

Analysis of Evaluation of Grade IV Students' Understanding in Paragraph Writing at SDN 158 Palembang

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the understanding of grade IV students in writing paragraphs, including obstacles and errors that often occur. A qualitative approach with an in-depth exploration design is used to understand the process of writing paragraphs. The subject of the study is grade IV students, with data obtained through direct observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Data analysis techniques use coding to identify patterns and draw conclusions. The results of the study show that students' understanding of paragraph structure is still limited, especially in compiling the main idea and supporting it in detail. Factors such as the lack of writing practice and the lack of a practice-oriented learning approach also affect students' difficulties. However, this study has weaknesses, including the limited research subjects in one class so that the results cannot be generalized to a wider population. In addition, this study did not delve into the role of different learning methods in improving writing skills. Opportunities for further research are to expand the scope of research to other grade levels and evaluate the effectiveness of diverse teaching approaches, such as project-based learning or digital technology, in improving students' paragraph writing skills.

Keywords: evaluation, understanding, writing, paragraphs

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Introduction

Evaluation is an integral part of education and learning activities. In education, evaluation refers to a series of activities that aim to obtain information as a basis for decision-making, both in designing and implementing the learning process (Astuti, 2022). Educational evaluation includes all activities related to measuring and assessing teaching and learning outcomes, which are then interpreted into qualitative or quantitative values according to specific standards (Alam, 2022; Heras & Ruiz-Mallén, 2017). This emphasizes the importance of evaluation as an instrument to improve the quality of education.

Education is the foundation that shapes human life to be more directed and quality (Ghosh, 2017). Through education, humans acquire knowledge, skills, norms and values that become provisions in life (Safitri et al., 2022; Udin et al., 2022). Language skills are taught in education, including reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Agustina et al., 2023; Fazalani et al., 2022; Ghazali et al., 2022). Among these skills, writing skills have a strategic role in developing thinking power and expressing ideas.

Writing is a creative process of pouring ideas and ideas in the form of writing with a specific purpose (Ruini & Mortara, 2022). Writing is the activity of digging into thoughts and feelings to be expressed systematically so readers can easily understand them (Cremin & Oliver, 2017). Writing skills are critical in education because they train students to think logically and structure (Singh et al., 2017). More than just a technical activity, writing helps students express ideas, feelings, and ideas in paragraphs, essays, scientific papers, or stories (Sa'adah, 2020).

At the primary education level, writing learning is taught from an early age, primarily through paragraph writing skills. Paragraphs are a series of sentences organized and related to

form a unity of ideas (Sa'adah, 2020). Learning to write paragraphs begins in the fourth grade of elementary school, but not all students understand the importance and correct way to write paragraphs. These difficulties are influenced by various factors, including limited understanding and less intensive practice.

Therefore, teachers as educators have an essential role in training and honing students' ability to write paragraphs. This ability needs to be taught systematically and continuously so that students are used to composing paragraphs well. Paragraph writing skills are critical because they are the basis of various types of writing in academic and non-academic environments. For this reason, primary education needs to pay more attention to equipping students with these skills as part of continuous Indonesian language learning.

However, although paragraph writing skills have been taught since grade IV of elementary school, various studies show that students' ability to write paragraphs is still low (Maulida et al., 2022; Syifa et al., 2022). This is reflected in the difficulty of students in structuring the main idea, organizing sentences, and understanding the importance of paragraph structure. Most of the previous research only focused on evaluating the final results of students' writing without exploring in depth the obstacles and mistakes that students experienced during the writing process. In addition, the study of the role of learning methods in improving paragraph writing skills at the basic level is still very limited. This research is here to fill the gap by analyzing students' obstacles and mistakes in writing paragraphs, as well as identifying factors that affect the learning process of this skill. The results of the research are expected to be a foothold for educators to design more effective learning strategies based on student needs.

