

THE EFFECTS OF GRAMMAR MASTERY AND VOCABULARY MASTERY TOWARDS STUDENTS ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING

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Abstract

The aim of the research is to obtain the empirical data and analyze the effects of grammar mastery and vocabulary mastery towards students' argumentative writing. Research method is survey with multiple correlation technique. This research was conducted at private senior high schools in Cibinong, in school year 2011-2012. Collecting data was done by using two kinds of instruments, multiple choice and essay writing. Multiple choice tests are used to measure the grammar mastery and vocabulary mastery of the students'. Essay writing is used to assess the argumentative writing especially analytical exposition. It shows that there are effects of grammar mastery and vocabulary mastery towards students' argumentative writing.

Key Words: Grammar Mastery, Vocabulary Mastery, and Students Argumentative Writing.

Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mendapatkan data empirik dan menganalisis pengaruh penguasaan tata bahasa dan penguasaan kosakata terhadap menulis argumentasi siswa. Metode yang digunakan adalah Survei dengan teknik korelasi berganda. Penelitian ini dilakukan di SMA swasta di Cibinong tahun pelajaran 2011-2012. Pengambilan data dilakukan dengan dua cara yaitu, soal pilihan ganda dan soal esai. Soal pilihan ganda digunakan untuk mengukur penguasaan tata bahasa dan penguasaan kosakata siswa. Sedangkan soal esai menulis digunakan untuk mengukur menulis argumentasi terutama eksposisi analitis. Berdasarkan penelitian terdapat pengaruh penguasaan tata bahasa dan penguasaan kosakata terhadap menulis argumentasi siswa.

Kata kunci: Penguasaan Tata Bahasa, Penguasaan Kosakata, dan Menulis Argumentasi Siswa

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Language is a systematic mean of communication. Human beings use language to communicate feelings and emotions. English is spoken by millions of people worldwide. It has referred to as a world language, the lingua franca, by the end of the twentieth century. The phenomenon of globalization has caused some people to become very interested in what actually happens. Many people use English in a global context for international communication. They want to be part of a target-language community, especially on the internet as a major channel for information exchange. The learning of English is considered enquiring the essentials of speech, reading, writing, speaking and literature.

Students of all ages learn to speak English in all over the world. They have different reasons why they study English. Some students study the language to reflect some kind of a choice. Others learn English only at schools because it is on the curriculum. Harmer ((2008:11) stated that many people learn English because they have moved into a target-language community and they need to be able to operate successfully within that community.

English is not an official language in most countries. It is the language most often taught in various situations as a foreign language. In Indonesia English appears in the primary education, but many universities students find that they are insufficiently competent in English use. It is studied not just for unspecified general purpose, but for travel and tourism, academic purpose (EAP) or for business. The students who want to study at an English speaking university or college or to access English language

academic texts for academic purpose (Harmer, 2008:11).

Many people who learn English have a particular reason. They wish to learn, speak, read, and write English effectively. English is taught in many varieties of situations in all over the world. The language that we speak or write is governed by a number of rules, styles and constraints. A language function is a purpose we wish to achieve when we say or write something. By performing the function, we are performing an act of communication. The issue that we communicate depends on the context in which it is said and the words.

Written language uses symbols or character to build words. It serves a range functions in everyday life for action, information, and entertainment. The students who want to express themselves in writing have to know how perform these functions. The idea that language performs certain functions in certain circumstances attempts to achieve a communicative purpose. A key feature of specific functional exponents (patterns or phrases) is to know which are appropriate in a given situation.

The important components of language are grammar and vocabulary. A text is collections of words and sentences. In writing, sentences are part of a longer text (stretch of discourse), which needs to be organized as well as with words, phrases, sentences, and questions. The elements in the text must stick together. Grammatical cohesion is achieved in a number of ways, such as the uses of pronoun, articles and tense agreement for the same purpose. Full grammatical sentences are likely too written and writing-specific language is used by the writer. They prefer to use content words that carry meaning (e.g.: house, car, star) than function words or grammar words (e.g.: was, to or which). The meaning of

the language depends on where it occurs inside the stretches of discourse and the relationship between the language elements. A meaning can be expressed in many ways.

