



ELITE Journal



(Journal of English Language Teaching & Education)

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ELTE Journal is published twice a year in the months of February and September. It presents articles on the English Language Teaching and Education. The contents cover analysis, studies, application of theories reports, and material development.

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ELTE Journal invites articles that have never been published before anywhere else. Manuscripts should be type-written, one and a half-spaced on quarto (A4) sized paper 9 - 20 pages in length; preferably on a standard floppy diskette with one hard copy. The article format should comply with the standard form of scientific writing. Articles will be reviewed by the Editors and/or Subjects Reviewers. The Editors reserve the right to edit articles for format consistency without altering the substance.

Preface

Welcome to the Journal of English Language Teaching and Education (ELTE Journal) Volume: 6 Number 1, February 2018. This journal presents some articles on the English Language Teaching and Education. This journal is intended to provide a platform both for established and early-career researchers. ELTE Journal provides a high profile, for academics, professionals, educators, practitioners and students in the field to contribute and disseminate innovative new work on language teaching and education. The contents included analysis, studies, application of theories reports from Teachers of English both Junior and Senior High School teachers, lecturers and students of Graduate Program PGRI University of Palembang.

The journal is published twice a year and accepts research papers and forum articles from the fields of English Language Teaching and Education. ELTE Journal invites original, previously unpublished, research and survey articles, on both practical and theoretical aspects of language learning and teaching as well as research. Research papers and forum articles are all subject to peer review before being accepted for inclusion.

For this edition, February 2018, the editors received 12 articles from the teachers, lecturers and students not only from Graduate Program PGRI University of Palembang but also from other schools, and universities. But there are only 8 articles are selected and published in this edition. Furthermore, in selecting the articles for this volume, the reviewers analyzed and selected them based on the requirements for journal writing.

Finally, the editors would like to thank several people and parties for their help, support and contribution. Any constructive comment, suggestion, criticism and contributions for future editions are welcome.

Editors

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The Correlations among Critical Thinking, Linguistic Intelligence, and Writing Ability of the Sixth Semester Students of FKIP PGRI University of Palembang

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Abstract

This article is concerned with the inquiry on the correlations among critical thinking, linguistic intelligence and writing ability. This study is aimed to investigate the empirical evidence about critical thinking and linguistic intelligence and its correlation to writing ability. The population of this study encompassed all the sixth semester students of Department of English Education of FKIP PGRI University of Palembang of which total is 108 students. From the population, only 36 students were taken as the samples. The systematic non-random sampling technique was used in recruiting the samples. Data were collected through tests and questionnaire. Data were analyzed by using Pearson Product Moment and multiple regression to find out the correlations among critical thinking and linguistic intelligence simultaneously on writing ability. Findings showed that there was significant correlation between critical thinking ability and writing ability, and between linguistic intelligence and writing ability. Multiple regression indicates that there were significant influences of critical thinking and linguistic intelligence simultaneously on writing ability. In conclusion, there is significant correlation among critical thinking, linguistic intelligence, and writing ability. At the same time, both critical thinking and linguistic intelligence affect writing ability of the sixth semester students of FKIP PGRI University of Palembang.

Keywords: *critical thinking, linguistic intelligence, writing ability, correlation, multiple regression.*

Background of the Study

The importance of improving writing ability has been very important in English language learning and is seen unavoidable to be dealt with within the four language skills. In fact, "Writing is one of the productive skills along with speaking; it is among the important skills and there are a lot of cognitive and mental factors that may affect writing ability" (Ahmadian, 2012:3). Furthermore, "In speaking, paralinguistic means, such as gestures and facial expressions, can be used to make speakers get the intended meaning clearly, whereas writing is purely based on linguistics" (Furneaux, 1999:59).

As the name implies, linguistic intelligence is directly related to language abilities, including writing. Gardner (2005:5) claims, "One's ability to express ideas or thoughts is also influenced by the linguistic intelligence. Linguistic intelligence is the ability owned by individuals involving one's intuition towards the spoken and written language, ability to learn language, and ability to use the language in order to achieve particular goals". In line with the statement, the writer infers that linguistic intelligence relates closely with the English language learning; one of them is the writing ability.

