

## ENHANCING ENGLISH EDUCATION PROGRAM STUDENTS' SKILL IN WRITING ESSAY THROUGH CLUSTERING TECHNIQUE

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**Abstract:** This study aims to determine the enhancing of students' writing achievement using clustering technique .The usage of this technique is expected that the students' achievement in writing skill can increase. The clustering technique used in writing learning of this study uses argumentative essays using various topics in accordance with the focusing understanding and making the essays of writing courses for the fourth semester students, at English Education Program of STKIP PGRI Nganjuk in the academic year of 2017/2018. The total number of students is 18 students . The increasing in students' achievement can be known by the analysis the result score in this study by using the classroom action research that is intended to find out that the clustering technique can help the students improve and develop their ability in writing skill. The grand of mean score test in preliminary study was 70,5 and cycle I was 75, while the grand mean score in cycle 2 was 87 which showed this present study could be categorized successful because it had exceeded the minimum criteria of writing III.

**Key words :** Writing skill, clustring technique and classroom action research

### **Introduction**

Writing is taught as one of the language skills through discrete writing courses like the courses for the other language skills, namely Listening, Speaking, and Reading at the English Education Program of STKIP PGRI Nganjuk. Writing is given as a series of courses beginning with Writing I focussing on the paragraph development, Writing II focussing on the development of essays of various simple types, and Writing III which is limited to the development types of essays that is one of them namely argumentative essay. In the Writing III course, in particular, its role in introducing students to write texts larger than a paragraph, that is an essay. Essay writing is important because it prepares the students to write long academic texts such as term papers or thesis. The description of the Writing III is the ability to write different types of essay is important for students because this will support their ability to express their ideas clearly in written form which in turn, will help them write academic writing in English. This subject equips the students with the skill to develop a good essay of

different type of essay, namely argumentative essay, persuasive essay, cause-effect essay, comparison and contrast essay and summary and analysis essay. With some practices given, it is expected that the students have the ability to write a good essay. (MKK 2030, Curriculum KKNi English Education Program : 2014)

Writing compared to the other skills in mastering English especially for English Education Program is considered as the most difficult one to be learnt, because it needs hard thinking in producing words, sentences, and paragraph at the same time. It is needed some steps and process to produce writing product well. Meyers (2005:2) say that writing is a way to product language, which is done naturally when speaking. It means that writing is communication with other in a verbal way. Writing is also an action a process of discovering and organizing the idea, putting them on paper and reshaping and revising them, (2005:2). On other hand, writing is language skill that has aim to share idea, opinion, feeling or anything that exist in mind.

Additionally Oshima and Hogue (1997) states Writing takes study and practice to develop this skill. For both native speakers and new learners of English, it is important to note that writing is a “Process”, not a “Product”. Writing is a progressive activity. It means that when learners for the first time write something down, learners have already been thinking about what they are going to say and how they are going to say it. Then after learners have finished writing, they read over what they have written and make changes and corrections.

The following is Nunan (2003) states that Writing is the process of thinking to invent ideas, thinking about how to express into good writing, and arranging the ideas into statement and paragraph clearly. It indicates that the learners are expected to explore the ideas and make them into good paragraph. Besides, writing is both a physical and a mental act. It is the physical act of committing words or ideas to some medium, whether it is an object or a symbols or an email.

Based the explanation above that the students must have the basic important elements of writing essay such as understand some steps of writing organization how to write a good essay, some patterns to arrange the diction of words which is suitable to the context and some ideas dealing with the context.

They are part of process to produce a good essay and achieve the purpose of learning writing.

Dealing with the process and the product of writing above at preliminary study done by researcher shows that on the writer's experience when the observation conducted at the fourth semester students' English Education Program the process of learning writing in the classroom was still passive. The students did not understand clearly about making a good argumentative essay, how to identify the kind of steps, and how to mention and chose some suitable dictions of words . Beside that, the lecturer uses the old technique that was (Grammar Translation Method) which makes the students felt bored and difficult to understand the material when teaching learning process conducted. The result of test at this preliminary study reveals that from 18 students, only 2 students can pass the test or 11 %. So, 16 students or 89 % fail. So it does not achieve the criteria of success; that is at least 85% students got score above the standard. That is why , the lecturer needs to be more creative in teaching, including the use of technique to overcome the problem of writing.

