

Students' Knowledge on Topic and their Ability to Write

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ABSTRACT

This study was aimed to investigate the correlation between students' knowledge on topic to be written and their ability to write. The writing course for the second semester students of English Department of STKIP PGRI Tulungagung is Academic Reading and Writing. In this course, the students should be able to develop their competence in reading academic essays as well as composing the essays using the correct organization. However, it has been observed that their ability to write the essays are in relation with their knowledge on the topic to be written. From the findings, it can be concluded that the hypothesis can be accepted since the statistical analysis using Kendal Tau showed that the coefficient of the correlation was positive medium correlation 0.473 and the correlation was significant ($0.016 < 0.05$). Therefore, it can be concluded that there is significant correlation between students' knowledge on topic to be written and their writing ability and the students with better knowledge on topics also have better writing ability.

Keywords: Knowledge on topic, writing ability, correlation

INTRODUCTION

In daily life, people have to be able to communicate with other people to share their idea, feeling and thought. People can communicate in two different ways, using speaking skill and using writing skill. As we can see, writing is often believed to be difficult to be both taught and learned (Naidu, 2007). However, we cannot separate our daily communication from writing. Writing can help people who cannot express their idea and feeling directly so that they can write to communicate their thought.

In relation with that, the objective of learning writing for the students of English as second or foreign language is to be able to share idea, feeling and thought in order to communicate with other people. In university level, especially in English Department of STKIP PGRI Tulungagung, writing is one of the compulsory subjects to be learned in language skills area. There are four series of writing course, starting from the basic into advanced level of writing course. One

goal in writing course is that they can later write their thesis as one of requirements to graduate in bachelor degree of English Language Teaching.

The writing course for the second semester students of English Department of STKIP PGRI Tulungagung is Academic Reading and Writing. In this course, the students should be able to develop their competence in reading academic essays as well as composing the essays using the correct organization. However, it has been observed that their ability to write the essays are in relation with their knowledge on the topic to be written. In the preliminary study done by the researcher, when the students should write a certain topic, they usually pay attention more on the topic rather than the organization of the essay. Therefore, when they really understand the topic, the students tend to write the essay more smoothly.

It has been known that the goal of teaching writing is to develop students' ability to communicate through writing effectively (Bonyadi, 2014). However, students are often lack of interest in writing because they are not familiar with the topic. Meanwhile, if the students are familiar with the topic, they still often get difficulty in writing because a minimum exposure of target language outside the writing classroom especially for the students of English as Foreign Language (EFL). Like what Septiana (2014) stated, students may have enough idea on the topic but they do not have the competence on the language to express their idea.

It is known that in writing class, the students sometimes should write the assigned topic. Since the topic is not by their interest, the students' writing is not really satisfying. Bonyadi & Zainalpur (2014) found that students are usually more motivated in writing if they have right to choose their own topic. It is believed that by choosing their own topic, it is granted that they have enough knowledge on topic and further to be expressed in the form of writing. Therefore, students will have better writing to be produced.

Based on the background above, this research is aimed to investigate the correlation between students' knowledge on topic to be written and their ability to write.

METHOD

In order to answer the question of this research, a correlation research design was used to measure the relationship between students' mastery in translation and their writing ability. A correlational research design was suitable for this study since it made use of all the levels of variables measured that is in line with what was stated by Borg, et al. (1993) in Latief (2011).

The population of this research is the second semester students of English Department STKIP PGRI Tulungagung who take Academic Reading and Writing course in the academic year 2018/2019. There are forty five students as the population which are divided into two classes. From the population, the researcher uses purposive sampling technique to take one class as the sample. The technique to take the sample is purposive sampling technique because the researcher takes the class which is taught by the researcher. There are 19 students who become the sample of this researcher.

There are two instruments in this research. The first instrument is the test on students' knowledge on topic to be written. Here, the researcher uses multiple choice test to measure students' knowledge on topic. The second instrument is the test of writing.

Further, the data collected was analyzed to test the research hypothesis. The data of mastery on topic of knowledge as well as the data of the writing ability were analyzed. The initial steps of the data analysis was the descriptive analysis. It is conducted to see the minimum score, maximum score, mean, median, mode and standard deviation. The convenient way of summarizing data is called central tendency of measurements (Ary, et al., 2010). The scores were statistically analyzed using SPSS 16.0.

Further, the data from the test of knowledge on topic and writing test were statistically analyzed to find out the relationships between students' knowledge on topic and the writing ability. The correlation between the two variables were analyzed using Kendal Tau statistical analysis using SPSS 16.0. Kendal Tau statistical analysis was chosen since the sample of this study was below thirty participants. Therefore, a non-parametric statistical analysis should be used.

Further, the coefficient of the correlation of the two test shows the degree to predict on how strong the relationship between students' knowledge on topic and their writing ability.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The first test administered in this test is the test of students' knowledge on topic assigned. Here, the researcher gave test on the Presidential Election. There are 20 questions of multiple choice test to be answered by the students. The result of the test are as follow:

Table 1. Summary of Test of Knowledge on Topic

N	Mean	Median	Mode	Minimum	Maximum
16	76.87	80	80	55	90

The score obtained in the test of knowledge on topic was the total score of each criterion in the scoring rubric. From the table above, it is known that the maximum score of the students was 90 while the minimum score of the students was 55. While from 16 students, the average score or the mean score 76.87. Figure 1 shows the result of the test of knowledge on topic.