Method

This research was carried out using qualitative research methods. Qualitative research is research that is used to research human and social problems. The researcher will report on the research results based on the data view report and data analysis obtained in the field, then describe whether the results are verbal or written in a detailed research report. This research was conducted by conducting interviews by asking several questions related to paragraphs to grade IV teachers at State Elementary School 158 Palembang and distributing paper as a sample as a printout for writing student experience stories in the form of paragraphs to grade IV students.

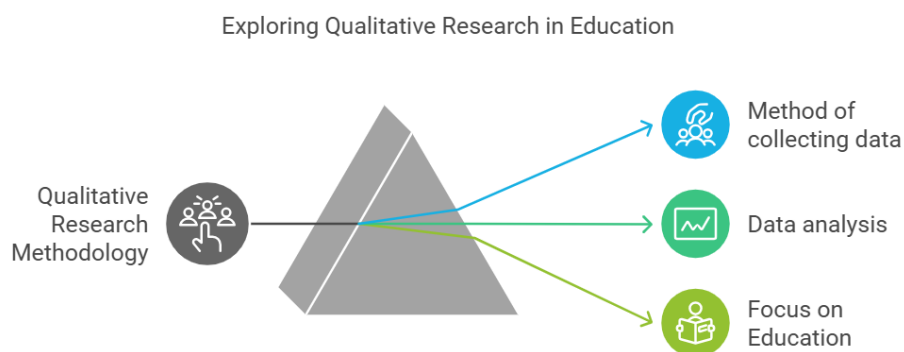


Figure 1. Qualitative Research Methods

Results and Discussion

The abilities possessed by a student can be reviewed during learning activities. From there, we can determine the student's ability to understand the material presented. An overview of the condition of grade IV students' understanding of paragraph writing falls into the excellent category, which can be seen from the work in the form of story essays. The researcher made the observation using a sample sheet that the researcher gave to grade VI students, totalling 25 students. The analysis results of our observations include: 1). At the beginning of the sentence

in the paragraph, all students can write it with a capital letter prefix; 2). Writing the wrong person's name, wherein the rules for writing people's names should begin with capital letters even though they are in the middle of the sentence. The names of people are written in one of the essays written by students, including Nury, Zakiya, and Arartha. There is a mistake in writing these names because they should have been written with the beginning of capital letters, namely Nury, Zakiya, and Artha. 3). Using and placing punctuation marks and commas is appropriate for 15 student story essays. 4.) Writing paragraphs that begin with sentences that protrude deeply. However, out of 25 students in grade IV, 16 have written paragraphs correctly, while nine have not been able to write paragraphs correctly. 5.) Sentences that are one sentence to another in a paragraph must be related and, in this case, based on the results of the sample sheet provided. All grade IV students were able to make paragraphs with interrelated sentences.

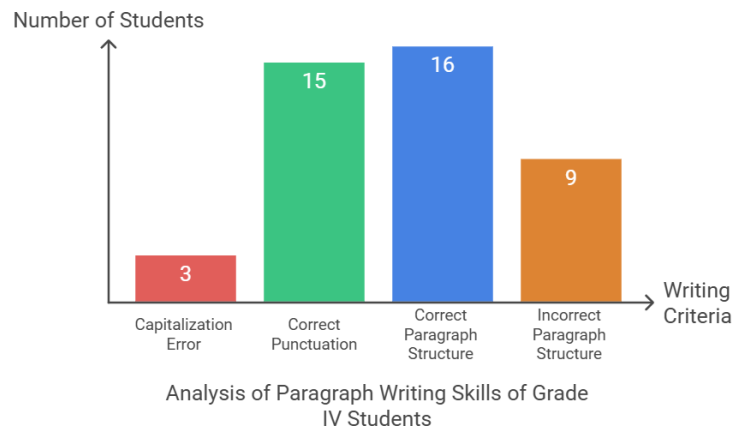
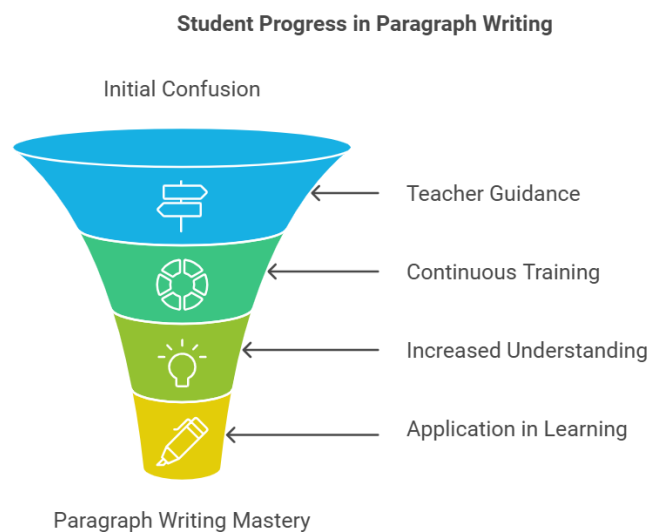