As mentioned at the description of wrting III course that argumentative essays is one of various essays that must be mastered well in writing skill III courses. This kind of essay is chosen to use in this study to be analyzed by using clustering technique An argumentative essay is a type of essay that presents arguments about both sides of an issue. It could be that both sides are presented equally balanced, or it could be that one side is presented more forcefully than the other. It all depends on the writer, and what side he supports the most. The general structure of an argumentative essay follows this format:

- a. Introduction: Attention Grabber / hook, Background
- b. Information, Thesis Statement
- c. Body: Three body paragraphs (three major arguments)
- d. Counterargument: An argument to refute earlier arguments and give weight to the actual position
- e. Conclusion: Rephrasing the thesis statement, major points, call to attention, or concluding remark

There are two major models besides this structure given above, which is called a classical model. Two other models are the Toulmin and Rogerian models. Toulmin model is comprised of an introduction with a claim or thesis, followed by presentation of data to support the claim. Warrants are then listed for the reasons to support the claim with backing and rebuttals. However, the Rogerian model asks to weigh two options, lists strengths and weaknesses of both options, and gives a recommendation after an analysis

The function of argumentative essay presents both sides of an issue. However, it presents one side more positively or meticulously than the other one, so that readers could be swayed to the one the author intends. The major function of this type of essays is to present a case before the readers in a convincing manner, showing them the complete picture

There are many ways in which can be developed topics and titles for an argumentative essay related to several topics. However, the topics and titles that is choosed to use for the argumentative essay will largely depend upon what is studied. Some of them are:

- Should school children be required to learn a second or even third language from a young age?
- Should children go to school from a younger age?
- Should students have to do as much homework as they currently do?
- Should teachers be required to perform regular tests to ensure that they are up to the job?
- Should lessons be made shorter and more frequent, so as to help students study?
- Should the school day start and finish earlier or later?
- Should parents have a more active role in the education of the children?
- Do teachers deserve such long holidays?
- Should students be rewarded for good attendance records?
- Should corporal punishment be used to help teach discipline to young students?

- Should schools make more useful the latest technology, such as laptops and tablets, to help develop the education and understanding that young people have when it comes to modern technology?
- Should students be separated so as to study in single-sex classes?
- Should compulsory education be changed so that students stay in school until they are older?
- Should higher education be available for free for everybody?
- Should schools introduce practical subjects that will be of more use to certain students when they are older?
- Should schools abolish exams and testing?
- Should schools be made more accountable for bad results achieved by the students?
- Should failing schools be more heavily punished?
- Should American teachers or security personnel who protect schools in the United States be armed?

In teaching writing the lectures must be able to organize learning-teaching activities. They have to master the materials, methods and also technique or strategy to make the students understand and apply writing matters in practice. A good technique can help the students in comprehending and mastering the subject learnt. One of the teaching failures is caused by an unsuitable technique in teaching-learning process. There are a lot of techniques to get teaching Writing effectively.

Therefore in order to modify positively the situation of the classroom and to make the teaching-learning process lively, the writer implemen an alternative technique, that is the one which common known under the term “Clustering Technique”. Clustering technique is a good way to turn a broad subject into a limited and more manageable topic for a short essay. According to John Langan (2001:25), clustering technique also known as diagramming or mapping, is another strategy that can be used to generate material for a paper. This method is helpful for people who like think in a visual way. In clustering, you use lines, boxes, arrows, and circle to show relationships among the ideas and details that occur to you.”

Moreover, the clustering technique can motivate the students to write and to stimulate their ideas. Besides that, this technique will help the students to organize their thinking before they develop in a paragraph then a short essay.

In clustering the students write a topic in the center of a piece of paper then write ideas suggested by the topic around it, connecting these to the topic with lines, follow the same procedure with your subtopics.

Furthermore, the application of clustering in teaching begins with a key word or central idea placed in the center of a page (or on the blackboard) around which the student (or lecturer using students-generated suggestion) jots down in a few minutes all of the free associations triggered by the subject matter using simply words or short phrases. Unlike listing, the words or phrases generated are put on the page or board in a pattern which takes shape from the connections the writer sees as each new thought emerges. Complete clusters can look like spokes on a wheel or any other pattern of connected lines, depending on how the individual associations are drawn to relate each other. By having students share their cluster patterns with other students in the class, the lecturer allows students to be exposed to a wide variety of approaches to the subject matter, which might further generate material for writing.

