

# Critical Thinking Graphic Organizer to Enhance Students' Writing Skill

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**Abstract-** Tarigan (1986:15) says writing is an activity to present ideas or thoughts. By writing, someone can express their idea, opinion, thought, or feeling. He/she may see a phenomenon, then it can be written critically. But many people think that writing is a difficult activity. They will be stuck to create the idea (s) or thought(s). Most university students assume writing is a difficult act because they have to write and analyze a phenomenon critically. This research proposes students to think and write some phenomena critically by using graphic organizer. The method is qualitative one to identify the using of graphic organizer (GO) among students. The participants are 30 students of English Literature Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts, UNNES in Indonesian Studies Subject. Data are taken from the product of students' writing, fields note, and interview. The results show good progress in writing after students do some writing assignments by using GO. They can identify and describe some phenomena, and then analyze them critically. The main ideas and developing ideas are structured clearly. The sentences show the correlation from one sentence to the next sentence. Their writing develops well.

**Keywords-** writing skills, critical thinking, graphic organizer

## I. INTRODUCTION

Writing is a form of thought that needs to read first in a specific time. One of the most important tasks for a writer is to master the principles of writing and thinking, which can help him/her achieve his/her aim. The most important among the principles that meant are a discovery, composition, and style. Briefly, learning to write is learning to think in or with a certain way (Angelo, 1980: 5). Richard (2003: 8) defines that "writing is a written communication that are working on the ability to produce special-purpose expression." Experts put the perception of writing based on real activity that prefers to convey ideas, information, and the argument through a written language. Based on the researcher's experience, especially in teaching writing, it was found that a large number of third-year students in Indonesian Studies' class in English Language and Literature Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts, UNNES still have difficulty in writing English. First, students had a low ability to generate, organize, and outline the ideas. They did not understand how to describe, organize, and manage the ideas in writing. Second, the students were still confused in using correct grammar. They did not have self-confidence in writing good English. Third, students' vocabulary (diction) was still limited. Most

students used repetition words and some students did not put conjunctions correctly when they write some sentences. Lastly, students did not understand how to use the mechanical conventions in their compositions. As a result, they were unable to arrange their writing well. One important factor which caused students could not organize their writing skills was a technique or strategy used by teachers where teachers used an improper technique or strategy, teaching media, and teaching materials in writing classes. Teachers use commonly technique or strategy in teaching writing classes that may not work properly or monotonous and uninteresting to students. As a result, students got difficulty to develop themselves in the learning process. The role of teachers is required as a motivator, facilitator and educator, is the most important thing to use an effective and attractive way of teaching, so that students got experience and ability in the writing class. From the facts above, one possible solution could be used to overcome the problem is to utilize critical thinking strategies graphic organizer.

Graphic organizer defined by Bishop (2013) as a visual display of key content information designed to guide learners and to enhance their understanding. The draft was sometimes referred to as concept maps, cognitive maps, or map content, but all of them are used to serve the purpose of helping students see clearly how ideas are organized in a text or around the concept. According to Abdul-Majeed Tayib (2015) on the effect of using graphic organizers on writing (a case study of preparatory college students at Umm al-Qura University), Graphic organizers (GO) as quoted from Bishop (2013) is the information visually designed for learners and aims to enhance understanding of the learner. Such information is often displayed in the form of mind maps, cognitive maps, or map content with the sole purpose of helping students how to organize ideas in a text or concept ideas. Through the use of GO, the learner can recognize an abstract form of a concept or information learned. GO helps learners to pay attention to the key concepts and how these concepts are connected. Through GO can reduce boredom when writing. Ellis (2004) states "spatial planning of critical thinking graphic organizer allows students to identify information that is missing or there is no connection in person strategic thinking." This is one way to arrange the concept to organize prior knowledge and generate a lot of ideas where one word as a link topic to

