

## FRIEND TO DEVELOP AN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

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### Abstract

*Writing is a process that helps the students develop their ideas and logical thinking. Principally, to write means to try to produce a written message. Because of these facts, it is necessary for teachers and students to master it well as writing plays a very important role in many processes including teaching and learning processes.*

*However, in the real teaching and learning process, junior high students who have been accustomed to LKS (Student Worksheet) consider writing a boring activity. They have to just fill in the blanks, answer the questions, and rearrange jumbled paragraphs in spite of writing their own ideas based on certain topics. This becomes the drawbacks for them to get actively involved in writing activities.*

*To overcome that, FRIEND standing for Fact, Reason, Point, Elaboration and Decision is considered helpful to improve learners' ability to develop an argumentative essay. FRIEND helps learners to write well-developed and properly organized essay since it provides systematic ways to do so. Besides, FRIEND actually gives learners an easy way to think, express, and organize their ideas into a good argumentative essay.*

**Keywords:** FRIEND, argumentative essay

### Introduction

In order to gain the success of the English teaching as a means of international communication, teaching English must focus on the four basic skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Writing as one of the four skills taught in schools is important since it is not just an end result. Writing is a process that helps the students develop their ideas and logical thinking. Principally, to write means to try to produce a written message. Smith in Hernowo (2004: 113) states that there are two reasons why people write: to communicate with others and to provide something for people themselves.

However, in the real writing classes, there have been obstacles faced by students. Most of them find some difficulties in doing their tasks given by the teachers especially in writing. They often show inconsistency in using either British or American spelling. Often time, their grammar use is not suitable with the tense desired. They are supposed to use past tense to tell about an event occurring in duration of time in the past by using since or for. Instead, what they thought is that they have to use present perfect because there is since or for as the time marker. Besides that, their writing is unable to show a clear level of formality. This problem also deals with their

inability to choose an appropriate word for a certain occasion. Then, when they have to write a certain kind of paragraph, like narrative, they find it difficult to write in a good sequence of time. Moreover, it becomes worse when they have to write an essay. They are still unable to show an effective flow of thoughts to present their ideas.

Other difficulties also exist in the teaching and learning processes. One of the most obvious differences is the use of tense. In Indonesian, there is no distinction to use the action word (verb) in the present, past, or future, while English is vice versa. They are not familiar with writing activities. Instead, they prefer getting involved in spoken activities to share their ideas, feelings, or expressions to learning written ones. In schools, the condition worsens, as the teachers are not interested in writing activities because writing is not a part of Indonesian culture.

These are supported by the fact that the students, especially in junior and senior high school, need not to write anything in the national final examination (UN/UAN). In doing this, they just have to identify the generic structure, determine the communicative purpose of the text, or even rearrange the jumbled sentences into a paragraph. In some cases, they also have to deal with the language fea-

tures of a text.

As a professional language teacher and instructor, there should not be any reasons to give up encouraging students to put their ideas in a written form – either in sentences, in paragraphs or in essays. Among the many ways to do so, FRIEND standing for Fact, Reason, point, Elaboration and Decision is considered helpful to improve learners' ability to develop text especially argumentative text. FRIEND helps learners to write a well-developed and properly organized each paragraph of an argumentative essay since it provides systematic ways to do so. Besides, FRIEND actually gives learners an easy way to think, express, and organize their ideas into every paragraph of a good argumentative essay.

### Writing

Writing is said to be the fourth competence in learning language. Although many students said that writing is a difficult competence, writing is actually an easy and enjoyable activity if there is appropriate methods, interesting teaching techniques, and actual materials.

Writing is an activity in which learners form graphic symbols, arrange them to form words, and put the words in order and link them together in a certain way to produce a logical sequence of sentence (Hernowo, 2004: 43). Writing is a complex activity since it requires students' comprehensive abilities such as mastering grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation. Besides, to write well, the students are expected to be able to present their ideas in the written form, as writing is a means of communication.

However, some think that writing is not only delivering ideas to others but also using a sheer energy to complete the writing process itself: thinking the ideas, preparing the outline, transferring the outline into draft, revising the draft, and finally proofreading the draft to prepare for the final outcome. The fact is that the students find it difficult to do so since they have limited ability and mastery of English.