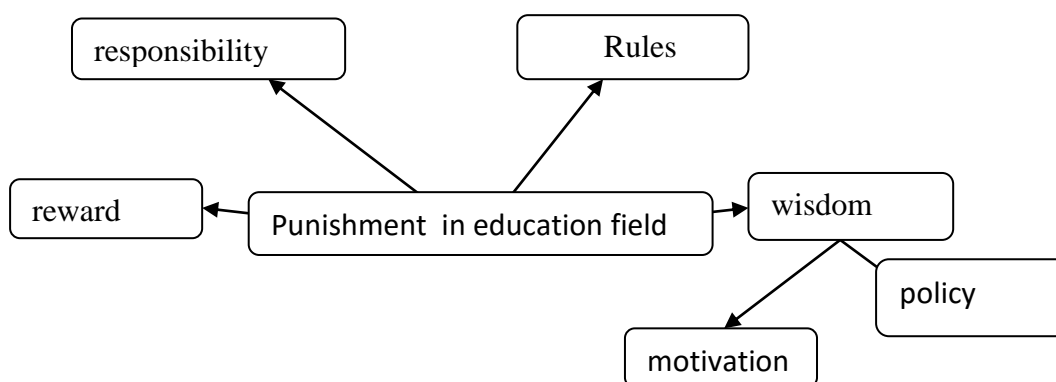


Figure 1: The Application of Clustering Technique

Based on the above statements the objective of the research is to enhance students' writing skill in argumentative essay by using Clustering technique at the students' fourth semester English Education of STKIP PGRI Nganjuk in the academic year 2017/2018.

### **Research Methodology**

The research was conducted based on CAR (Classroom Action Research). In accordance with the characteristics of CAR, this research was conducted within some cycles. The procedure for action research can be described in four stages; they are planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. In each step is applied clustering technique in this research that need some observation in learning activity. The result of one cycle is used to determine the need for the following cycle, until problems get solved by the strategy (Kemmis and Mc Taggart, 1988). See the figure as below :