relate more words. Perles (2012) asserts that "ways of using the technique of graphic organizers: brainstorming, structuring and restructuring". First, brainstorming is one of the steps of the writing process as the student's mind, sit down, and think of topics. Then, the teacher asks the students to brainstorm a topic to get information and ideas that refers to the topic. Second, the arrangement means that teachers choose topics and ideas or information on the topic to help students use different graphic organizers to develop their thinking. Lastly, the restructuring means encouraging students to use the organizer after they have completed their first draft to ensure that the information is well structured. In addition, there are some suggestions from several researchers who use graphic organizer technique of critical thinking to solve the problem in writing. As Sharrock (2008) and Emerson (2010) found that the critical thinking of writing graphic organizer is an effective strategy. Series of studies, especially by Clark in Zaini et. Al. (2010), observed that graphic organizers not only allows students to record and classify information, but also helps students understand difficult concepts, generate ideas, and identify connections between ideas. This means that the graphic organizer strategies can help students to write in English, especially in writing. Sharrock (2008) and Emerson (2010) argues that the strategy of graphic organizer can help students make a topic sentence, supporting the idea, supporting details, and a good closing sentence, so students can write well, and the readers can understand the idea. Related to the study above, we need to apply graphic organizer technique to overcome the problem of students' writing because it allows students to have lots of ideas to make the concept of the topics discussed before writing. When they make more concepts, it can generate more ideas that can be expressed through writing. The purpose of this study is how graphic organizers can improve students' skills in writing.

## II. METHODOLOGY

The qualitative research employing case study method is done in this research since it aims at revealing a specific phenomenon experienced by a subject in specific context with the intervention of the researcher in eliciting data (Nunan, 1992; Alwasilah, 1995). The phenomenon investigated in this research is the understanding of students in analyzing Indonesian Education System and Indonesia Transportation System. The subjects are 30 students who take Indonesian Studies subject. They are 6<sup>th</sup> semester. The data were collected through assignments which include two topics: Indonesian Education System and Indonesia Transportation System. Students drew graphic organizers to guide their ideas. They do a brainstorming, structuring, and restructuring their ideas.

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Gere (1985: 4) says writing in the sense of communication is to convey knowledge or information on the subject. Writing means supporting the idea. Byrne (1988: 1), says that writing does not just make one sentence or just a few things that are not related, but produce a series of points in

order, which relate to one another, and in a certain style. A series of sentences that can be short, maybe just two or three sentences, but the sentence was put on a regular basis and relate to one another, and form a unity that makes sense. Crimmon (1984: 191) argues that writing is hard work, but also an opportunity to say something about themselves in a way to communicate ideas to others, even to learn something unknown. Variety of article writing can be based on the content which effect the type of information, organization and procedure of writing delivery. Based on the variety of the writing system can be divided into four: description, exposition, argumentation, narration (Syafi'ie, 1990: 151). Keraf (1989: 6) argues written language is based on a common goal. Based on that writing can be divided into five: description, exposition, argumentation, narration, and persuasion. In the argument, there is an analytical exposition text which is a type of text that contains the remarks on something such as objects, places, or events where the text contains a detailed idea about the author of an event or events that are around.

