Abstract

The research entitled The use of English Punctuation in improving Students writing skills at the sixth semester of Faculty of Letters of UMI Makassar. This study aims to describe student’s error of using punctuation in English text. The study is conducted to students at the semester six of English Department. The researcher analyzed the error in the use of punctuation itself, because good punctuation is essential in clear and effective writing especially in academic writing. It was correlated to Jeremy’s theory (2004,p.49) stated that using punctuation correctly is one of the important skill in writing.. There are two problems of this study; how the students’ errors of using punctuation in English text are and what cause of error in using punctuation. The researcher used qualitative method in this study. Punctuation marks that are presented in this research are comma, full stop, hyphen, apostrophe, question mark, quotation mark, and exclamation mark. As a result, the researcher found that comma is most common error made by the English Department student during the sixth semester. In the data analysis, the writer described that the sixth Semester Students’ of the English Department have low achievement in using English Punctuation. The low achievement they have is primarily caused by their errors that are still made by students' in using English Punctuation, they are also influenced by the following factors : 1. The students’ basic knowledge in using English punctuation is not sufficient, 2. The interest of the students' in learning and doing the exercises of the use of English punctuation is low, and 3. The English punctuation is very complex and difficult to the students'.

Keywords : English Punctuation, Improving, Writing Skill

Abstract


Kata Kunci: Tanda Baca Bahasa Inggris, Meningkatkan, Keterampilan Menulis
1. Introduction

It can be denied that language is an integral part of human life and society. It used to relate between one people to others, meaning that is for communication. English as international language is widely use in many areas or field as tool of communication and it plays a very important role in developing business, economics, politics, education, and many other fields.

In studying English, many students who study in the tertiary level still often make error in using punctuation although they have learned it for many years. They made error because they have poor knowledge about the language. In teaching English as the second or foreign language it is necessary to note that there are four language skills. One of them is writing skill. It is considered as the most difficult among the four language skills, namely: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Writing is one of the language skills which is directly used by the writer for written communication. It is productive and expressive process. It involves grammar, Rhetoric, which is similar to style, concept and judgment element.

The punctuation is of the component of writing which often used incorrectly; for example the use of period, comma underlining, semicolon, colon, exclamation point, and another marks. The error of the use of Punctuation and bibliography.

The English punctuation is a component of writing. It is very important for the people who want to write. Besides, it is important to show the reader how sentences are related; of course the reader’s association of ideas and to help making it clear to the reader.

Considering the important of the English punctuation for the people who want to write, and observing unsatisfactory facts about the difficult encountered by the student in using English punctuation, the writer motivated to do research under the title: The use of English Punctuation in improving Students writing skills at the sixth semester of Faculty of Letters of UMI Makassar.

This proposal is indented to help the students to overcome their difficulties in using English punctuation in writing skills. Therefore, the writer would like to obtain data from the sixth semester students of faculty of letters of UMI Makassar University by finding out the difficulties or their error in using English punctuation mark in writing. Afterword, the writer tries to present in studying this subject and the explains in detail as well.

Linguistics / Letters is the foreign Alphabet of a group of letters or symbols written or marked on a surface as a means of communicating ideas by making each symbol stand for an idea, concept, or thing, by using each symbol to represent a set of sounds grouped into syllables, or by regarding each symbols as corresponding roughly or exactly to each of the sounds in the language.

Writing is letters or symbols that are written or imprinted on a surface to represent the sounds or words of a language. Basically, writing means producing oral message into written language. It involves an active process to organize, formulate, and develop the ideas into a piece of paper. So that the readers can follow the writer message as well as in oral form. Writing is one of the ways to give information to the readers, the writing should be clearly and useful for the reader need. To make writing clearly, there are some guides that important to make the writing clearly and easy to be understood. The guides will be explained below.

The terms of writing have several meanings. Many experts have proposed the definition and explanation of writing. Widdowson (1978:62) states that writing is the act of making up correct sentences and transmitting them through the visual medium as mark on paper.