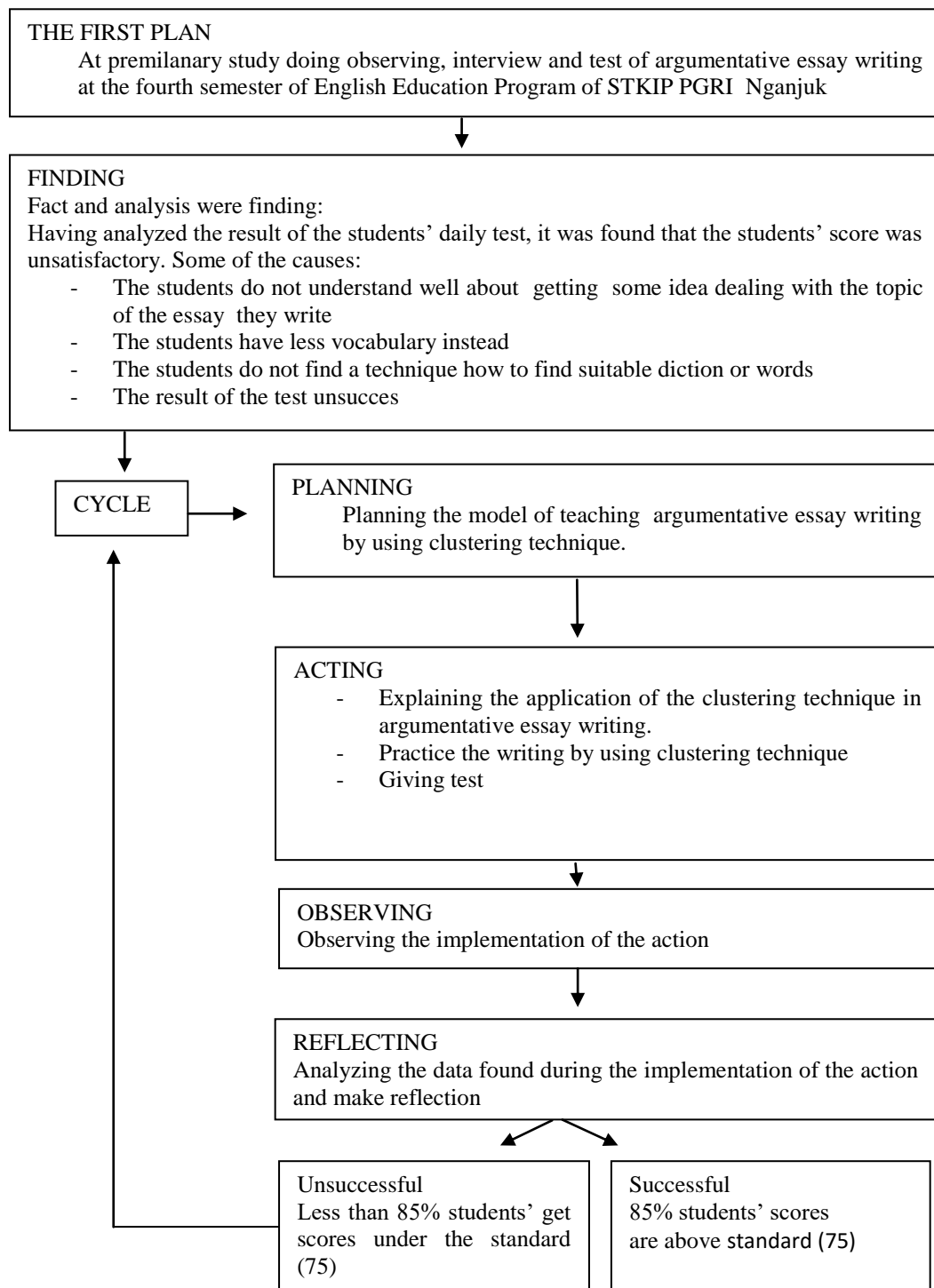


Figure 2 : Design Cycle adapted from KEMMIS & TAGGART Model (1988)

## A. Research Procedure

### 1. Preliminary Research

The Preliminary research was conducted to obtain data about the students' problems in writing skill. It was done by observing and interviewing



the teaching of writing in classroom. Besides, the writer interviewed the students in terms of the techniques and activities employed in teaching writing, the writer also asked their opinion who were involve in the classroom activities in a recent time.

From that interviewing the writer get and identifying the problems in teaching writing. The students gets problems in the writing skill. So from that data, the writer can solve the problems with clustering technique. It was necessary to measure the ability of the students in writing skill. After the preliminary research was conducted, the writer began the research with the following procedure : planning the action, implementing the action, observing the action, and reflecting.

## 2. Cycle 1 and 2

### a. Planning

This planning is to identify within the classroom or some aspect of teaching that the reasercher wants to enhance or understand better. This planning also involves attempting to deal with some aspect of this problem. In this stages there are many things must prepare for the research in classroom, they are:

#### 1. Preparing the teaching media

In this stages the writer prepared the technique, from that preliminary research the writer used clustering technique in teaching writing skill in classroom. The writer use this technique, because it is simple, interest and make students easier to improve their write an argumentative essay..

#### 2. Designing the lesson plan

The lesson plan was designed with the purpose of preparing the students more creativity, confidently, and enjoy with their learning in classroom. In teaching writing skill, many students feel bored, afraid and lazy for do that. So, lecturer must have a creative an interest technique when teaching writing.

In the first activity the writer give the simple explained based on the theme. The writer giving some questions about that theme, to

remembered students with that materials. The second, students make a group in two students in every group.

The last every students make a simple cluster. from the cluster the student can make an argumentative essay.

### 3. Preparing the materials

Instructional material and technique stated in the lesson plan was prepared on the basis of instructional objectives in this research. The materials adjusted with the basic competence recommended in the English Educational based curriculum and the clustering technique. Meanwhile, the materials was taken from internet and English text book.

### 4. Assessment Instruments

The writer prepared instruments such as filed notes and record some information that occurred during teaching writing process. For the instrument in writing activity, the writer make a simple formula to get the students' writing score. The writer make a formula to get the students' writing score, they are:

$$\text{The percentage of exhaustive students} = \frac{\text{Total score}}{18} \times 100\%$$

That formula used if the lecturer want to find the percentage from the students' result. So, the writer know how far that research success or failed. From that result, the writer can observe again and evaluate about the research in teaching writing. And the writer can change their strategy or technique in teaching writing using clustering technique, so the percentage in the next cycle can be successes.

