STUDENTS' ABILITY IN WRITING ARGUMENTATIVE TEXT AT MAN 1 PAYAKUMBUH

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the argumentative writing ability of twelfth-grade students at MAN 1 Payakumbuh, focusingon their ability to construct coherent texts with logical arguments, appropriate structure, and grammatical accuracy. Employing a descriptive quantitative design, the research analyzed writing scores from all 43 students in the population, assessed by their English teacher using holistic scoring rubrics that evaluated the argumentative task. Data analysis encompassed descriptive statistics, frequency distribution, ability categorization, and comparison against the school's Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) of 80. Results revealed a mean score of 74.77 (range: 20-100), indicating adequate overall performance with significant gaps between high and low achievers. Categorization showed 25.6% of students at Excellent level and 53.5% Good, demonstrating competence in basic structure and coherence; however, 67.4% failed to meet KKM standards due to persistent challenges in developing strong arguments, logical paragraph organization, grammar application, and mechanical accuracy. These findings underscore the need for targeted, strategy-based instruction, structured guidance, and continuous feedback to elevate all students' argumentative writing skills to institutional benchmarks, thereby enhancing overall English language proficiency.

Keywords : *Students' Ability, Writing, Agumentative Text*

NTRODUCTION

Mastery of argumentative text writing was essential in the Merdeka Curriculum through thesis (introduction), arguments (body), reiteration (conclusion) structure to develop critical thinking and effective communication among high school students (Purnomo et al., 2022; Nunan, 2003). Argumentative text represented the peak of factual writing competence in the high school English syllabus. Writing ability required accurate vocabulary (Reflinda, 2016; Kardena et al., n.d.; Prima et al., 2023) and appropriate teaching strategies (Roza et al., 2022).

Preliminary observations at MAN 1 Payakumbuh (August 8, 2025) identified three main difficulties: (1) constructing introduction topic sentences, (2) strengthening arguments with supporting data, (3) using transition signals for inter-paragraph coherence. Similar obstacles included punctuation challenges (Melani & Mardiah, 2023) and cognitive-linguistic demands (Levine, 1987; Wigg & Semel, 1984).

This descriptive quantitative study measured the argumentative writing ability of 43 grade XII IPS students (F2.c & F2.d) at MAN 1 Payakumbuh using documentation scores and SPSS analysis, addressing the research question: "How is students Ability in writing argumentative text at MAN 1 Payakumbuh?" to establish an empirical baseline for effective teaching interventions.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive quantitative design to identify grade XII IPS students' argumentative writing ability at MAN 1 Payakumbuh, aiming to accurately describe phenomenon characteristics using quantitative data without environmental modification (Sugiyono, 2016). The population consisted of 43 students from classes F2.c (24 students) and F2.d (19 students), selected as the total sample via total sampling technique (Arikunto, 2010). The main instrument was a documentation sheet of students' writing scores, collected through: first, preparation (university/school permits, teacher coordination); second, implementation (score & KKM recording); third, post-implementation (data verification & organization) (Setiawan, 2024). Data analysis was conducted using SPSS, encompassing data tabulation, central tendency measures (mean, median, mode), dispersion (range), frequency distribution, Kurikulum Merdeka categorization (Table 1), KKM comparison, and result interpretation.

Table 1. Kurikulum Merdeka Assessment Guidelines

Score Range	Category
91–100	Excellent
81–90	Good
71–80	Fair
61–70	Poor

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research involved 43 students as samples, consisting of 24 students from class F2.C and 19 students from class F2.D. The main problem was that the students' ability in writing argumentative text at Man 1 Payakumbuh. This dataset consists of argumentative writing scores

from 43 twelfth-grade students at MAN 1 Payakumbuh, assessed holistically by their English teacher.

The main data in this study were the scores from the argumentative text writing task, which were obtained through an assessment instrument in the form of an argumentative text writing assignment on a predetermined topic. The writing of students' score can be seen in the table below:

Table 2. Students Writing Score of Argumentative Text

F2. C			F2. d		
No	**Name**	**Score**	**No**	**Name**	**Score**
1.	AA	90	23.	ZAN	70
2.	ADA	85	24.	Z	30
3.	AND	100	25.	A	100
4.	AA	45	26.	BFL	50
5.	DM	100	27.	CAD	85
6.	E	90	28.	FRP	65
7.	GM	20	29.	FP	85
8.	HHN	95	30.	KSS	20
9.	IA	75	31.	LRP	100
10.	MRS	95	32.	MIAH	100
11.	MAI	35	33.	MRA	85
12.	MI	50	34.	MR	90
13.	N	30	35.	MA	70
14.	NH	95	36.	MA	90
15.	NAH	90	37.	MS	95
16.	NMPY	90	38.	ROF	90
17.	PG	95	39.	ST	45
18.	R	80	40.	SFR	65
19.	SNP	90	41.	TOR	45
20.	SS	75	42.	VAP	100
21.	S	90	43.	ZRP	75
22.	W	90			

Source : The English Teacher of MAN 1 Payakumbuh

The data consists of final writing scores from classroom argumentative text assignments, ranging from 20 to 100, with a sample representing the full population of two classes (F2.c and F2.d). Scores were tabulated, processed using SPSS for statistics, and analyzed for descriptive statistic , frequency, categories, and KKM comparison.

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistical results revealed several important findings. The mean score of the students' argumentative writing test was 74.77, indicating that the overall performance of the students was at a moderate level. Meanwhile, the median score was 85.00, which was considerably higher than the mean score. This difference suggests that the distribution of the data was negatively skewed, meaning that several low scores reduced the average value of the dataset. The mode score was 90, indicating that this was the most frequently occurring score among the students.