Hornby (1974:996) states that writing is in the sense of the verb ‘write’. Write is to make letters or other symbols (egideographs) on a surface, especially with a pen or a pencil on a paper.

Troyka (1987:3-4) states that writing is a way of communicating a message to a reader for a purpose. 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.

1.1 Types of writing
There are three Types of writing, they are:

1. **Technical Writing**
   This form of expository writing has a primary purpose of conveying technical information in a sample, no-nonsense manner.

2. **Research Writing**
   This form of expository writing has a primary purpose of reporting new information that has been learned by studying available resources.

3. **Creative Writing**
   The primary purpose of creative writing is to entertain the readers.

1.2 **The purpose of writing**
   The writer decides some reasons why he/she writes. She also thinks about a possible effect that might occur the reader. There are three categories the purpose of writing, namely to persuade, to inform, and to entertain.

1.3 **Traits of Effective Writing**
   Although the types of writing you will be doing is important, the following are certain traits that all good writing follows:
   1. Stimulating Ideas
   2. Logical Organization
   3. Engaging Voice
   4. Original Word Choice
   5. Effective Sentences Style
   6. Correct, Accurate Copy

1.4 **The five steps of Writing Process**
   There five steps in writing process, they are:
   a. **Prewriting**
      Before you start your story you have to think about what you want to write. This is called Prewriting. Something you can do is making a story. That is when you think of ideas to make your story, like who is going to be in it, the setting, the plot, and the problem/solution and organize them graphically.
   b. **Writing**
      This is the step to writing your first draft. You put all ideas that you had into paragraph.
   c. **Edit**
      After you have written you rough draft of your story it is time to edit your story. You give it to a friend or a parent and let them read it through. They need to check if your spelling, punctuation, grammar, and capitals are in the right place and if everything is ready for a final copy.
   d. **Proofreading**
      Now you must read your story and make sure that there is no missed mistake and everything is the way you like it.
   e. **Publishing**
      It is already time for you to write your final copy. Take your rough draft and copy it on a computer or paper and then you are done!

**Punctuation**

Punctuation is one of the components of writing. Many authors have described about it, and those description are useful for us to have a proper understanding of what is meant by punctuation. For this reason the writer puts forward some description.

The first description that the writer puts forward is the description from Butler in *English simplified*. I state that punctuation is used to clearify sentence structure and meaning, and without punctuation a writing is difficult to understand, furthermore, the use punctuation symbol assists the reader to proceed in inelegant and orderly fashion through the heavy traffic of ideas (1978:1). This description refers that punctuation is the system of marks used to make writing clearly.

The second description is stated by Brewton, (1962: 352) they said the function of punctuation is to show the reader how sentence and part of sentences are related. In conversation, a speaker has many resources to show such relation, for example, a change in facial expression or pitch of voice. In writing, the resources are less numerous. Moreover, i must use them correctly, as the reader will not be confused. In most cases, i will not have the chance to clear up distortion in meaning caused by faulty punctuation. He must, therefore, be able to express what he really means. They way that can be taken by the writer to make his writing clear and lucid are by using punctuation. It means that punctuation is very important for the writer to make writing material meaningful. Therefore, he must...
use it properly. Punctuation is essential to make writing clear, when it is used properly, it helps in expressing ideas clearly, it invites disapproval and ridicule. It means that the writer must use punctuation correctly.

1.5 The English Punctuation Marks

As we know that many authors have writing about punctuation, whether the sense, the use or the marks of English punctuation. In this case, I will present the English punctuation marks that are stated by some experts, in order that we know the amount of English punctuation marks.