### 5. Preparing the success criteria

Success criteria was used as goal of the research. In conducting the research, criteria decision was vital to know whether the action was successfully completed or not. In this research had two considerations the success criteria. First, the data result was one of consideration to reach the success criteria made and based on the students' average in writing activity at English Education Program

STKIP PGRI Nganjuk at the fourth students which were 65,00 so the writer expected that the average of the class was able becoming 85,00 for the criteria of success of the Classroom Action Research where was also based on the passing grade in this school that each student had to reach at least 75 in scoring.

Later in relation to students' writing ability, this research was considered successful if 85% of the each students got the score equal to or greater than 75. In addition, the writer used recorder was to record the information that occurred during the writing activity.

#### b. Implementing

The implementation of the action was centered on what had been planned in the lesson plan. The plan concerning with the teaching and learning of writing through clustering technique was implemented after all of the preparations had been made.

In implementing the action, the writer acted as a the implementer of clustering technique in teaching writing activity and the teacher acted as observer whose job was conducting the observation during the teaching and learning process.

The implementation of the action research was two cycle which had two meetings for implementing the technique and giving exercises to measure the students' knowledge of the writing activity when the writer used clustering technique. These implementation was done at February and March 2018.

#### c. Observing

This observation during and after the lesson collect data about what happens in the lesson. This observation is done by the observer doing by the lecturer. Data of the Research

Data of the research included both process and product data they collected in reference to the criteria of success defined in this research: the data of the process dealt with the student involvement in learning of writing activity through clustering technique. The data of the product

referred to the students' score on writing activity test. To collect the data related to the second criteria.

The average score of the whole students was counted using this formula stated by Ari Kunto (2010) as follows

$$M = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

M = Mean score / average score of the students achievement in writing essay through clustering technique

$\sum x$  = The sums of the total student's score

N = The number of students.

#### Research Instrument

The instruments in this research employed in this research to gather the data. They were observation the writing activity with test the students' write and giving some writing test.

#### Writing test

After conducting test that it was for gathering the data about the students' learning result. Related to this research, the exercise was developed to check the students' improvement in writing activity. It was administered in the preliminary study and at the end of cycle. In the preliminary study, the writing test was held to know the students' achievement in writing, where as at the end of cycle it was to know students' improvement after clustering technique implemented.

In this research, the test will be employed by the writer was a kind of lecturer made test activity. Thus, from this instrument obtained data was in the form of score.

#### d. Reflecting

This contains how to Analyze the data, think about what happened in class and to get the conclusions regarding how to develop the approach.

The following procedure as this act of reflecting should inform the process of planning the next lesson and so the cycle should begin again. Every lesson should include some aspect of action research and that the continued development of a teacher is dependent on this on going process. In the reflection process of analyzing data to determine how far the data

collected have shown the success of clustering technique in solving problem. The analysis of the result of observation is done by comparing the data collected with the target or criteria or the criteria of success.

In the teaching writing III activity using clustering technique is considered successful. Students feel (1) enjoy learning writing skill using clustering technique, (2) the writer feels convenient in using clustering technique, (3) the students become more active in improving their own writing skills, (4) the students enjoy helping each other in the process of learning writing skill, and (5) the students writing skills improve as indicated by the average score of at least 85% students get a good point.

In cycle 2 students has increasing compared in cycle 1. When the teacher observe the average point from that criteria of success are good. In fluency students get 85%, grammar 86%, vocabulary 90%.From that result, the writer get successful in their research.

### Discussion of the Findings

The findings of the implementation and result of the writing skill for teaching writing in preliminary study , cycle 1, and cycle 2 presented in this part. It includes the students' involvement in writing activity and reflection.

The students' result writing activity in preliminary study was used to gather the data of students that can be used to know the students achievement and ability before the technique was implemented. The result of the students writing activity can be seen at the table below presented by the following result of both activities of cycle I and 2.