Figure 2. Analysis of Paragraph Writing Skills of Grade IV Students

The researcher also interviewed teachers regarding students' ability to write paragraphs in this study. Regarding the learning process in the classroom, when the teacher teaches paragraph writing material based on the interview results, the teacher stated that the learning took place in a controlled state. A teacher in charge of paragraph writing learning materials also said that the learning process went smoothly, and some students understood the material quickly even though they were still confused about how to write the initial paragraph. However, by practising continuously, students increasingly understand paragraph writing. They can apply it in learning activities even though, in reality, there are still some students who do not understand the correct paragraph writing.



For the use of learning media when explaining paragraph writing material, teachers have used teaching media in projectors and books such as newspapers, magazines, novels and storybooks. The learning process takes place in which the teacher uses these media to explain and help students understand the material. The teacher uses a projector to display story texts in the form of paragraphs while describing how to form the paragraph correctly, the steps to write a paragraph, then determining the theme in the paragraph and making an essay outline to develop a paragraph. Teachers use texts as two forms of sentence collections to test students' understanding of paragraph writing material. One of the sentences protrudes inward at the beginning of the paragraph, while the other sentence has no protruding initial sentence. Then, the teacher shares the text with the students and asks the students to determine which paragraphs are and why.

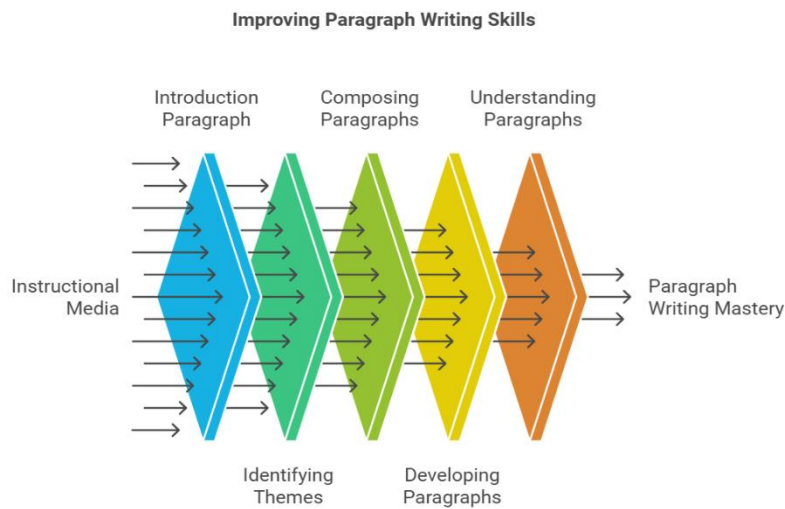


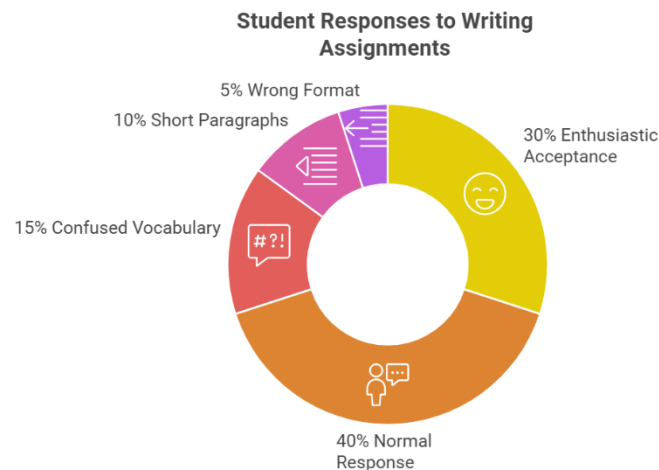
Figure 5. Strategies to Improve Students' Writing Skills

Of course, teaching and explaining paragraph writing material to students is not an easy thing. Of course, teachers face obstacles during the learning process of paragraph writing material. This paragraph material has been taught since the 3rd grade of elementary school, even though some high-class students still do not understand how to write paragraphs correctly. Several obstacles cause this. The first obstacle teachers face when teaching paragraph writing material is students who experience confusion in finding and determining ideas in writing paragraphs and understanding material related to punctuation and capital letters, which has not fully become an obstacle for teachers in teaching paragraph writing to students. The use of capital letters and punctuation marks is a rule that students need to pay attention to when writing paragraphs to make it easier for readers to understand the meaning of the reading.

Then, students also often do not focus on what the teacher explains. Of course, this affects students' understanding of the material. Motivation is also one of the supporting factors in learning. Learning motivation certainly has a vital role in stimulating students and creating enthusiasm and a sense of joy during learning. So, high-motivation students also have the energy and enthusiasm to follow the learning process (Maryance et al., 2022). Students' lack of motivation to learn affects their' understanding of paragraph writing. Students' views on the importance of learning to write paragraphs are also an obstacle to understanding paragraph writing material. No matter how much effort the teacher makes, if students have such a view, it will undoubtedly be an obstacle.