Dewey (1933:4) points out, "The main aim or goal of education is that the learners learn how to think. Think how to use appropriate words, discover ideas, produce good writing, and express language in the right order". To be successful in these environment, learners need higher order of thinking skills that can help them to make reliable decisions and acquire new knowledge quickly, especially in English language learning. According to King et al (2009:1), "Basically higher order of thinking skills comes down to 5 categories, one of them is critical thinking". Moon (2008:2) states, "Critical thinking and its relationship to the educational process has become a central issue and it is time to explore the term".

Regarding to students' critical thinking and linguistic intelligence in relation to their writing skill, a problem was found under the writer's experience as she attended writing IV course when she did the degree at Department of English Education of FKIP PGRI University of Palembang. At that time, the problem was found as the students did the mid semester test. They were instructed to write an essay based on the topics given by their lecturer then. The topics had to be developed and written in accordance with a type of essay, namely an argumentative essay or a descriptive essay. So, before writing, the students had to determine first whether their topic would be best developed in an argumentative essay or descriptive essay. One of the writing topics was "Should we have a new captain of this class?". That topic actually should be best developed in an argumentative essay; however, one of the students did and developed the essay topic in the form of descriptive essay. Accordingly, the composition had to be revised by the student after the mid semester test.

Another problem arises when the writer attending the writing course. It is when she has to do the review of peers composition. Under the lecturer

feedback, he explains that some words correspond better to other word/s. He underlines one's composition, for example "I have to wash the plates before I can make my homework", cited from a composition entitled *My Busy Day at Home*. In this case, *wash the plates* is better replaced by *wash the dishes*. So does the word *homework* correspond better with the word *do* instead of *make*.

Furthermore, based on the informal interview with one of the English lecturers at PGRI University of Palembang, the lecturer claimed that the sixth semester students' writing scores are varied and they can be categorized to below average. The writer also got the explanation that although the lecturer has been teaching writing skill for a long time, student's performance is considered unsatisfactory because writing is very complex. Besides the faulty in use of grammatical rules; there are some factors affecting students' writing ability. To some extent, the learners' weakness in writing possibly caused by internal factor, namely critical thinking (way of thinking at higher level) and linguistic intelligence (being smart in word/s).

In relation to the explanations above, this study is undertaken to investigate empirical evidence that relates to the problems, particularly the critical thinking and linguistic intelligence in relation to student's writing ability.

Research Questions

The problem of this study is limited to the investigation of the correlations among critical thinking, linguistic intelligence, and writing ability of the sixth semester students of FKIP PGRI University of Palembang. The problems of this study are formulated in the following questions: (1) Is there any significant correlation between critical thinking and writing ability of the sixth semester students of FKIP PGRI University of Palembang?; (2) Is there any significant correlation between linguistic intelligence and writing ability of the sixth semester students of FKIP PGRI University of Palembang?; (3) Are there any significant correlations among critical thinking and linguistic intelligence simultaneously on writing ability of the sixth semester students of FKIP PGRI University of Palembang?.

Conceptual Framework

Definition of Critical Thinking

Critical thinking seems to be considered as a complex activity since it involves many aspect to be dealt with. Besides, it has recently become one of the foremost subject matters of many experts to discuss and explore. Regarding to this condition, a number of proposals related to the definition of critical thinking are suggested by some experts.

First, according to Cottrell (2005:1), "Critical thinking is defined as a cognitive activity, associated with using the mind". From this, it can be considered that critical thinking is an activity in which one involves one's mind to cope with the matters found.

Meanwhile, Paul et al (2014:4) reveal, "Critical thinking is the art associated with the ability to analyze or to evaluate thought". Similarly, Washburn (2010:3) points out, "Critical thinking relates to the activity to criticize people or things both in terms of the negative side and the positive side of them that may lead to the comprehension and best judgement about them". Thus, one should carefully consider every aspect in case one is thinking critically.

Next, Moore et al (2007:4) state, "Critical thinking is the activity of evaluating specific claims though considering arguments plausibly". Furthermore, Ruggiero (1981:52) explains, "Critical thinking is the mental process involving the activity to investigate ideas as well as to find out the meaning of the ideas and to judge the power of the meaning of the ideas whether or not it is defensible". In other words, to think critically one should logically consider the matter found by investigating as well as making interpretation, and evaluating the weakness and the strength of the matters found.

With regard to the definitions and explanations above, critical thinking can be regarded as an art or ability as well as an activity employing mind to think of, to criticize, to analyze, and to evaluate people or things carefully, not only the bad side but the positive side of them as well. Besides, it is conducted through a series of processes started from investigating ideas to making a judgment of the strength of the meaning of the ideas.