Ross and Doty (1985: 283-290) state that punctuation is one of the mechanics of writing together with capitalization. Then, they classify punctuation into thirteen marks:

1. Period (.)
2. Quotation Marks (""")
3. Comma (,)
4. Semicolon (;)
5. Colon (:
6. Dash (---)
7. Exclamation point (!)
8. Question Marks (?)
9. Parentheses (
10. Brackets [
11. Apostrophe (‘)
12. Ellipses (…)
13. Underlining(-----)

On the other hand, Janis (1977: 318-347) classified punctuation into eleven marks, namely:

1. Period (.)
2. Quotation Marks (""")
3. Comma (,)
4. Semicolon (;)
5. Colon (:
6. Dash (---)
7. Exclamation point (!)
8. Question Marks (?)
9. Parentheses (
10. Brackets [
11. Apostrophe (‘)
12. Ellipses (…)
13. Underlining(-----)

Another expects, Chandler (1955:1-8) classified punctuation into thirteen marks, namely:

1. Conquering the comma (,)
2. Period (.)
3. Quotations Marks (?)
4. Exclamation Point (!)
5. Semicolon (;)
6. Apostrophe (’)
7. Underlining(-----)
8. Quotation Marks (""")
9. Colon (:
10. Dash (---)
11. Parenthesis ( )
12. Brackets [ ]
13. Hyphen (-)

1.6 The Use of English Punctuation Marks

1.6.1 Quotation Marks

There are two system of quotation marks, namely American system and English system. American system is used double (”) quotation marks and English system is used single quotation mark.

Double quotation marks is used:
To enclose a direct quotation a person’s exact word.
Lina said “I am going to Surabaya Saturday”
(the speaker’s exact word)

Single quotation marks is use to enclose:
A quotation marks within question (Chandler, 19
Example:
Reny asked, “who said, ‘practice makes perfect’?”

Addition remaked, “phrase ‘initiate any appropriate action’ seems to leave a lot to the imagination

1.6.2 Semicolon

Use semicolons in three situations:
First, use a semicolon to separate two sentences when there is no coordinating conjunction.
such as and, but, or, nor, or for.
With coordinating conjunction: Autumn leaves showered from the trees in multiple colors, and it looked like snow with a rainbow.
With semicolon: Autumn leaves showered from the trees in multiple colors; it looked like snow with a rainbow.
If the two sentences are joined by a conjunctive adverb, such as however, consequently, therefore, or moreover, use a semicolon before the conjunctive adverb and a
Autumn leaves showered from the trees in multiple colors; consequently, we have a big job ahead of us raking them into compost piles.

Second, use a semicolon to separate two sentences joined with a coordinating conjunction when commas are contained within either of the sentences.

Autumn leaves showered from the trees in red, gold, yellow, and brown; and it looked like snow with a rainbow.

Third, use a semicolon to separate items in a series if there are commas within the items.

Mr. Johnson, my neighbor; Mrs. Addison, my aunt; and Ms. Ricardo, my music teacher, all came to the open house.

1.6.3 Comma

The comma are necessary for clear expression of written ideas, and it is used set of:

Use comma to separate words, phrases, and subordinate clauses written in series (Warriner, 1958: 445):

Words: sandwiches, fruit, candy, dandy and cookies
Phrase: those puppies play on the back steps, in the flower beds, and under the house.
Clauses: my parents are interested in what i do, where i go, and how i behave.

1.6.4 Colon

There are three reasons to use colons.

First, use a colon for conventional items: giving the time, separating chapter from verse in Bible references, separating volume from page in bibliography references, and writing a salutation in a business letter.

The alarm is set for 5:30 a.m.
He cited an article in National Geographic 196:81 (that is, volume 196, page 81)

Second, use a colon to introduce a formal list. Words such as the following or as follows frequently signal a formal list.

The attendant made the following checks on my car: oil level, transmission fluid level, battery, tire pressure, and windshield washer fluid.

Third, use a colon to mean summary follows or explanation may be a complete sentence. The summary or explanation may be a complete sentence. The zoo faced a series of troubles: It lost accreditation, a keeper was attacked by a lion, a visitor was bitten by a monkey, and the director was fired.

2. Method

The research method is pre-experimental research design. It aims at finding out the effectiveness of using English punctuation in improving students’ writing skills at the sixth semester of Faculty of Letters of UMI Makassar involves one group of students by giving pre-test and post-tests.

