to write, like related to feelings, experiences, knowledge, insight, and events in environment. As one of the language skills, writing should be produced grammatically because it will never be separated from the mastery of grammar. To produce good sentences, it requires the mastery of the aspect. Mastering grammar is the first step to make a good writing. It can guide us to produce writing

grammatically in which our writing can be read meaningfully and logically.

According to Chin (2000), a professor of English in University of Montana, Grammar is the sound, structure, and meaning system of language. It means that grammar refers to the system of rules by which words are arranged into meaningful unit. It is the most important system in language skills including writing. Besides, other aspects like vocabulary, verb tenses and organization are also important to make our writing good, but if we ignore the aspects, our writing will be difficult to be understood by the readers. So, when we are writing, we have to notice the aspects of writing. The better our writing will be, the easier and the more understand the readers read it.

Talking about writing, it means that we talk about the communication of written text. Writing can be a tool of good and meaningful communication. We can communicate with other people indirectly. The better our writing we produce, the better our writing will be a means of written communication. As a means of written communication, writing has an important role to convey our feelings, ideas, and messages. We can send our messages through the various forms of writing areas such as newspapers, magazines, articles, and books.

Actually, there some problem may be faced by university students in writing activities, such as block minded, difficulties to make paragraph coherence and cohesion, incorrect grammar, etc. The problem will be seen, if the students do editing after doing writing activity. The editing is done to know error or mistake that happen in writing draft. It has so many advantages own by the students if the do editing before going to finishing final draft. In this paper, the writer try to give problem solving for students to know their mistake or error in their writing. It is by Error monitoring strategy. Students need a strategy when learning process to enable them to write paragraph or essay so that they would not think anymore that writing is interesting.

Error Monitoring strategy is a strategy that can be used by the students to detect their writing mistakes in order to be good and neat. They can make their writing better than before. Error monitoring strategy can be used by the students to independently detect and correct errors in their written work to increase the overall quality of their final product. Therefore, in this strategy, the students are expected to detect and correct the mistakes or errors in their writing. To detect the errors, the students should use COPS acronym that consists of Capitalization, Overall appearance/Organization, Punctuation, and Spelling. This acronym can cue students through an editing process to edit written work for mechanical errors and clarity (Hall, 2011)

II. Discussion

a. Writing activities

Writing is a process to develop ideas in paragraph in order to get the result that is writing. Sokolik in Linse (2005:98) said that writing is a combination of process and product. The process means our act in gathering our ideas. The ideas then will be presented to the readers (audiences) in a form of any type of writing that is called as the product. In addition, Russel and Robert (2002:7) state that writing is usefully described as a process, something which shows continuous change in time like growth in organic nature. It means that writing is a process in which there is always continuous change in the process until the process finished. It is as a growing of organic nature.

Writing must also be developed through systematic instruction and practice. We have to practice the strategies and rules of how to be able to write. We need many practices because writing is a complex and demanding skill. According to Wendling and Mather (2009:139), writing is a complex task that requires the integration of multiple cognitive, linguistic, and motor abilities. If students are to become confident and competent writers, they

require explicit instruction and many opportunities to write. So, writing is a skill that needs a process to be done in order to get the product and should often be practiced to be able to write.

Being able to write means that our ability is able to produce good writing so that it can be readable and understandable for the readers or audiences. Being readable and understandable can make the readers not bored to read our writing. Besides, They can be more interested in reading it and can catch the points of our writing. In writing, the students should have some skills in order to be able to do the process of writing and get the better product. Therefore, to have the skills of writing is not easy, but if the students do more practices and study hard, they must be able to have the skills.

According to Douglas (2007:399), there are two kinds of skills of writing as follows:

a. Microskills

- 1) Produce graphemes and orthographic patterns of English.
- 2) Produce writing at an efficient rate of speed to suit the purpose.
- 3) Produce an acceptable core of words and use appropriate word order patterns.
- 4) Use acceptable grammatical systems (e.g, tense, agreement, pluralization), patterns, and rules.
- 5) Express a particular meaning in different grammatical forms

b. Macroskills

1. Use cohesive devices in written discourse
2. Use the rhetorical form and conventions of written discourse
3. Appropriately accomplish the communicative functions of written text according to form and purpose.
4. Convey links and connections between events, and communicate such relations as main idea, supporting

idea, new information, given information, generalization, and exemplification.