Table 1. The students scores of the essay

NO.	STUDENTS (INITIALS)	SCORE OF WRITING ESSAY		
		Preliminary Study	Cycle I	Cycle 2
1.	AP	67	83	83
2.	DWKW	75	75	83
3.	FH	67	75	83
4.	MFK	75	75	83
5.	MAJ	75	83	92
6.	MBM	75	75	92
7.	MBA	67	75	83
8.	NREA	75	67	92
9.	NLL	75	75	92

10	PNA	67	75	92
11.	PY	67	75	83
12.	RA	67	75	83
13.	SC	75	75	92
14.	WPJ	67	75	92
15.	YN	67	67	83
16.	YS	75	75	83
17.	ZCA	67	83	92
18.	RWKW	67	67	92
		$\sum XO = 1.270$	$\sum XO = 1.350$	$\sum XO = 1.566$

From the result above at the preliminary showed that the students' score is still far from the passing grade in school that each students had to reach 75 in scoring. So, from the problem above the technique had been prepared by the writer.

Based on the result of preliminary, the writer carried out the cycle 1 in order to improve the students' writing skill in argumentative essay using cue clustering technique. It was conducted in two meetings of implementing the clustering technique with the time allocated 90 minutes and first meeting was used to administer the writing test.

In the first meetings in the first meeting in cycle 1, the writer conducted the writing activities which had been arranged in lesson plan. The writer taught the students about argumentative essay. The writer explained about the definition of argumentative essay , the language feature , the generic structure and the model of argumentative essay. Then, if the students get the materials from the writer about argumentative essay the writer give the example. Here in the research the writer choose the topic is the role of English.

An then the writer also explained about clustering technique and how to use it in the writing activity especially in argumentative. The writer explaine the example activity with clustering technique. And in the second meeting the writer apply the clustering technique to get the writing score. Before start the second meeting students must make a group. In one group there are consist of two students. It is divide the topic of argumentative essay to all of group. In the second meeting in cycle 1 the writer give the topic to students make argumentative essay about The development of English at Nganjuk Regency.

From the result above showed that the students' score is different from the preliminary test in this research. It means that there are students get increasing and the opposite. But here, in the second meeting in cycle 1 students' score get from their present using Clustering technique at the first time in writing activity. The result of the test showed the improvement but it haven not fullfilled the criteria of succes determined at writing III. Therefore the lecturer did the following implementation of clustering technique in making an argumentative essay by using an other topic.

In cycle two the writer also give the same activity like a cycle 1. Before students start the activity the writer make a group for students, one group consist two students.

Then in every group the writer give one topic, in the cycle 2 the writer change the topic. The topic in cycle 2 is education. The topics is very interesting , because students can explore all of their expression to their knowledges dealing with education . The students can make an argumentative easier because the topic is suitable with the field they study.

From the result above showed that the students' score is different from the pre-research and cycle 1. There are many students got score 75 more than 80%, It's mean that they are successful in writing test cycle 2. From the table show that students get increasing, and about changing the topic is very influential to students

### **Discussion**

The study hypothesized that the students' writing ability in argumentative essay can be improved by using Clustering technique. This action hypothesis was confirmed by the result of the test that showed high increase in the student' writing score. The increasing was proven in two cycles.

In cycle 1, the total score in cycle 1 was 1350.the mean of the cycle 1 could be formulated as follow :

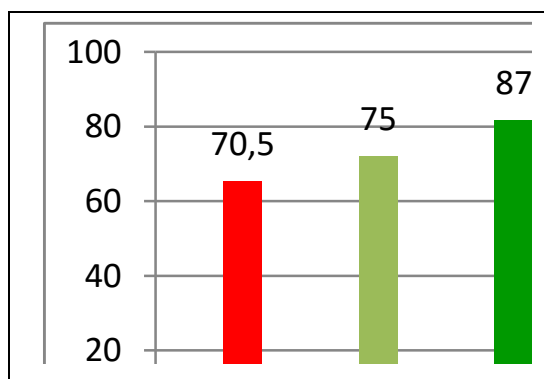
$$\text{Mean score of cycle 1} = \frac{\sum X}{n} = \frac{1350}{18} = 75$$

It was acquired that the average of the students' score was 75. In cycle 2 , the total score was 1566. the mean of the cycle 2 could be formulated as follow :

$$\text{Mean score of cycle 2} = \frac{\sum X}{n} = \frac{1566}{18} = 87$$

It was acquired that the average of the students' score was 87. The above results of data analysis were considered as the finding of this classroom action study, which could be summarized.