Characteristics of Critical Thinkers

A number of misconceptions exist about critical thinking. One is that critical thinking is synonymous with having a lot of right answers in one's head. There's nothing wrong with having right answer, of course. But "Critical thinking involves the process of finding answers when they are not so readily available" (Ruggiero, 2012:21).

And yet another misconception is that critical thinking cannot be learned, that one either has it or does not. On the contrary, critical thinking is a matter of habit. The most careless, sloppy thinker can become a critical thinker by developing the characteristics of a critical thinker. This is not to say that all people have equal thinking potential but rather that everyone can achieve dramatic improvement.

The Process of Critical Thinking

The critical thinking process stems from the activities of thinking itself. As Ruggiero (2012:24) reveals, "There are some activities of thinking" which are described in Table 2:

Table 2.
The Basic Activities in Critical Thinking

No.	Activity	Definition	Requirements
1	Investigation	Finding evidence-that is, data that will answer key questions about the issue	The evidence must be both relevant and sufficient.
2	Interpretation	Deciding what the evidence means	The interpretation must be more reasonable than competing interpretations.
3	Judgement	Reaching a conclusion about the issue	The conclusions must meet the test of logic.

All of the three activities are conducted gradually and respectively started from investigation to judgment. In line with Ruggiero's description above, Washburn (2010:52) states, "The thinking process is preceded by investigation which leads to the last product of thinking process that is conclusion or judgment".

Based on the explanations above, there are at least three activities which are included in critical thinking process, namely investigation, interpretation, and judgment. In this case, the investigation is an activity, basically comes first, which aims to find the evidence or information about the issues or matters arise. Next, it goes on to the subsequent step or activity, which is interpretation which means to interpret or determine the meaning of the evidence or information from the investigation conducted beforehand. The last one is judgment, that is, making inferences or drawing conclusions from the data or evidence as well as the information that have been obtained in the previous activities, that is investigation and interpretation about the issue.

Definition of Linguistic Intelligence

Gardner (1983:77) proposes, "Linguistic intelligence as the intelligence of using words appropriately to make meaningful written and spoken forms of language". To him, linguistic intelligence is the capacity to follow rules of grammar, and, on carefully selected occasion, to violate them. This intelligence emerges early in life, and involves a number of inseparable elements including the ability for doing syntactic analyses, gaining literacy, and language learning.

Furthermore, Armstrong (1999:9) defines, "Linguistic intelligence is the intelligence of words or "word-smart". This is the intelligence of journalist, story teller, poet, and lawyer. It is the kind of thinking that brought us Shakespeare's *King Lear*, Homer's *Odyssey*, and the tales of the Arabian nights. People who are particularly smart in this area can argue, persuade, and entertain or instruct effectively through spoken word. They often love to play around with the sounds of language through puns, word games, and tongue twister. Or alternatively, they are masters of literacy. They read voraciously, can write clearly, and can gain meaning in other ways from the medium of print.

In relation to definitions and explanations above, linguistic intelligence deals with an individual's ability to understand both spoken and written language, as well as their ability to speak and write themselves. It is the extent to which an individual can use language, both written and verbal, to achieve goals, problem solve and increase abstract reasoning.

Nature of Writing

Writing is one of the four major language skills. It is commonly considered as the active or productive language skill. Through writing, people can convey their ideas to someone else.

According to Brown (2007:81), "Writing is a complex activity involving many skills to determine ideas and to transfer the ideas onto a piece of a paper clearly and comprehensibly for the readers". Meanwhile, Ploeger (2000:13) states, "Writing is an activity intended to observe the knowledge and feeling of a writer about something, which, then the result is communicated to his/her audience/readers". On the other hand, Langan (2008:7) asserts, "Writing is a skill that can be learned and developed through practices".

With regard to the explanations above, writing is an activity that involves a series of steps to transfer thought or ideas to paper. When the writers are writing, they try to convey the things in their mind to readers through the writing that they write. Also, writing is a skill that can be learned and developed through practices which mean the more often the learners practice to write, the better they will be able to write.

The Uses of Writing

The uses of writing associate with the writer's goal as well as adjust to the readers' needs. Therefore, in case one is willing to create a work in the written form, he/she is required to determine first what he/she is writing for and to whom he/she will communicate it.