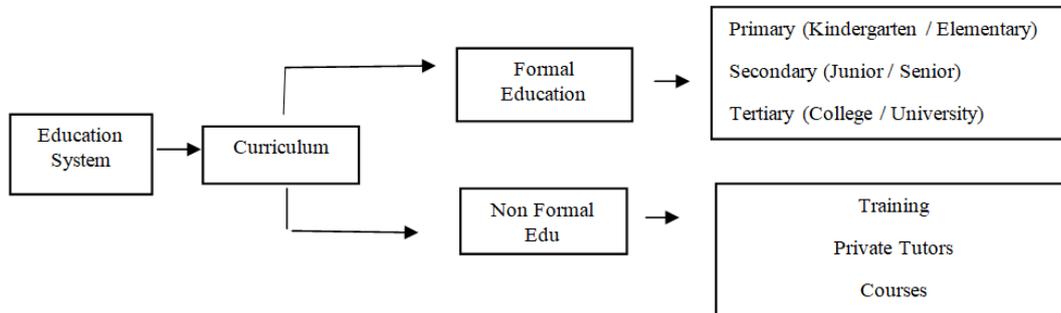
Patrick D. Higgins (2012) in the Effects of Using A Critical Thinking Graphic Organizer to Improve Connecticut Academic Performance Test Interdisciplinary Writing Assessment Scores said graphic organizer is a graph that visually demonstrated that describes the relationship between facts, terms, and or ideas in a text. Graphic Organizer comes from a number of forms and may involve the knowledge map, a map of the mind / concept, cognitive maps, concept diagrams, etc. (Hall & Strangman, 2002). The use of graphic organizer can improve the process of writing through an organized frame work that can be used to compare standpoint, reinforce persuasive writing through the knowledge of the author. Tazkiyatunnafs Elhawwa (2015) in Developing Materials of Writing Course Using Graphic Organizers for the English Department Students says that the ability to write is a skill that can be learned. Writing is the product of a set of ideas. Teachers or lecturers have an important role to choose the books or materials that are suitable for students so that the writing process was smooth and how learners or students can learn to write. Graphic Organizer (GO) selected by the pre-writing strategies deemed suitable for students through GO,

While in representing their ideas/thoughts, students are wished to write a topic critically. They are pleased to share their comment, opinion, or suggestion. According to HAR Tilaar (2011: 15-16). Robert H. Ennis (2011) in Tilaar (2011: 15-16), critical thinking is reasonable and reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do. Richard Paul (1990) adds critical thinking is an ability and disposition to critically evaluate a trust or confidence, what underlying assumptions and on the basis of which the live view of that assumption is. Lipman (1991) defines critical thinking as thinking that facilitates decision which is based on the reality criteria that includes self-corrective and substantive context.

Participants of this research are 30 students who take Indonesian Studies course at English Literature Program, English Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts. They learn some topics, but students only focus on Education System in Indonesian and Transportation System

in Indonesia. First, students should understand what graphic organizer is and how to represent their ideas/thoughts through graphic organizer. Students are pleased to create their own graphic organizer.

(kindergarten/elementary), secondary (junior/senior high school), and tertiary (college/university). In formal education, they show training, private tutors, and courses. Some students also talk about full day schools and



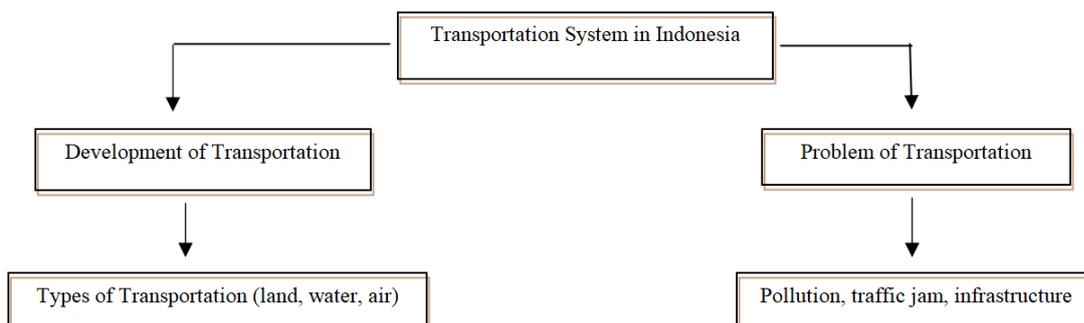
**Figure 1.** The Education System in Indonesia

First topic is about education system in Indonesia. At class students discuss about the education law and education level. They also learn what graphic organizer is. After discussing, students get assignment. They should develop their ideas/thoughts about education in Indonesia by using graphic organizer. As Perles (2012) stated "ways of using the technique of graphic organizers: brainstorming, structuring and restructuring". He adds brainstorming is one of the steps of the writing process as the student's mind, sit down, and think of topics. Teacher asks the students to brainstorm a topic to get information and ideas that refers to the topic. Then, the arrangement or structuring that means teachers choose topics and ideas or information on the topic to help students use different graphic organizers to develop their thinking. Lastly, the restructuring means encouraging students to use the organizer after they have completed their first draft to ensure that the information is well structured. Students apply Perles' suggestion. They do a brainstorming, structuring, and restructuring their ideas/thoughts.