The design of this research will present as follows:

\[
O_1 \rightarrow X \rightarrow O_2
\]

Where: \(O_1\) : Pre-test
\(X\) : Treatment
\(O_2\) : Post-test

The data obtained from the test will be analyzed by using the procedures as follows:

1. Classifying the students score into five classification:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>91-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>75-90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>61-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>51-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Poor</td>
<td>Less than 50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Calculating the mean score of the students answer in both pre-test and post-test by this formula:

\[
x = \frac{\sum x}{N}
\]

Where: \(X\) = The mean score
\(\sum x\) = The student
\(N\) = The number of the student

1. Pre-test

Before doing the treatment, the writer meets the lecturer and determine two class. The research determine one topic and then asks the students to develop this topic.
The pretest done in 90 minutes.

2. Treatment
   a. The researcher present and introduce the material to the class and explain what the students have to do.
   b. The researcher give the material text to the students.
   c. The researcher ask the students to understand situation and condition that are describe in a sentence.
   d. The researcher ask the students to answer question about facts or details present in a sentence.
   e. The researcher explains first how to work out test and questionnaire as well as told them the time available to do test.
   f. The researcher distributes the instrument to the students.
   g. The researchers ask the students to do the best, and the students who have finished the test may continue doing questionnaire.
   h. Finally, the research collects the data from the respondents.

3. Posttest
   The writer gives posttest 90 minute. In experimental class the writer ask the students to write a sample of use of English punctuation writing but the writer does not determine any sample

3. Findings and Discussion
   3.1 The Result Score of Pre-test
   The data collected in this research was analyzed thought quantitative analysis. It used to get the score. The researcher used scoring scale and the result of data analysis as follow based on the explanation. The following table showed the result of pre-test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO</th>
<th>SAMPLE</th>
<th>Score of each component observed</th>
<th>TOTAL score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>quotation mark</td>
<td>Semicolon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   Based on the table one above, from the 20 sample and 4 aspects scoring of component observed, the highest score of each quotation mark component is (sample number 3 and 12) for quotation mark component score, 20 (sample number 3 and 12) for semicolon component score, 20 (sample number 12) for comma component score, 20 (sample number 3 and 12) for colon component. Contrary, the lowest score is 12 (sample number 6, 14 and 15) for quotation mark component score, 12 (sample number 6 and 7) for semicolon component score, 12 (sample number 6 and 7) for semicolon component score, 11 (sample number 6 and 10) for comma component score, 11 (sample number 1) for colon component score.

   The mean score of the Students in Pre-test:

   \[
   \text{Mean} = \frac{\sum \text{Score Pretest}}{N}
   \]

   \[
   = \frac{60.8}{20} = 3.04
   \]

   Table 2 Classifications in Quotation Mark
Table 2 above indicates that criteria and percentage of the students Quotation Mark in pretest shows those there 2 (10%) students obtained “Good” scorers. There were 5 Students (25%) got “Average” scorers, there were 10 students (50%) got “Poor” scorers, and 3 (15%) got Very Poor scorers.

Table 3 Classifications in Semicolon
Based on the table 3 above indicates that criteria and percentage of the students semicolon in pretest shows that there was 2 (10%) Students obtained “Good” score, there were 8 Students (40%) got “Average” scorers, there were 8 Students (40%) got “Poor scorers and 2 (10%) Students got obtained “Very Poor” scorers.

Table 4 ClassificationsComma
Based on the table 4 above indicates that the criteria and percentage of the students comma in pretest shows that there 3 (15%) Students obtained “Good” scorers. There were 2 students (10%) got “Average” scorers, there were 10 Students (50%) got “Poor” scores, and 5 (25%) Students got “Very poor” scorers.

Table 5 Classifications in Colon
Based on the table 5 above indicates that criteria and percentage of the Students Colon in pretest shows that there 2 (10%) students obtained “Good” scorers, there were 5 students (25%) got “Average” scorers. There were 10 students (50%) got “poor” scorers, and 3 (15%) students got “very poor” scorers.