Writing is an act of communication; it is an act of making marks on certain surface in a form of graphic presentation, to make meaning. Writing, according to Halliday (1989: 14), is a part of language and more specifically, it is one kind of expression in language. Its

meaning is created by particular set of symbol, having conventional values for representing the wordings of a particular language, which is drawn up visually.

Writing competence is a form of language competence that should be mastered by English learners besides reading, listening, and speaking. Writing is also a form of verbal communication in order to deliver thoughts, ideas, and messages to others indirectly. Having a good writing competence, one is not only able to express his ideas but also able to make others understand what he means in his writing.

### The Purpose of Writing

The purposes of writing have to do with goals or aims of writing. Thinking about purposes of writing, a writer should think as follows:

It is to express ideas. A writer expresses his feeling, expressions, personality, likes, and dislikes in his writing in order to make readers understand something within the materials.

It is to provide information. It means to give information and explain it. This purpose is to focus on the materials being discussed.

It is to persuade readers. It means to convince readers about a matter of an opinion. This also focuses on the readers' point of view.

It is to create literary work. It means that a work which is based on one's point of view (opinion, attitude, and observation) of other matters occurring in one's environment.

### Teaching Writing Skill

Writing is a real-life reality. It is in social, work or study situations. Teaching writing on EFL is to get things done and to form and maintain social relationships. In reality, the teacher can teach the students such as letter, journals, notes, instructions, essays, reports, menus. Teaching writing is a way of conveying messages or just to keep a record of what is in our mind.

Adamson (2006: 208) states that in a recent research study, teaching writing in English language teaching classroom is considered as a means to consolidate language. Students very often write from someone else's ideas. It is "writing as language learning". In this stage, students are given a topic for building up their writing. Moreover, in the English language-teaching classroom, especially in traditional pedagogy, the teacher gives a topic or selection of topics, a set of requirements, and a time limit. The students finish the task

within the time limit and hand in the product. The students' work is evaluated based on the accuracy of the final product.

To achieve the goal of teaching writing, of course, practices will make them perfect. The more the students practice writing with a systematic and graded way, the better the results will be in that the students will sharpen their sensitivity in choosing the diction, using the appropriate grammar as well as the writing styles and genres. In this process, a student-centered activity will give the students more chances to improve their writing by the guidance of the lecturers functioning themselves as the facilitators and guides.

### Writing Genres

Troyka in Adamson (2006: 53) divides writing genres into five types. Narrative-descriptive writing strives to appeal to the readers' sense so they can see and feel the scenes and actions of the writing. The narrative-descriptive writing may be essentially either narrative or descriptive.

Narration focuses on both events and actions. Therefore, narrative writing tells about what is happening and what happens.

In contrast to narration, descriptive writing concentrates on things (nouns) such as a person, a place or an object rather than on actions (verbs) in which the nouns allow people to share their sensual impressions of a person, a place or an object. It appeals to the readers' sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch.

Exposition aims at informing and making the readers understand. It is often called informative writing because it seeks to give information and to explain it to readers. If it is necessary, informative writing focuses on the subject being discussed. Exposition or informative writing includes reports of observation, ideas, scientific data, facts or statistics. It can be found in text-books, encyclopedia, technical and business reports, newspaper and magazines.

Argumentation is often called persuasive writing because it aims at persuading and convincing the readers towards the writer's point of view in a particular issue. Argumentative is a kind of writing of which purpose is to influence the readers to agree, support, or approve the writers' opinions and at last act according to what the writers or the speakers want. The argumentative essay is a genre of writing that requires the student to investigate

a topic, collect, generate, evaluate evidence, and establish a position on the topic in a concise manner.

Argumentative or persuasive writing can be found in editorials, letter to editors, reviews, sermons, business or research proposal, opinion essays in magazines and books arguing a point of view.

Seldess (<http://www.writeexpress.com/persuasiveessay.html>) mentions that the organization of the argumentative essay should have an introductory paragraph with a clear, concise, and defined thesis statement in the first paragraph of the essay.