5. Distinguish between literal and implied meanings when writing.
6. Correctly convey culturally specific references in the context of the written text.
7. Develop and use a battery of writing strategies, such as accurately assessing the audience's interpretation, using prewriting devices, writing with fluency in the first drafts, using paraphrases and synonyms, soliciting peer and instructor feedback, and using feedback for revising and editing.

The importance of mastering those skills is that the students can achieve which type of writing that they are able to write. Generally, micro skills apply more appropriately to imitative and intensive writing. While the macro skills are essential for the successful mastery of responsive and extensive writing (essay). So, what the students need in writing is the macro skills of writing.

The purposes of writing are to express one's self, to provide information for one's reader, to persuade one's reader, and to create a literary work. Writing for some writers has different purposes. On the other hand, Writing is not only used to express ideas, meanings, and feelings but also used for the other reasons. Students have some reasons to write. The students need to know for what they write in order to make them easier in developing their ideas. If students do not have clear purpose of writing, they will feel bored and not focus on their writing. By knowing the purpose, students will be easy to decide the strategies to achieve good writing. Therefore, students need to identify a purpose of their writing.

There are several general purposes for writing: to explain or educate, to entertain or amuse, to persuade or convince.

Furthermore, Grenville (2001:1) points out the purpose of writing:

- a. **Writing to Entertain**, Writing to entertain means that it does not necessarily make the readers laugh, but at least engage their feelings in some way. Writing to entertain is also known as creative writing or imaginative writing. The examples of creative writing are novels, stories, poems, song lyrics, etc.
- b. **Writing to Inform**, Writing to inform means that we tell the readers about something. This writing is used to give important information related to the readers. The examples of writing to inform are newspapers, reports, articles, procedures, etc.
- c. **Writing to Persuade**, Writing to persuade means that we try to convince the readers about something. This writing tries to make the reader agree with the writer's opinion. This type of writing may include writer's opinion, but as a part of logical case backed up with evidence, rather than just as an expression of feelings.

Writing is a purposeful and communicative activity that responds to other people and other texts. It is a skill which must be taught and practiced. Besides, Writing is essential features of learning a language because it provides a very good means of foxing the vocabulary, spelling, and sentence pattern. Furthermore, writing is an efficient tool to facilitate and to reinforce other language skills. Reading, vocabulary, and grammar skills are employed in the act of writing.

Writing Activities

Writing is an integrated skill. It is one of the productive skills and another is speaking (Haycraft, 1998:8) . As the productive skill, writing is very far different from speaking. It needs a activity that students should do. The activity is usually

called as writing activity. All students must be through a activity to produce the product of writing. However, Doing the activity, the students should do the right stages started from writing until being finished. By doing the stages carefully, the students will produce a good result. According to Richard and Renandya (2002:316), activity of writing as a classroom activity incorporates the four basic writing stages-planning, drafting (writing), revising (redrafting) and editing.

- a. **Planning**, Planning (pre-writing) is the first step that the students do to start writing. It stimulates thoughts for getting started. The students have to plan what they will write that can make them easier in drafting. Having a planning is the important one to do the activity because if there is no planning, there is nothing to do the next step. Everything we do, we have to plan before. Planning in writing is that the students should think in their mind to gather ideas that they are going to write so that the students can be easy to continue the next step.
- b. **Drafting**, Drafting is a step after planning. This step involves the ideas from the planning stage into written sentences, adding details, and elaborating. In drafting, students have to use the easy way that is the students can use some questions that help them while they are drafting. According to Riel, there are some questions might be helpful to students as they compose their first drafts:
 - 1) What ideas or thoughts will we include?
 - 2) How will we organize the material?
 - 3) How will we introduce, develop and conclude our first draft?
 - 4) What will the title of our article be? (A clever title can help ensure a large readership!)

- c. **Revising**, Revising usually involves proofreading a writing product for meaning. The revision process can seem overwhelming. In this step, the students may resist to make revisions, such as additions, deletions, or movement of words, sentences, or paragraphs. They can check their draft whether it is true or not. In addition, Vaca et al in Linse (107: 2005)said that revising occurs when a writer looks for feedback from a lecturer or another student. It means that revising can be done by the lecturer or another student to revise the students' writing (drafting).
- d. **Editing**, Editing is the proofreading stage of writing. Unlike revising, which entails the possible reworking of large parts of our writing, editing is a word-by-word and sentence-by-sentence task (starkey, 2004:57). The proofreading stage is to identify grammatical, spelling, and mechanical (capitalization and punctuation) errors. Besides, according to Robert (2003:147), There are seven types of incorrectness that can be edited: Careless slips, confusions and omissions, Spelling mistakes, Punctuation mistakes, Grammatical incorrectness, Formed sentences, Grammatical inappropriateness, and Semantic or lexical incorrectness.
- e. **Publish**, Publish is the last step to show our product of writing. The students can post writing product in front of the class or read it to the class. They can also share about their writing to other friends.

