

WRITING COMPARISON/CONTRAST PARAGRAPH WITH BLOCK STYLE

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Abstract

A comparison/contrast paragraph can be organized into two ways known point-by-point, and block model. The most of fifth semester students of English department at Nias Raya University, however, prefer to organize their writing with block model. The reasons for choosing the model were the purposes of this research. This research was carried out by using qualitative descriptive. The data were obtained through unstructured questionnaire. The result of this research showed that there are three reasons of the students in using block model in organizing the comparison/contrast paragraph; the first is easier to be organized; the next is good for the shorter paragraph; and the last is the similarities or differences between the compared subjects is understood easily. Hence, block organization for a comparison/contrast paragraph is the easiest way for the students to construct their paragraph to be interested writing rather than other style. Therefore, this information can be a consideration for the lecturer in teaching the type of the paragraph.

Keywords: Comparison/Contrast Paragraph; Block Style; Writing Organization.

A. Introduction

Comparison/contrast paragraph is a paragraph that tells similarities and differences between two or more people, places, or things. Comparing when they are alike, but contrasting when they are different. Similarly, Oshima (2007: 109) states that when two things are compared, the similarities between them are described, but the differences will be explained when they are contrasted. In other words, comparison emphasizes the similarities between two things, or people, while the contrast focuses on the differences between them.

In comparison/contrast paragraph, the two things should make sense to compare or contrast. For example, two applicants are compared. In selecting the topic, the paragraph will be focused on the

way they are alike or different. For instance, how the education of the first applicant differ from the second applicant. In addition, the introduction of the paragraph should give the reason for the comparison or contrast, for example to determine which is the more or less desirable of the two. The thesis statement should clearly present the two items to be compared or contrasted (the subject) and the criteria for the comparison/contrast (the main points).

With any comparison/contrast paragraph, brainstorming and prewriting are especially effective to avoid shallow or circular writing. It is important to make a list or diagram to find common parts to compare, then figure out how those common parts are similar and different, and what effects they have on you as an

audience member or on the subjects themselves. In the prewriting stage, it may become clear that the topics of comparison are very similar, so focusing on their differences could be necessary to make the paragraph more meaningful. Similarly, if the topics seem completely unlike each other at first glance, telling their hidden similarities may prove more interesting. Making these kinds of decisions before drafting can help keep the paragraph focused and organized.

Moreover, in setting up the comparison/contrast paragraph, it can be arranged into two parts (Connelly, 2013). They are point by point, and subject by subject. In point by point, the paragraph expands sequences of comparisons that demonstrate specific similarities and differences to be read easily. On the other hand, subject by subject divides the body of the paragraph into two segments; the topic and controlling idea of the first subject is introduced at the first, and then it is followed by the second subject. This is easier to be organized than point by point since the body of the paragraph is grouped into two segments.

Related to the arrangement of comparison/contrast paragraph, there are two common ways to organize the comparison/contrast paragraph. First, the topic A is explained, and then talking about topic B., then right back to topic A, and so on. The second, topic A is discussed and then finishing the paragraph with the other topic that is to be compared or contrasted with the topic A. Similarly, Oshima (2007: 111) asserts that there two way to write a comparison/contrast paragraph, namely block organization which grouping all the similarities

together in one block and all the differences together in one block, and point-by-point organization which telling the similarities and differences by subtopic. Moreover, there are two options in writing a comparison paragraph; the first, write all about the first subject and then all about the second subject (block style), and the second is point-by-point style by choosing several points of comparison that is comparing one point of the two topics, then continue to compare the second point of both, and so on (Zemach & Islam, 2004: 72). It is clear that in organizing the comparison/contrast paragraph, the compared subjects can be displayed into two ways, namely block method and point by point method.