The process of writing requires a different set of competencies which is different from speaking. Writing is the mental work of inventing ideas, thinking about how to express them and organizing them into statements and paragraphs. According to Harmer, writing is a practice tool to help students to practice and work with language they have been studying (2008:112). In other words, this writing activity reinforces the students to review the subject they have studied.

The ability to write academic essays is widely regarded as one of the hallmarks of a higher education. It is essential that university students be able to write clearly about topic that is related to their research fields. Argumentative writing which is one of common of assignment in academic writing tasks function to show that the assertion or hypothesis about some phenomenon is correct than others. Logic is only one aspect of a successful argument. It is a formal system of analysis that helps writer invent, demonstrate, and prove arguments. Brown (2007:391) commented that compositions were supposed to (a) meet certain standards of prescribed English rhetorical style, (b) reflect accurate grammar, and (c) be organized an conformity with what the audience would consider to be conventional. In addition, a student's final product measured up against a list of criteria that included content, organization, vocabulary use, grammar use, and mechanical considerations such as spelling and punctuation.

Writing is one of the critical skills that a student develops in senior high school, because it is both physical and

mental act. They have to invent ideas, to think about how to express them and to organize them into statements and paragraphs that will be clear to the reader. They need to focus on the development of ideas and on mastering grammatical rules. Moreover, they also should know rhetorical structure of the written text. Based on the statement above, the writer intends to measure the effects of grammar mastery and vocabulary mastery towards students' argumentative writing, because process of writing skill requires different set fundamental competencies, such as grammar and vocabulary.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Grammar Mastery

Competence which has common synonyms for the term proficiency, expertise, or ability implies a high level of skill, well-developed knowledge, or a polished performance (Hadley, 2001:2-3). She noted that the term competence and performance introduce yet another complication, especially for those familiar with the fields of language and linguistics.

Furthermore, Brown (1994:31) noted that in reference to language, competence is one's underlying knowledge of the system of the language-its rules of grammar, its vocabulary, all the pieces of a language and how those pieces fit together. In other words it is said that competence is what one knows and Hadley (2001:4) distinguished that competence is defined as a presumed underlying ability.

Grammar is the central to the teaching and learning of languages. It is also one of the most difficult aspects of language to teach well. Grammar is known as a set of structured rules that govern composition of clauses, phrases, and words in languages. In *Teaching by Principles* (2007:420), Brown wrote, "Grammar is the system of rules

governing the conventional arrangement and relationship of words in a sentence.” It can be assumed that grammar technically refers to rules of sentence level, not to rules governing the relationship between sentences. Grammar is partly the study of what forms or structures are possible in a language.

According to Thornbury (1999:1), grammar is a description of the rules that govern how a language’s sentence is formed. It is conventionally seen as the study of syntax and morphology of sentences. Studying grammar means that we know how different grammatical elements can be strung together to make chains of words.

People agree that grammar is too important to be ignored, and that without good knowledge of grammar, learners’ language development will be severely constrained (Richards and Renandya, (2002:145). Sentences are acceptable and understandable if they follow the rules which are set out by the language. In English, the rule states that a subject is followed by a verb which is followed by an object. It is stated by Nunan (2003:154) that grammar is generally thought to be a set of rules specifying the correct ordering of words at the sentence level. Grammar can be introduced in a number of ways. It exists to enable us to mean and without grammar it is impossible to communicate beyond a very rudimentary level. Teachers can show students grammar evidence and ask them to work out for themselves how the language is constructed.

Grammar mastery is understood as knowledge of and ability to use the grammatical structures of a language and use them effectively in communication. Brown (2007:420) agreed that grammatical competence occupies a prominent position as a major component of communicative competence. On the other hand, competence in English

grammar is a comprehensive text encompassing virtually all aspects of English grammar. The text examines the foundational principles of grammar and builds those principles, demonstrating the close interrelationship with all the parts of speech in both verbal and written communication.

