

STUDENTS' ABILITY IN USING PUNCTUATION MARKS

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian Artikel ini mengeksplorasi kemampuan siswa dalam menggunakan tanda baca berdasarkan kuesioner yang diisi oleh 12 siswa. Fokus utama penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi kesalahan umum dalam penggunaan tanda baca dan menilai tingkat kepercayaan diri siswa terhadap keterampilan ini. Mengacu pada penelitian sebelumnya oleh Ginting, Oktaviani, Syafitri, Mawudok, Ganiyeva, Isaqov, dan Tajiboyeva, abstrak artikel ini menekankan pentingnya penggunaan tanda baca yang tepat sebagai faktor kunci dalam komunikasi tertulis yang efektif. Hasil kuesioner menunjukkan bahwa banyak siswa mengalami kesulitan dalam penggunaan tanda baca seperti koma, titik, dan tanda kutip, yang berpotensi berdampak negatif pada kinerja akademis mereka. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan peningkatan pengajaran dan latihan praktis untuk membantu siswa memperkuat pemahaman dan keterampilan mereka dalam menggunakan tanda baca dengan benar. Dengan demikian, artikel ini bertujuan untuk memberikan wawasan yang lebih dalam tentang tantangan yang dihadapi siswa dan pentingnya pendidikan yang lebih baik dalam penggunaan tanda baca.

Kata Kunci: Tanda Baca, Kemampuan, Siswa.

ABSTRACT

This article explores students' ability to use punctuation marks based on a questionnaire completed by 12 students. The primary focus of this study is to identify common errors in punctuation usage and evaluate students' confidence levels regarding this skill. Referring to previous studies by Ginting, Oktaviani, Syafitri, Mawudok, Ganiyeva, Isaqov, and Tajiboyeva, the abstract of this article emphasizes the importance of proper punctuation as a key factor in effective written communication. The questionnaire results reveal that many students struggle with the use of punctuation marks such as commas, periods, and quotation marks, which may negatively impact their academic performance. This study recommends enhancing teaching strategies and practical exercises to help students improve their understanding and skills in using punctuation correctly. Thus, this article aims to provide deeper insights into the challenges students face and the significance of better education in punctuation usage.

Keywords: Punctuation Marks, Ability, Students.

INTRODUCTION

Punctuation marks play a pivotal role in written communication, as they provide clarity, structure, and rhythm to text. Punctuation serves to prevent misunderstandings in written communication. Incorrect use of punctuation can significantly change the meaning of a sentence, which can cause confusion for the reader. For example, an error in the use of commas can cause the reader to misinterpret the content of the reading. The ability to use punctuation correctly is an absolute requirement to produce good writing. At the high school level, students are expected to be able to use various types of punctuation effectively in their essays. Therefore, an understanding of the correct use of punctuation is very important for students.

Despite their importance, many students struggle to use punctuation marks correctly, particularly when writing descriptive paragraphs in English. This article aims to analyze

the ability of students, specifically those at the Junior High School (SMP) and Senior High School (SMA) levels, in using punctuation marks. By evaluating responses from 12 students through a questionnaire, this study highlights common errors and underlying challenges. Insights from prior research, including works by Fiber Yun Ginting, Ayu Oktaviani, Manfred Mawudok, Khayriniso B. Ganiyeva, and others, are incorporated to provide a comprehensive overview.

The complexity of punctuation use in English often stems from its rules, which differ significantly from students' native languages. According to Fiber Yun Ginting, students commonly make errors in descriptive paragraph writing due to a lack of understanding of punctuation rules. These errors not only disrupt the flow of writing but also hinder effective communication. As punctuation is a fundamental aspect of language proficiency, analyzing students' ability to use it can offer insights into improving writing skills in educational contexts. Research by Ayu Oktaviani et al. emphasizes that students frequently confuse punctuation marks and capitalization, which are closely related in sentence construction. This problem is further exacerbated by limited practice and inadequate feedback from teachers. Such issues reflect broader challenges in teaching and learning English as a second or foreign language, particularly in contexts where English is not used outside the classroom. Addressing these difficulties requires a detailed analysis of the root causes and tailored strategies to enhance punctuation mastery. Manfred Mawudok and Khayriniso B. Ganiyeva underscore the significant impact of poor punctuation on overall writing performance. Mawudok identifies punctuation misuse as a primary reason for poor academic outcomes in English, while Ganiyeva highlights its influence on meaning and coherence. Their studies point to the importance of emphasizing punctuation rules in English instruction and providing students with opportunities to practice and refine their skills.

This article, therefore, explores the critical issue of punctuation usage among students and its implications for their writing competence. By integrating findings from the literature and primary data collected through a questionnaire, it seeks to shed light on the common pitfalls students encounter and propose practical solutions to enhance their abilities. Ultimately, this study aims to contribute to improving students' writing proficiency by addressing a foundational aspect of English language learning: the correct use of punctuation marks.

METHOD

This study used quantitative methods to analyze the ability of junior and senior high school students to use punctuation. Data was collected through a questionnaire distributed to 12 students from these educational levels. The questionnaire was made in the form of a google form. The questionnaire contained short questions about the correct use of punctuation in sentences or short conversations. The questionnaire was created to see the students' ability to use correct punctuation in short sentences. The participants in this study were junior high school students and senior high school students. The questionnaire was distributed online to randomly selected participants.