The process of writing also has requirements. The requirements can help the students do the stages of process of writing easily. They will be able to decide what the topic that they want to write in which they know the background knowledge of the topic. However, By knowing the background knowledge of the topic, they can be easy to develop their ideas to continue their

writing until being finished. They can also notice what the specific genre they will write. The requirements in the process of writing are:

- 1) **Awareness:** When students are given a writing assignment such as an essay, they must draw upon awareness of
 - a) Background knowledge on the topic
 - b) How to research relevant information on the topic
 - c) The specific structure for the genre assigned (persuasive essay, narrative account, response to literature)
 - d) What the lecturer wants in the paper — the performance standards and expectations to be met
- 2) **Skills and brain processes:** Producing a writing assignment requires a student to use multiple skills, many of which are areas of weakness for dyslexic learners, including organization, language, memory and sequencing, metacognition, processing speed, perceptual - motor skills, and attention.

Last but not least in producing good writing, we should notice the components of writing. According to Huges (2003:114) , there are five components of writing, they are:

- a. **Content,** We must have ability to think creatively to develop our ideas. The content of writing should be knowledgeable, substantive, through development of thesis, relevant to assigned topic. To help developing content, we need to ask ourselves about questions such as whether to expand a point that provides an example or define a term in order to help readers understand the text or to persuade them of the validity of the argument presented.
- b. **Organization,** Writing should have good organization based on the text written. It should have unity and

coherence. Unity means that all of the sentences in it discuss only one main idea. Every supporting sentence must directly explain or prove the main idea, which is stated in the topic sentence; while, coherence means that the parts of the paragraph are logically connected. To make a coherent paragraph should use transitional signals.

- c. **Vocabulary**, In writing composition, there should be sophisticated range, effective words, idiom, word choice, and its usage. We should have many vocabularies to make our writing become good writing. so, we should enrich our vocabulary.
- d. **Language Use**, In composing texts, the well writing results require correct spelling, grammar, and handwriting. It is important to make our writing become meaningful and understandable for the readers. We should notice the tense, word order, pronouns, articles, prepositions, number, and also the errors of agreement in writing.
- e. **Mechanics**, Essay writing is mechanically good if the writers demonstrate the mastery of conventions, good spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, and also hand writing. Mechanics are the conventions of print that do not exist in oral language just in written language. So, we should be careful in writing because it will be permanent.

b. ERROR MONITORING STRATEGY

Error monitoring strategy is a strategy used as a guide to write in the correct form. It helps students systematically question themselves regarding capitalization, appearance, punctuation, and

spelling errors in their written products, as well as correct them, before submitting the assignment to the lecturer (Todd, 2011). In other words, error monitoring strategy is very helpful for the students to be used as self-correct of their writing in order to be better so that the lecturer can be satisfied in assessing their product. According to Lieneman and Reid (2011:30) Error monitoring strategy is a strategy that addresses revisions for any type of writing. So, this strategy can be used not only for editing but also for revising before the final draft is written.

By using error monitoring strategy, students learn how to monitor their written work through self-questioning, thus allowing them to cope more effectively with the curriculum demands related to written assignments. Question themselves means that after drafting their writing, they then use COPS questions to correct their draft by themselves. If they doubt about editing the draft, they can give their product to their friends to help revising.

The COPS question/ acronym is used to apply error monitoring strategy. According to Schumaker et al in Mather (2009:146) , COPS helps the students identify four basic error types. The four basic types of errors refer to the acronym of COPS itself. They are Capitalization, Overall appearance, Punctuation, and Spelling. Moreover, the COPS acronym provides students with a checklist for editing some possible mechanical errors. According to Welkes (2008:54), the acronym of COPS, which stands for Capitalization, Overall appearance, punctuation, and Spelling, enables students to use a self questioning technique, similar to that used with content editing

- 1) Have I capitalized all proper names (i.e., people, places, documents, as well as the first word of every sentence?
- 2) How would I judge the overall appearance of my paper? Are there many erasures? Would the reader look at my paper as being sloppy or unappealing?

- 3) Have I used the proper Punctuation? Do my sentences end in periods, question marks, or exclamation points? Have I separated items in a series and multiple clauses with commas?
- 4) Have I checked the spelling in my essay? Is it correct? Does it conform to the spelling rules I know? Have I avoided the abbreviations of computer communication?