In addition, the increasing comparative grand mean tables of the test scores that was obtained by the students for preliminary, cycle I and cycle II could be showed as the following graphic:



Graph 1. Students' Progressing Achievement in writing III of test at the Preliminary study, Cycle I and Cycle 2

The findings of cycle 2 clearly revealed that the writing skill of the subjects could be improved through clustering technique. It could be seen from cycle I and cycle 2, that the grand mean score of test at preliminary study (70,5), cycle I (75), and cycle 2 (87). The study could be categorized successful because it had achieved the minimum criteria of Writing III at English Education Program STKIP PGRI Nganjuk .

The study was intended to enhance the student's writing skill through clustering technique. This was successfully achieved after two cycles were carried out. The students involved in the class activities and seemed eager to the writing activities by using clustering technique. It can be seen from the observation during the teaching learning process. The students were more active and the atmosphere of teaching learning process changed to be more attractive.

These findings of the classroom action research indicated that the implementation of clustering technique was significantly effective in enhancing writing skill. Therefore, the findings also could answer the research problem which was clustering technique could enhance writing skill to the students's



fourth English Education Program of STKIP PGRI Nganjuk in the academic year of 2017/2018.

### **Conclusion**

In this research the classroom action research was conducted to find out whether the clustering technique can help the students enhance and develop their ability in writing skill especially writing III of argumentative essay. The students' fourth semester students' English Education Program, STKIP PGRI Nganjuk were selected by conducting a preliminary study. Based on the study, it was showed that the students faced big problem in their writing skill. The researcher used clustering technique to solve the problem faced by the students in writing skill. The data analysis result of score in cycle I showed the increasing mean figures were 75. The mean figure obtained by the subject under study for each session in cycle I was obviously higher than the mean figure of the test score at preliminary study. The grand mean figure of the test score obtained by the subjects under study in cycle I after calculating both the sessions was 75. This result showed the progress of the students writing skill. However this score was still categorized as unaccomplished, because it had not achieved the standard minimum score of the success indicator. Therefore, the researcher needed to conduct cycle 2 in this study using an interesting topic. The result of data analysis of the following test at cycle 1 and 2 score obtained by the subject under study in cycle 2 the result of the grand mean figure was 87. The grand mean figure of post-test in Cycle 2 was much higher than in cycle I and preliminary study. The grand of mean score in preliminary study was 70,5 and cycle I was 75, while the grand mean score in cycle II was 87 which showed this present study could be categorized successful because it had exceeded the minimum criteria of Writing III. It could be concluded that the clustering technique was an effective technique that can be used to enhance the students' ability in writing skill.

The conclusion could also be drawn that clustering technique was also able to enhance and maintain the students motivation, desire, interest and enjoyment in learning English as it was shown by the result of the observation.

The result of the questionnaire also indicated that a good finding in term of students' responses toward the clustering technique. The students enjoyed the teaching and learning process of writing III by using clustering technique. Therefore, the technique could also reduce the students' boredom in learning English especially in writing skill.

Based on the findings above, the researcher wants to give the following suggestion in helping teachers and students in English teaching and learning:

For the English lectures at English Education Program of STKIP PGRI Nganjuk especially who teaches in the fourth semester are suggested to use clustering technique as one alternative of good technique in teaching writing skill since it can build up the students' interest, participations, and motivation in learning writing skill. In teaching and learning process, the most important single factor is the teacher who has to promote friendly and fun classroom situation. The teachers should be sensitive in creating, selecting and organizing the teaching aids and manipulating the technique to manage the class activities, simulating and maintaining the interest of the students, it can help the teacher in teaching writing skill with its components such as finding word meaning, important information, and main idea it is believed that the student's ability in writing skill can be enhanced.

For the students of English Education Program STKIP PGRI Nganjuk are suggested to be more enthusiast in learning English. The students should have much practice to acquire the writing skill.. It's recommended for students to read more, not only in the classroom, but also out side of it as like using internet because it can help them to enhance the other language component such as vocabulary, grammar. For the other researchers, due to the time the writer was very much limited during this research, then, it is suggested for the other researchers to conduct the similar research using the same technique but with longer time allocation. It is also suggested to conduct the similar study with the same technique at the other university or school students.

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