This research also refers to several relevant studies. The study *An Analysis of Students' Ability in Using Punctuation Marks in Descriptive Paragraph Writing* by Fiber Yun Ginting serves as the foundation for identifying patterns of students' errors. Additionally, research by Ayu Oktaviani, Dewi Syafitri, and Sastika Seli on *Students' Errors in Using Punctuation and Capitalization* helps to understand the relationship between punctuation errors and capitalization. The article *Punctuation Marks as an Aspect and Cause of Poor Performance in the English Language* by Manfred Mawudok explains

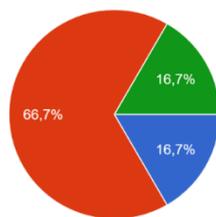
the influence of punctuation on students' performance, while Khayriniso B. Ganiyeva, in *Using Punctuation Marks in English Language*, highlights the importance of punctuation in written communication. Finally, the article *The Importance of Using Punctuation Correctly* by Z. Isaqov and Tajiboyeva Durdonahan strengthens the understanding of the positive impact of mastering punctuation usage.

The collected data were analyzed quantitatively to calculate the frequency of errors in using punctuation marks and qualitatively to identify the types and causes of errors. This analysis aims to provide an overview of students' abilities in using punctuation marks and offer recommendations for better learning practices.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

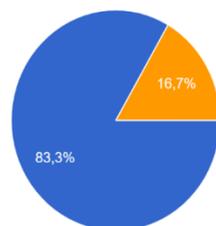
The research questionnaire consists of 5 multiple-choice questions designed to test the students ability in using punctuation marks. After conducting interviews by filing out questionnaires in the form of google forms with several respondents, the result obtained can be seen below :

1. Correct the following sentences with proper punctuation: "I went to the fruit vegetable and fish market"
12 jawaban



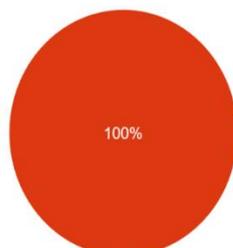
- a. " I went to the market, vegetables, fruits, and fish."
- b. " I went to the vegetable, fruit, and fish market."
- c. " I go to the market: vegetables, fruit, and fish."
- d. " I went to the vegetable, fruit, and fish market."

2. Choose the right punctuation to complete the sentence: "Budi said I have finished my assignment"
12 jawaban



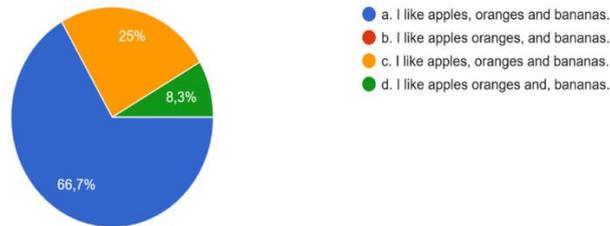
- a. Budi said, "I have finished my assignment."
- b. Budi said: "I've finished the assignment."
- c. Budi said, "I've finished doing the assignment."
- d. Budi said, "I've finished the assignment!"

3. What is the correct punctuation mark for the following sentences: "Where did you go"
12 jawaban

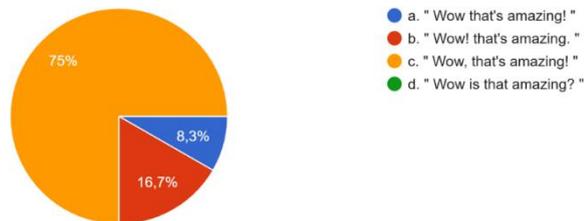


- a. " Where you went."
- b. " Where did you go? "
- c. " Where did you go! "
- d. Where did you go;

4. Identify punctuation errors in sentences: "I like apples oranges and bananas"
12 jawaban



5. Correct the following sentences with proper punctuation: "Wow that was amazing"
12 jawaban



Based on the results of the questionnaires distributed and filled out online by the students, almost all students who became participants had a good ability to use punctuation. This indicates that students who are at the junior and senior high school level have a good ability to use punctuation. Although there were some students who were still wrong in the placement and use of punctuation marks, as shown in the diagram above, this does not cover the fact that students already understand the use of some common and basic punctuation marks.

Basically, in an effort to improve punctuation skills, writing practice is an effective way and can be done by students independently or with their teachers. The application of punctuation in creating descriptive paragraphs can be one of the effective writing practice exercises for students to improve their punctuation skills. Educators or teachers also have an important role in this regard, the role of teachers in improving punctuation skills involves effective teaching, creating a supportive learning environment, using innovative learning media, and constructive evaluation and feedback. With this approach, teachers can help students develop their ability in the proper use of punctuation.

Since punctuation is one of the important elements in writing, students are expected to have a good level of ability in using punctuation.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the article, it can be concluded that most students have a good ability to use punctuation in some short and basic sentences, although there are still misplacements in some sentences. Lack of writing practice can be one of the factors for the students' low ability to use punctuation. Mastering and being able to practice punctuation is important for junior and senior high school students to create quality writing that has clear meaning. Continuous writing practice can be an effective way to improve students' ability to use punctuation. With these exercises, students can find out where their weaknesses are in using punctuation and can overcome the challenges they face in learning and practicing punctuation.

Besides practicing by writing, students can also read books to improve their punctuation skills. Engaging with a variety of texts exposes you to correct punctuation usage in context. Pay attention to how authors use punctuation to convey meaning and create rhythm. This exposure will help you internalize the rules and see their practical applications in different writing styles.

In conclusion, improving students' punctuation skills is important for a variety of reasons related to communication, text comprehension, and writing skills. In the professional world, effective communication skills are highly valued. Students who master the use of punctuation will be better equipped to communicate effectively in future work environments. Thus, improving punctuation usage among middle and high school students is not only important for their academic success but also for the development of communication skills that will be useful throughout their lives.

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