The Advantages of Error Monitoring Strategy

By using error monitoring strategy, the students can get many advantages on it. They can use this strategy to edit or to revise their writing, starting from editing the capitalization, overall appearance, punctuation and spelling; Capitalization include the proper nouns, titles, and beginning of sentences; overall appearance include spaces between words and double spaces between lines, neat printing/writing/typing, and paragraphs are indented, paragraphs follow the model, complete sentences used; punctuation includes proper end marks, commas, semi colons, colons, quotation marks, and hyphens as required; and spelling includes use tools such as lists, word walls, dictionaries, word study notebooks, and spell check technology (clifton, 2011). thus, students can check their writing independently before submitting their work. In addition, error monitoring strategy enable learners to attempt increasing accuracy during independent work without the need for one-on-one instruction. So, by using this strategy, the students can write accurately, fluently, and neatly.

Procedures of Error Monitoring Strategy:

Error monitoring strategy can be implemented individually, in small groups, or whole group and it can be facilitated by a lecturer/lecturer, paraprofessional or adult volunteer. Applying the steps of using error monitoring strategy should use the mnemonic WRITER to remember the steps. Mnemonic WRITER

consists of **Write, Read, Interrogate** by using COPS acronym (Capitalization, Punctuation, Overall Appearance, and Spelling), **Take, Execute, and Reread**. By the existence of the nemonic, the students will be easy to do the steps of error monitoring strategy; also; they will be more active in writing. Besides, the students can practice this strategy in their daily activity when they practice writing. It can make them become aware to notice the aspects of writing by using COPS acronym within the strategy. The pocedures of using error monitoring strategy are as follows (Hugest and hall, 1998:265):

- 1) In developing their initial draft, students write on every other line to leave room for edit.
- 2) The rough draft is read for meaning, and inappropriate sentences (e.g: those that are not related or are unclear) are deleted and changed.
- 3) Students interrogate themselves using COPS acronym: (C)—Have I capitalized the first word and proper nouns; (O)—Have I made any handwriting, margin, messy, or spacing errors; also, paragraphs are indented, paragraphs follow the model, complete sentences used (P)—Have I used end punctuation, commas, and semicolons correctly; and (S)—Do the words look like they are spelled right, can I sound them out, or should I used the dictionary?
- 4) If the students are unsure about en error, they are directed to take their paper to someone else (lecturer, parent, friend, etc) for help.
- 5) Students execute a final copy of their paper, incorporating corrections made on the rough draft and writing neatly as possible on every line.
- 6) The composition reread and final corrections are made
- 7) Students submit their work to the lecturer.

The Description of implementation of Error Monitoring Strategy can be described by boyle and scanlon (2010:252) as follow:

Table 2.1

Implementation of Error Monitoring Strategy

ERROR MONITORING
W Write on every other line R Read the paper for meaning I Interrogate yourself by using the COPS questions T Take your paper to someone for help E Execute a final copy R Reread your paper

Before the students apply the steps above, the lecturer should introduce the strategy to the students. Introducing the strategy, the lecturer should do some steps below (Mather and Jaffe, 2002):

- 1) Explain to the student that if he/she is able to identify the errors in compositions, his/her papers will be better and his/her grades will improve.
- 2) Administer a pretest, using a copy of a handwritten sample passage, in which the student is asked to mark any errors found. Show the student the percentage of errors the student identified and the percentage he/she did not identify.
- 3) Explain that you will teach the student a strategy that will help with proofreading. Make sure he/she understands why proofreading is necessary.

- 4) Obtain a commitment from the student to learn the strategy.
- 5) Describe the steps in the strategy.

III. Conclusion

There are many advantages getting by English Department students, if they want apply error monitory strategy in their writing activities. It can be as a self-correction for them to improve thir knowledge relate to writing ability and grammatical form. That we know in error monitoring strategy, it is used as a guide to write in the correct form. It helps students systematically question themselves regarding capitalization, appearance, punctuation, and spelling errors in their written products, as well as correct them, before submitting the assignment to the lecturer. Thus, it addresses revisions for any type of writing.

By using error monitoring strategy, students learn how to monitor their written work through self-questioning, thus allowing them to cope more effectively with the curriculum demands related to written assignments. Question themselves means that after drafting their writing, they then use COPS questions to correct their draft by themselves. If they doubt about editing the draft, they can give their product to their friends to help revising.

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