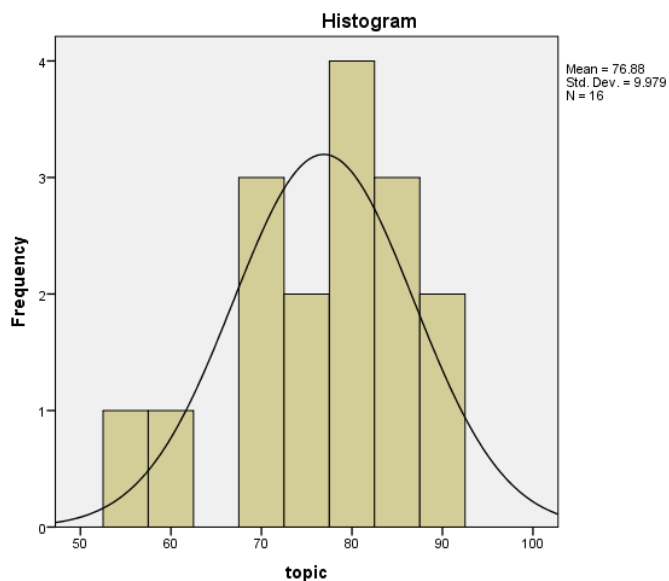


Figure 1. Result of Test of Knowledge on Topic

After administering the test of knowledge on topic about presidential election, the next step to be done was conducting the writing test. Here, the students should write an cause and effect essay about “After Presidential Election in Indonesia”. The result was can be seen in table 2.

Table 2. The Result of the Writing Test

N	Mean	Median	Mode	Minimum	Maximum
16	77.56	80	82	92	62

The score obtained in the writing test was the total score of each criterion in the scoring rubric. From the table above, it is known that the maximum score of the students was 92 while the minimum score of the students was 62. While from 16 students, the average score or the mean score 77.56. Figure 2 shows the result of the writing test.

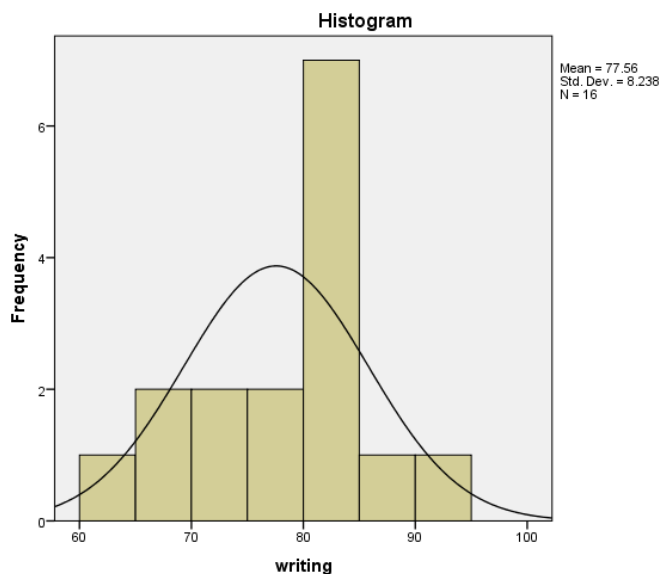


Figure 2. Result of Writing Test

The further action after knowing the result of both tests was conducting the statistical analysis on the hypothesis testing. Here, the researcher used Kendal Tau correlational statistics since the sample of this study or N was under 30, that is, 16 students. It was a non parametric test. The result of the Kendal Tau correlational statistics can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Kendal Tau’s correlational statistics

Correlations

			topic	writing
Kendall's tau_b	Topic	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.473*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.016
		N	16	16
	Writing	Correlation Coefficient	.473*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.016	.
		N	16	16

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

From the table above, it can be seen that the correlation coefficient was .473 and the significance coefficient was 0.016. Since the significance coefficient was lower than the significance level of 0.05, it means that the null hypothesis that said “The students who have better knowledge on topic do not have better writing ability” was rejected. In other words, there is a significant correlation between knowledge on topic and the students’ writing ability. Furthermore, the correlation coefficient of 0.473 showed that the correlation of knowledge on topic and writing ability was on medium positive correlation.

For many years, the students of EFL have been asked to write the topic assigned by the teachers or lecturers. However, some students often got difficulty in writing the assigned topic due to the unfamiliarity of the topic. Some researches on this area have been done and they showed that topic selection, knowledge on topic or topic familiarity affected the writing fluency. Bonyadi (2014), for example, found that knowledge on topic usually affected the students’ motivation in writing. Students usually were more motivated to write familiar topic since they have enough topic on it. This study supported the finding of Bonyadi (2014) since it was found that the students with better knowledge on topic also have better writing score. Therefore, it can be concluded that the knowledge on certain topic affected the fluency in writing.

Although this study has found the correlation between knowledge on topic and students’ writing, further researcher should be done. First, because the

coefficient of the correlation only show medium correlation, it is better to do further researcher to see whether stronger or weaker correlation will be found. Second, the knowledge on topic only tested by 20 questions. Further, to have stronger reliability and validity more questions should be tested.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The questions in this study was “Do students with better knowledge on topic to be written also have better writing ability?” and it was hypothesized “The students with better knowledge on topic to be written also have better writing ability.” From the findings, it can be concluded that the hypothesis can be accepted since the statistical analysis using Kendal Tau showed that the coefficient of the correlation was positive medium correlation and the correlation was significant. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is significant correlation between students’ knowledge on topic to be written and their writing ability and the students with better knowledge on topics also have better writing ability.

Some suggestions are offered due to the conclusion taken in this study. First, further research should be done on this area of the topic to know more about how knowledge on topic affects students’ writing. Second, teacher of English as Foreign Language or EFL teacher should pay attention on the selection of the topic to be written by the students to see the writing fluency.

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