From the research results through observation, students received assignments with various responses. Some students accept happily because they are fond of writing an essay, but some students give mediocre responses due to a lack of interest and understanding. Sometimes,

some students are also wrong in using vocabulary to write paragraphs, such as mixing Indonesian and regional languages they use daily. This must be paid more attention, considering students often use regional languages daily. Some students write paragraphs consisting of only two to three sentences in one paragraph. In writing paragraphs, there should be at least four to five sentences in one paragraph and students who do not write paragraphs with the beginning of sentences that protrude inwards.



These obstacles encourage teachers to think about how to overcome the difficulties experienced by students in writing paragraphs. Through animated PowerPoint accompanied by attractive colours, teachers are used as a medium in delivering material by providing examples of paragraph texts and explaining to students about paragraph writing. Teachers also make it a habit for students to read a lot of writing, either from printed books, magazines or newspapers, in an effort by teachers to overcome existing obstacles. Giving assignments to be done at home is also an effort by teachers so that students understand paragraph writing and create a fun learning atmosphere in class. A pleasant classroom atmosphere can make students feel at home and not bored during classroom learning so that students can better understand the knowledge being taught.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the research conducted, it is known that there are still some grade IV students who still do not understand how to write paragraphs correctly. Although some students understand how to write and place paragraphs correctly, This is based on the research results that have been carried out by observation and interviews. This is due to several obstacles, namely not fully understanding the students' material, not focusing on the learning time, and lacking interest and motivation in learning the students themselves. To overcome this, teachers develop teaching methods in the classroom that are more interactive, fun, and not dull. Using learning media such as projectors by displaying animated power points makes learning more interesting and motivates students to follow the learning and teaching process.

So, it can be concluded that the understanding of grade IV students in paragraph writing is good. It can be seen that as many as 16 students out of 25 have understood paragraph writing correctly. A total of 9 students where the number did not reach half of the number of students who did not understand paragraph writing correctly.

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