Grenville (2001:2) points out that writing has several uses as follows: (a) to Entertain: It is considered as a way to keep in touch with readers, particularly by engaging their feeling through providing emotion or exciting plot in the writing. Some examples of this use can be found in novels, stories, poems, song lyrics, plays, and screenplays; (b) to Inform: It is a writing which is intended to tell readers about something. For instance, it can be found in the form of newspaper, articles, scientific or business reports, instructions or procedures, and essay for school and university; (c) to persuade: Providing evidence is essential in this kind of writing since the main purpose of this kind of writing is to convince the readers about something they read. A number of examples of this writing use can be found in advertisements, articles, newspaper, and magazine.

Methodology

A correlational research design was used in this study. It was employed to find out the correlation among variables covering the three variables, namely critical thinking, linguistic intelligence and writing ability by using a correlational statistic test. The correlational research design of this study is shown in Figure 2.

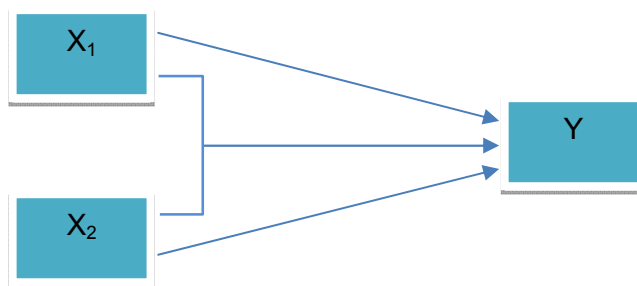


Figure 2. Correlational Research Design

Legends:

X_1 = Critical Thinking

X_2 = Linguistic Intelligence

Y = Writing Ability

Creswell (2012:338) claims, "Correlational designs provide an opportunity to predict scores and explain the relationship among variables. In correlational research designs, researchers use the correlation statistical test to describe and measure the degree of association (or relationship) between two or more variables or sets of scores". In this design, the researchers do not attempt to control or manipulate the variables as in an experiment; instead, they relate, using the correlation statistic, two or more scores for each person.

The sixth semester students of FKIP PGRI University of Palembang in the academic year of 2016/2017 were the population of this study. The sixth semester students were decided as the participants of this study due to a consideration that they had the adequate knowledge related to the writing skill because they had already attended several writing courses in Department of English Education. In addition, the sixth semester students were spread into three classes, namely VI A, B, and C. The total of the population was 108 students. In line with the statement above, from three classes of total population, there were students who involved and participated as the sample of this study.

They were determined as the sample of this study by using systematic non-random sampling technique. According to Fraenkel et al (2012:97), “In systematic sampling, every *n*th individual in the population list is selected for inclusion in the sample”. In this case, every 3rd individual in the population list was selected. So the writer got a total number of 36 students as sample or around 33,33 %.

The data of this study were collected by using the test and questionnaire that encompassing: (1) Critical Thinking Appraisal : The number of the critical thinking test items comprises 17 questions in the form of multiple choices having two to five alternatives. The scheme and test specification of this test follow and are similar to the *Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal*®. There are five sections included in this test consisting of inferences, assumptions, deductions, interpreting information, and arguments; (2) Linguistic Intelligence Questionnaire: The linguistic intelligence questionnaire is a Thomas Armstrong Intelligence Test derived from Howard Gardner’s MI Model. The instrument consists of 20 Likert type questions, for each of which 4 options are considered. The options are 1 for strongly disagree, 2 for disagree, 3 for agree, and 4 for strongly disagree. There is no right or wrong response since the students were asked to read each item and select what they perceive as the best answer at that point of their life: (3) Writing Test: This test is provided to find out the students’ writing ability. There is statement followed by specific test intructions that tell the participants how to respon and develop the test. The statement is taken from GRE® General Test: Verbal Reasoning and Analytical Writing. Additionally, the analytic scoring is used to assess the students’ writing ability.

Table 4.
Instrument Specifications

Variable		Indicators	Test number	Total of test item
X ₁	Critical Thinking	1. Analyzing inferences	1, 2, 3, 4	4
		2. Analyzing assumptions	5, 6,7, 8	4
		3. Analyzing deductions	9, 10, 11	3
		4. Interpreting information	12, 13, 14	3
		5. Evaluating arguments	15, 16, 17	3
X ₂	Linguistic	1. Considering that books	1 – 20	20

	Intelligence	are important		
		2. Claiming that learning English, social science, and history at school is easier than mathematics and natural science		
		3. Spelling words accurately and enjoying words games		
		4. Enjoying debate and discussion		
		5. Producing writing that better than peers		
		6. Communicating with people in a highly verbal way		
Y	Writing Ability	1. Developing the writing content	1	1
		2. Organizing the ideas clearly, cohesively, and logically		
		3. Selecting the appropriate words		
		4. Constructing correct grammar		
		5. Using mechanics (spelling, punctuation, and other writing conventions) correctly		
Total 38				

Results and Discussion

With regard to the result of hypothesis testing of the study, it was found that the first, the second, and the third alternative hypotheses were accepted.