In brainstorm their ideas/thoughts, students draw a graphic organizer. First students talk about education system

expensive cost to get better education. Researchers also help students to do structuring the topic. Then researchers ask students to do restructuring. It means researchers encourage students to use the organizer after they have completed their first draft to ensure that the information is well structured. Students also insert their opinions about education system in Indonesia. Here are some examples students' opinions about education system in Indonesia that can be seen at the last paragraph.

- If we want to increase education system, we should develop the quality of education that includes human resources, educators, facilities, and infrastructures. by increasing quality, we can compete internationally.
- The educational reform is a complex endeavor. Our country has identified the problems of standardized tests that cause rigid schooling system. Schools do not give chances for students to improve and develop their passions and creativities in improving their characters and behaviors. They just make a systems and rules to be obeyed to achieve good values in academic.
- Expensive tuition fee is a problem in education system



**Figure 2.** Transportation System in Indonesia

in general that includes education law, and education level. They develop their ideas about curriculum. They talk the history of curriculum in Indonesia, started from curriculum 1984, 2006, KTSP, and 2013. Then they discuss about the formal and non-formal education. Formal education includes Then they discuss about the formal and non-formal education. Formal education includes primary

in Indonesia. Many students who come from poor family can't continue their study because of the expensive cost. Though government offer some scholarship that is well known as BOS, it does not help totally. Students have to buy uniforms. It is difficult for poor students.

In brainstorm their ideas/thoughts, students draw a graphic organizer. First students talk about transportation system in general. Then they discuss about the development of transportation and the problems. In the development of transportation, students talk about types of transportation that are divided into land, water, and air. In problems of transportation, they talk about the pollution, traffic jam, and infrastructure. Researchers also help students to do structuring the topic. Then researchers ask students to do restructuring. It means researchers encourage students to use the organizer after they have completed their first draft to ensure that the information is well structured. Students develop their ideas by written transformation in transportation in the industrial revolution era that include transportation online. They also insert their opinions about transportation system in Indonesia. Here are some examples students' opinions about transportation system in Indonesia that can be seen at the last paragraph.

- a) Integration of public transportation is indeed very important for all elements of society. It will achieve a positive impact among society itself. Indonesia will be wealthier when we have a good transportation.
- b) Some problems in transportation system such as pollution, traffic jam, and infrastructure. To reduce the problems, we start to use public transportation and leave our vehicles at home.
- c) Moving together concept is a good concept because it allows people to use public transportation to support people's activities. It has been supported by comfortable and cheap public transportation, such as busway, BRT, MRT, and others.

After we read students' writing, we can see how Graphic Organizers help them structure the ideas to relate with other ideas. Through graphic organizers, students share their ideas structurally in a hierarchical top-down fashion which can be the guidance to improve their review writing. Students can minimize the grammatical errors. By implementing graphic organizers, students present their review ideas chronologically.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Writing as one skill in learning a language is important for students. Through writing, students express their ideas, thoughts, opinions, or suggestions critically. To help and guide students directed and organized the ideas, thoughts, opinions, or suggestions, students create a graphic organizer. Through graphic organizer, students can pour their ideas coherently. Students can also reduce the grammatical errors when writing. But this research also has some limitations because this research only focuses on the application of Graphic Organizer. The researcher suggests anyone who are interested in finding another topic is pleased to do the further research, such as literature, the applied linguistics, EFL teaching, etc.

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