In this introductory paragraph of an argument essay, students should set the context by reviewing the topic in a general way. Next, the author should explain why the topic is important why readers should care about the issue. Lastly, students should present the thesis statement. It is essential that this thesis statement be appropriately narrowed to follow the guidelines set forth in the assignment. If the student does not master this portion of the essay, it will be quite difficult to compose an effective or persuasive essay.

The organization of an argumentative essay should also provide body paragraphs. Each body paragraph should be limited to the discussion of one general idea. This will allow for clarity and direction throughout the essay. In addition, such conciseness creates an ease of readability for one's audience. It is important to note that each paragraph in the body of the essay must have some logical connections to the thesis statement in the opening paragraph. Some paragraphs will directly support the thesis statement with evidence collected during research. It is also important to explain how and why the evidence supports the thesis (warrant) with clear and logical transitions between the introduction, body, and conclusion.

Transitions are the mortar that holds the foundation of the essay together. Without logical progression of thought, the reader is unable to follow the essay's argument, and the structure will collapse. Transitions should wrap up the idea from the previous section and introduce the idea that is to follow in the next section with evidential supports (whether factual, logical, statistical, or anecdotal).

The argumentative essay requires well-researched, accurate, detailed, and current information to support the thesis statement

and consider other points of view. Some factual, logical, statistical, or anecdotal evidence should support the thesis. However, students must consider multiple points of view when collecting evidence. As noted in the paragraph above, a successful and well-rounded argumentative essay will also discuss opinions not aligning with the thesis. It is unethical to exclude evidence that may not support the thesis. It is not the student's job to point out how other positions are wrong outright, but rather to explain how other positions may not be well informed or up to date on the topic.

a conclusion

It is at this point of the essay that students may begin to struggle. This is the portion of the essay that will leave the immediate impression on the mind of the reader. Therefore, it must be effective and logical. Do not introduce any new information into the conclusion; rather, synthesize the information presented in the body of the essay. Restate why the topic is important, review the main points, and review your thesis. You may also want to include a short discussion of more research that should be completed in light of your work.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that argumentative essay aims at persuading the readers towards the writer's point of view in order that they will agree, support, and approve the writer's opinions. A good argumentative should have an introductory paragraph with a vivid, concise, and defined statement, one or more body paragraphs limited to the discussion of one general idea stated in the thesis statement, and a concluding paragraph that should be effective and logical.

### **Teaching Argumentative Essay by Using FRIEND**

This article will focus only on argumentative essay; and, FRIEND standing for Fact, Reason, point, and Elaboration of points, and Decision is a technique to organize and develop this essay. It is adapted and modified from FREON (Fact, Reason, and Conclusion) which was firstly introduced by Ms. Eva Lati-fah in LBPP LIA Surabaya in 2007 to teach an introductory paragraph of an argumentative essay. Based on her research, it was proven that this technique was able to improve the students' introductory paragraph writing.

Similar technique of using acronym was used by Andrew Finch of Kyungpook National University when he taught poem to the students. In his teaching, he introduced some acronyms to encourage his students to learn poems and write their own ones. An example was FRIEND. He put this word as an acronym:

<p><b>F</b>ew people are <b>R</b>ead friends <b>I</b>n my life. I <b>E</b>njoy seeing true, not <b>N</b>ew friends every <b>D</b>ay</p>
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When teaching this essay writing, a teacher needs to know each aspect of FRIEND itself. The first is "F" which means Fact. Fact about something itself can be taken from definition, phenomenon, or even writers' opinion or experience that cannot be denied. Wishon and Burks (1980: 65) mention that another method of paragraph development is to begin with a general statement or opinion. Then, it is "R" referring to Reason. The written reason should have a close relationship and, if possible, support the fact mentioned earlier.