Three points can be interpreted on the basis of the results of the analysis. First, the result of correlation analysis showed that there was significant and strong correlation between critical thinking and writing ability of the sixth semester

students of FKIP PGRI University of Palembang. It means that writing ability closely relates to critical thinking. This result can be confirmed to what Assadi et al (2013:6) found in their research that critical thinking ability has a positive influence towards the learners' writing. Therefore, students who are able to think critically of what they have written will be able to refine any ideas in their composition which lead to their attainment in writing, as what Ruggiero (2012:22) points out, "The abundance of ideas will appear and flow as critical thinking ability is employed in writing".

The second, the result of correlation analysis showed that there was significant and fair correlation between linguistic intelligence and writing ability. It means that linguistic intelligence fairly relates to writing ability as Gardner (1993:81) states, "Writing activity is one of the activities mastered by individuals with certain linguistic intelligence".

The third, the result of correlation analysis showed that there were significant correlation among critical thinking and linguistic intelligence simultaneously on writing ability. From the statistical data analysis using the Analysis of Multiple Linear Regressions, the score of R square is obtained. It indicates that 60.9% of the writing skill variations can be explained by the variations of the two variables of linguistic intelligence and critical thinking, whereas the rest of 39.1% can be explained by other causes not included in the model. The regression coefficient of X_1 (critical thinking) and X_2 (linguistic intelligence) are scored positive; thus, if the linguistic intelligence and critical thinking increase, the score for the writing skill tends to rise.

Conclusions

In relation to the findings described in the previous chapter, it is concluded that: (1) There was significant correlation between critical thinking and writing ability of the sixth semester students of FKIP of PGRI University of Palembang indicates that the students with the better critical thinking have the better writing ability than the poor ones. The more critical they are, the more creative they develop the writing ideas which lead to their good writing attainment; (2) There was significant correlation between linguistic intelligence and writing ability of the sixth semester students of FKIP PGRI University of Palembang. So it can be concluded that linguistic intelligence closely relates to writing ability because

students with high linguistic intelligence have various words of vocabulary and they are able to write an essay that plume or that makes them gain the respect of others; (3) There were significant correlations among critical thinking and linguistic intelligence simultaneously on writing ability of the sixth semester students of FKIP PGRI University of Palembang. The condition indicates that students who have good critical thinking and high linguistic intelligence are more expressive in declaring their arguments support with reasons so they achieve good score in writing than they in vice-versa.

This study proposes suggestions in line with the findings of this study. Critical thinking and linguistic intelligence have 60.9% contribution towards the writing ability of the sixth semester students of English Department of FKIP PGRI University of Palembang academic year 2016/2017. Consequently, the lecturers of Department of English Education are expected to design the writing course that is not only facilitating students to develop their writing ability but also exploring and developing their critical thinking ability better by using the right material in writing, for instance reasoning and arguing. Then, to develop students' linguistic intelligence, the lecturers can support them by encouraging them to enjoy real communicating through writing and also applying other skills all at once. This allows learners to see the purpose of language, and helps them take an interest in it. Writing and receiving real letters and emails from classmates or cyberspace friends can be motivating for communicative purposes.

Beside the language proficiency that must be considered by the sixth semester students of Department of English Education in the English learning process, they also should equip themselves with critical thinking ability for it will not only provide them with the good academic performance for instance writing, but it will also make them able to cope with the challenges they find in their real life. Because critical thinkers are honest with themselves, acknowledging what they don't know, recognizing their limitations and being watchful of their own errors. Moreover, competencies related to linguistic intelligence are likely to contribute to skill of language learning, writing ability, with some practical advantages for language teachers. So, there might be the possibility for the existence of panel data taken from variables over a period of time, in this case the variables are critical thinking, linguistic intelligence and writing ability of

English language learners. However, more studies will provide more evidence for generalization.

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