In writing the type of the paragraph, however, the writer can choose the style of the paragraph organization freely. It depends on the topic he/she wants to talks about. Also, it is options for writer whether he/she talks more similarities or more differences (or both) (Oshima, 2007). In conclusion, writing a comparison/contrast paragraph

However, from those types of organization of the comparison/contrast paragraph stated above, block style is the easiest organization to be used by the fifth semester students of English department at Nias Raya University in writing the paragraph. This can be seen from the result of the students test about comparison/contrast paragraph. The reason for this case will be the objective of this research.

B. Research Method

This study was carried out using descriptive by explaining the reasons for

choosing block organization as the easiest way in writing a comparison/contrast paragraph. The respondents were the fifth semester students of English department at Nias Raya University consisted of 34 students. The data of this research were gathered through unstructured questionnaire, and then the data collected were analyzed qualitatively based on the procedures suggested by Miles and Huberman's theory (1994:10-11) The analysis consisted of three concurrent flows of activities are data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

C. Research Finding and Discussion

Based on data analysis, it was found some reasons for choosing block style in organizing comparison/contrast paragraph:

1. Easier to be organized

Using block organization in writing a comparison/contrast paragraph is easier since it tells freely all about first subject without second subject interferences. Then, it moves to tell the second subject after the first one. In other words, the paragraph compares/contrasts two subjects in a separate block. This was proved by the data got from the students responds as follows:

18th Respondent: "I think using Block Organization makes it much easier for me to write comparison/contrast paragraphs. The reason is because I can focus on one thing first, and then another. For example, I focus on all the similarities first, then I focus on the differences".

9th Respondent: The reason I chose block organization is because, in writing it provides clarity in presenting the main idea or topic. Thus, readers can easily follow the structured and systematic flow of the argument. This approach makes it easier to understand information, makes it organized and clear.

2. Good for writing a shorter paragraph

Block organization is better used for shorter paragraph. The body of the paragraph is organized by telling first subject completely before moving to the second subject. In this organization, the similarities and differences of the compared subjects can be discussed separately to avoid paragraph that looks like an essay because it's too long. It can be seen in the following students responds:

5th Respondent: Karena dengan menggunakan block organization saya lebih mudah membandingkan dua hal. Tidak dicampur-campur. Sehingga memudahkan saya untuk menjelaskan dalam pemilahan sesuatu dan tidak terlalu panjang paragraf nya.

17th Respondent: Karena dengan menggunakan gaya block organization memudahkan saya untuk menyusun ide secara singkat sehingga tidak seperti sedang menulis essay. Dan fokus dimulai dengan ide yang satu kemudian melanjutkan kepada ide yang lainnya.

3. Similarities and differences are easier to be understood

Since the similarities and differences were discussed separately, the students are focused on explaining the way the compared subjects are alike or differences in the first part. Moreover, this kind of style makes the paragraph simple for easier reading. It is concluded based on the student responses such as follows:

22nd Respondent: "Block Organization makes writing much easier for readers to understand. For example, they want to buy a laptop but they are suggested 2 laptops (for example, Lenovo and Acer brands) so they can read what are the similarities between the two items, then go to the differences. So, they can decide their choice from this comparison".

1st Respondent: "karena teratur di mana comparison dan di mana contrast".

Based on the result, it is clear that block organization is the easiest style for the students to write the paragraph. In writing the comparison/contrast paragraph using this style, the model of the paragraph consists of two blocks, one block for similarities and one block for differences. However, if a writer wants to tell too much about each subtopic, he/she might write a separate paragraph for each one.

D. Conclusion

Block style is one way for organizing a comparison/contrast paragraph that discussing the similarities of the compared

subjects in one block and the differences between them in other block. This organization tends to be used since it is easier to be organized; the paragraph can focus talking about how the subjects are alike at the first, and then continue to tell the differences between the two. In addition block style is good for writing a shorter and less detailed paragraph. In other words, the similarities and difference can be discussed in a different paragraph depends on the how many points are being compared/contrasted to each other.

E. Reference

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