3.2 The Result Score of Posttest
Table 1 the students’ score from posttest
Based on the table 1 above, from the 20 sample and 4 aspects scoring of component observed, the highest score of each Quotation mark component is 20 (sample number 12) for Quotation mark component score, 22 (sample number 12) for semicolon component score, 24 (sample number 12) for comma component score, 24 (sample number 3 and 12) for colon component score. Contrary, the lowest score is 12 (sample number 9) for quotation mark component score, 15 (sample number 6, 9, 11, 15, and 18) for semicolon component score, 14 (sample number 13) for comma component score, and 12 (sample number 6) for colon component score.

The mean score of the students in posttest:

\[
\Sigma \times \text{Mean score posttest}
\]

\[
X = \frac{134.7}{N} = \frac{134.7}{20} = 6.73
\]

Table 2 Classifications in Quotation Mark

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>22-25</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>19-21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>16-18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Very Poor</td>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[
= 6.73
\]

Table 3 Classifications in Semicolon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>22-25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>19-21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>16-18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Very Poor</td>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 Classifications in Comma

Based on the table 3 above indicate that the criteria and percentage of the students Semicolon in posttest shows that there 1 (5%) student obtained “Very Good” score, there were 4 students (20%) got “Good” score, there were 10 students (50%) got “Average” score, and 5 (25%) students got “Poor” score and no one students got very poor score.
Based on the table 4 above indicate that the criteria and percentage of the students Comma in posttest shows that there 1 (5%) students obtained “very good” score, there 5 students (25%) students got “good” score, there were 7 students (35%) got “Average” score, and 7 (35%) students got “poor” score, and no one students got very poor score.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>22-25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Good</td>
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<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
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<td>10-12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 Classifications in Colon

Based on the table 5 above indicates that the criteria and percentage of the students Colon in posttest shows that there 1 (5%) students obtained “very good” score, there 5 students (25%) students got “good” score, there were 7 students (35%) got “Average” score, there 9 students (45%) got “average” score, and 6 (30%) students got “poor” score, and 1 (5%) students got “very poor” score.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>22-25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>19-21</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>16-18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Very Poor</td>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

deviation of the pretest and posttest we can see, at the table below:

Based on the data in the table above the result of test pretest and posttest. The mean score of pretest was 6.0 (poor) and the standard deviation was 0.7, while the mean score of posttest was 6.7 (fair) and the standard deviation 0.8. it means that score of the posttest was higher that of the pretest and standard deviation of posttest was higher that pretest

In this case, the researchers concluded that the use of English Punctuation in improving Students writing skills at the sixth semester of Faculty of Letters of UMI Makassar increased.

4. Conclusion

Based on the percentage of the findings, the researcher explained of each component eased from pretest and posttest as follow:

A. Quotation Mark

The result of the data analysis from pretest show that, were 3 students (15%) got score very poor, there 10 students (50%) got poor score, there 5 students (25%) got average score, there 2 (10%) got good score. And the posttest there were 1 student (5%) got very poor score, there 10 students (50%) got poor score, there 7 students (35%) got average score, there 2 students (10%) got good score.

B. Semicolon

The result of the data analysis from pretest show that, were 2 students (10%) got score very poor, there 8 students (40%) got poor score, there 8 students (40%) got average score, there 2 students (10%) got good score. And in the posttest there were 7 students (35%) got poor score, there 7 students (35%) got average score, there 5 students (25%) got good score, there 1 student (5%) got very good score.

C. Comma

The result of the data analysis from pretest show that, were 5 students (25%) got score very poor, there 10 students (50%) got poor score, there 2 students (10%) got aver-
age score, there 3 students (15%) got good score. And in the posttest there were 7 students (35%) got poor score, there 7 students (35%) got average score, there 4 students (20%) got good score, there 1 student (5%) got very good score.

D. Colon

The result of the data analysis from pretest show that, were 3 students (15%) got score very poor, there 10 students (50%) got poor score, there 5 students (25%) got average score, there 2 (10%) got good score. And in the posttest there 7 students (35%) got poor score, there 9 students (45%) got average score, there 3 students (15%) got good score, there 1 student (5%) got very good score.

Reference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Test</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>