Furthermore, the standard deviation was 24.35, which shows a relatively high level of variability in students' writing abilities. This indicates that the students' performance varied widely. The range of the scores was 80, with the lowest score being 20 and the highest score 100. The large gap between the minimum and maximum scores reflects the unequal distribution of writing abilities among students.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistic of Students Writing Score

Statistics

	No	Students_Code	Class	Score
Valid N	43	43	43	43
Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean	22.00		1.4419	74.7674
Median	22.00		1.0000	85.0000
Mode	1a		1.00	90.00
Std. Deviation	12.557		.50249	24.34752
Range	42		1.00	80.00
Minimum	1		1.00	20.00
Maximum	43		2.00	100.00

These results demonstrate that although many students performed well in writing argumentative texts, there were still several students who obtained very low scores, which significantly influenced the overall average score.

Frequency Distribution of Students' Scores

To obtain a clearer picture of students' performance, the scores were grouped into several class intervals. The results of the frequency distribution show that a considerable number of students achieved high scores. A total of 12 students (27.9%) scored between 81–90, while 11 students (25.6%) scored between 91–100. In total, 23 students (53.5%) obtained scores above 80, which indicates that more than half of the students demonstrated good ability in writing argumentative texts.

However, the distribution also revealed that several students obtained low scores. About 11 students (25.6%) scored below 50, indicating that a significant number of learners experienced difficulties in writing argumentative texts. Meanwhile, only 6 students (14.0%) scored between 71–80, and 3 students (7.0%) scored between 61–70.***Table 4*** *Frequency Distribution of Students Writing Score*

Tabel 4. Nilai Menulis Teks Argumentative

	Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
91-100	11	25.6	25.6	25.6
81-90	12	27.9	27.9	53.5
71-80	6	14.0	14.0	67.4
Valid	3	7.0	7.0	74.4
61-70	11	25.6	25.6	100.0
<50	43	100.0	100.0	

Total	

This distribution suggests that the class performance was polarized. While some students performed very well, others struggled significantly with the writing task. The lack of students in the middle score range indicates that students' writing ability was not evenly distributed.

Categorization of Students' Writing Ability

To further interpret the students' performance, the scores were categorized into ability levels based on the standard academic assessment categories. The results indicated that 23 students (53.5%) were categorized as "Good," while 11 students (25.6%) were categorized as "Excellent." This means that 79.1% of the students demonstrated relatively strong writing abilities in argumentative texts.

On the other hand, some students were still categorized at lower levels. A total of 6 students (14.0%) were classified as "Fair," and 3 students (7.0%) were categorized as "Poor." These results indicate that approximately 21% of the students still required additional support and guidance in developing their argumentative writing skills.

Table 5. Categorization of Students Writing Ability

Kategory Kemampuan

		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Valid	Excellent	11	25.6	25.6	25.6
	Good	23	53.5	53.5	79.1
	Fair	6	14.0	14.0	93.0
	Poor	3	7.0	7.0	100.0
Total		43	100.0	100.0	

Students' Mastery Based on the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM)

In addition to ability categorization, students' scores were also evaluated based on the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) established by the school. The KKM for the English subject at MAN 1 Payakumbuh was 80. The analysis revealed that only 14 students (32.6%) achieved mastery (Tuntas) by scoring equal to or higher than the KKM. Meanwhile, 29 students (67.4%) did not meet the required standard (Tidak Tuntas).

Table 6. Students' Mastery of Students Writing Score

Status Ketuntasan KKM

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Tuntas	14	32.6	32.6	32.6
	Tidak Tuntas	29	67.4	67.4	100.0
Total		43	100.0	100.0	

This finding indicates a discrepancy between the general ability categories and the institutional benchmark of achievement. Although many students were categorized as "Good" or "Excellent," most of them still did not meet the formal mastery standard established by the school.

The findings of this study indicate that students' ability in writing argumentative text is generally at a moderate to good level. Most students demonstrated the ability to organize their ideas and construct arguments using the appropriate structure of argumentative texts. However,

the wide range of scores and high standard deviation reveal that students' writing abilities varied considerably. The discrepancy between ability categories and mastery level based on the KKM also highlights an important issue. While many students showed relatively good performance compared to their peers, they still failed to reach the institutional standard of achievement. This suggests that students may understand the general structure of argumentative texts but still struggle with deeper aspects such as argument development, coherence, grammar accuracy, and supporting evidence.

Therefore, Based on the data above, the researcher gained the students' abilities. There is a study related to this research (Roza et al., 2022) that suggests the teacher should come up with techniques or strategies to avoid difficulties in writing. Thus, students are suggested to learn more to write a good application letter become a writer. In addition (Roza et al., 2022) suggest that when students did mistake and errors in learning process, teachers should pay attention to the students' positive emotions and feelings that they are doing a progress of developing their grammar competence even though they did mistake.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the twelfth grade students of MAN 1 Payakumbuh generally demonstrated a fairly adequate ability in writing argumentative texts. The result shows that the mean score of the students indicates a relatively good level of writing ability. Many students were able to organize their ideas and present arguments in a structured way. However, when the students' scores were compared with the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM), only a limited number of students achieved the expected standard. This result indicates that although the overall average score appears satisfactory, a number of students still face difficulties in writing argumentative texts.

Furthermore, the data analysis also showed a significant variation in students' writing ability. Some students performed very well, while others obtained low scores. This variation suggests that students have different levels of mastery in developing arguments, organizing ideas, and using appropriate grammar and vocabulary in writing. Therefore, it can be concluded that students' ability in writing argumentative text at the twelfth grade of MAN 1 Payakumbuh is categorized as moderate, and improvement is still needed to help students achieve better writing performance.

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