Next, "I" itself means point which is actually the controlling ideas of the essay – ideas to develop. Here, the students just need to mention the ideas dealing with the argument or opinion. When explaining "E" or Elaboration, a teacher should specifically mention the elaboration of the point. Moreover, Wishon and Burks (1980: 129) say that the writer may begin with a dominant impression and proceed to specific details. This means that after mentioning point which has mentioned before, students must develop it into the detail one so that they will get the essay which are creative, complete, and coherent. In the other words, it can also be said that the elaboration is the supporting details of each paragraph of an argumentative essay.

Here are the steps of applying FRIEND to teach each paragraph of an argumentative essay.

#### For Introductory Paragraph

As it was mentioned before, an introductory paragraph of an argumentative essay

must consist of thesis statement and some controlling ideas. To write a complete thought of an introductory paragraph, a teacher can ask the students about certain matter dealing with argument and ask them what kind of fact could be related to it. Let's say the students are about to argue with allowing cars in the city. After they find certain fact or even opinion, ask them to write it as the topic sentence; and this is for "F" or "fact". For example: *"Nowadays, having cars is a must for people in the city."*

Then, after the students find a certain fact or opinion, ask them why it is so. That's for "R" or "reason". For example: *"It is because cars provide a lot of advantages in helping people do activities."*

For the "I" or "point", "E" or "elaboration", and "D" or "decision", lead the students to think of the point why they disagree with the fact. The points the students have become the controlling ideas for their argumentative paragraph. For example: *"However, as we all know, cars create pollution, cause a lot of road deaths, and other incidents."*

#### For Body Paragraph

A body paragraph must have a topic sentence and some supporting sentences. Here are the steps to develop a body paragraph of an argumentative essay through FRIEND.

Similar to what a teacher does to write an introductory paragraph, lead the students to the fact relating to the controlling idea. The first controlling idea is "cars create pollution". For "F" or "Fact", teacher leads the students about any fact or phenomenon dealing with that matter and to support the fact, the use of certain expressions like "It is unarguable" is advisable. Let's take a look at an example. *"First, it is unarguable that cars contribute to most of the pollution in the world."*

Then, for "R" or "reason", gear the students to find out related reason why that fact occurs. For example, *"This is because cars create a deadly gas from the fossil fuel used by the engines"*.

For "I" or "point", a teacher can ask the students what matters result from this. For example, *"This dangerous invisible matter causes illnesses such as bronchitis, lung cancer, and triggers off asthma."*

As the point is about some illnesses, for "E" or "elaboration", lead the students to present explanation to support the point. For in-

stance, *"Some of the illnesses are so bad that people die from them. The data published by WHO in 2012 show that in big cities where most people drive their cars to do their activities, more than 10% of them suffer from a severe respiratory problem, and around 20% of them cannot survive."*

To wrap up the first body paragraph, teacher leads students by presenting "D" or "decision". The decision should be based on what is explained before. The use of conclusion expression, like "to conclude, to wrap up, as a conclusion, or it can be concluded", is recommended. For instance, *"It can be concluded that the use of car with its dangerous gases leads to severe problem of respiration leading to death."*

For the next body paragraph, a teacher just follows the steps above.

#### Assessing Argumentative Essay

Generally, there are three types of rating scales used in scoring writing. They are holistic scoring, primary trait, and analytic scoring. In this occasion, the holistic scoring will be employed.

Holistic scoring uses a variety of criteria to produce a single score. Brown (2004: 242) states that each point on a holistic scale is given a systematic set of descriptors, and the reader-evaluator matches an overall impression with the descriptors to arrive at a score. Descriptors usually follow a prescribed pattern. O'Malley (1996: 142) also states that the rationale for using a holistic scoring system is that the total quality of written text is more than the sum of its components. Writing is viewed as an integrated whole. The elements of the holistic scoring involve four dimensions.

The first is idea development/ organization which focuses on central idea with appropriate elaboration and conclusion. Then, it is fluency/structure dealing with appropriate verb tense used with a variety of grammatical and syntactic structures. Next, it is word choice which is about the uses of varied and precise vocabulary appropriate for purpose. Finally, mechanics deals absence of errors in spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.

#### Conclusion

FRIEND standing for Fact, Reason, point, Elaboration, and Decision is believed to be able to help the students to improve their ability to develop an argumentative essay into a well-organized and fluent thought.

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