Vocabulary Mastery

Vocabulary is the component of language that concerned with words and meanings. All languages have words. Some words can be used in a wide variety circumstances, but on others much more limited use. Nation and Nunan, (2003:135) stated that words are clearly vocabulary which is a very important parts of language learning. The most useful English vocabulary depends othe goal of the learners. It is almost 1000 word families of English. Around 75 percent of the running words is used in academic text and newspaper, 80 percent in novels, and about 85 percent in conversation. It contains most of 176 function word families (Nation and Nunan,2003:136)

Vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provide much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, read and write. (Ricahards and Renandya (2002:255). As one of the important element in the acquisition of a second language, vocabulary must not only be known and must be readily available for use. We know that people who have little vocabulary will face problem in communication in spoken or written language.

Harmer (2002:13) stated, “Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed.” You can say very little with grammar, but you can say almost anything with words. Most learners acknowledge the importance of vocabulary mastery. Learning is the

process and acquisition is the end result of vocabulary development.

Brown (2007:436) stated that the best internalization of vocabulary comes from encounters with the words within the context of surrounding discourse. Lexical forms now play a central role in the contextualized meaningful language. The learners are guided in a specific ways to internalize these important blocks of language. They see vocabulary as being important part of language learning. And the most useful vocabulary depends on the goals of the learners.

According to Nation (2008:7) vocabulary can be divided into three or four levels largely on the basis of how often it occurs in the language and how widely it occurs. First, high frequency words are the group of words that occur very frequently in all kinds of the uses of the language. Second, academic words which consist of word family that occurs in special purposes, such as academic writing. Third, technical words which are very important for anyone who specialized in a particular area. The last is low frequency words which are rarely occurred.

In addition, Nation (2008:125) stated that academic vocabulary consist of word families that occur frequently across a wide range of academic subjects. It is a formal vocabulary. The academic vocabulary is used in academic texts and academic activities. Learning specialized vocabulary is just one aspect of the main goal being able to function well in a specialized area.

Harmer (2007:61) explained that the speaker's knowledge of a word also included an understanding of how the shape of that word can be altered so that its grammatical meaning can be changed.

In a sum, vocabulary knowledge is acquired to different degree. The development of a rich vocabulary is an important element in the acquisition of a

second language. It is important to learn vocabulary to reach fluent written communication.

Argumentative Writing

Argumentative essay is a genre of academic writing that requires students to investigate a topic, collect, generate, evaluate evidence, and establish a position on the topic in a concise manner. In his paper, Menasche (2001<http://www.smartenglishcourse.com/online-course/analytical-exposition-text/>) wrote that an argumentative paragraph is a kind of paragraph where the writer presents the idea of others, judgments, personal comment, and tries to support a different personal position on the main issue. This is the type of paper that scholars publish in a journal to communicate advances in knowledge, new idea, and new point of view.

The argumentative essays are designed to be persuasive rather than descriptive, and try to convince the reader of a view of point or a claim. They require the writer to extensively research background information, evaluate the evidence, and formulate a perspective. The function of argumentative essay, is to display that the writer's assertions (opinion, theory, and hypothesis) about some phenomenon is correct or more accurate than others.

Argumentative writing centers on an assumption that a writer must convince a particular reader, watch real or imagine through the presentation of relevant point with supporting evidence. It is clear that argumentative writing is the act of forming reasons, making introductions, drawing conclusion, and applying them to the case in discussion. The writer has to convince readers that his argument or statement highly credible.

In sum, argumentative essay is an essay that attempt to convince or persuade people through reasoning, logic

and evidence to do what the writer wants them to do, or to believe as the writer wishes them to believe. An argumentative essay is an analytical, expository essay that persuades. Argumentative essay is similar to expository essay. They differ in the amount of the pre-writing and research. Argumentative essay involves research and longer in length than expository essay. On the other hand, expository essay involves less research and is commonly used for in-class writing exercise or evaluation.

Expository essay is a type of essay that the students require to investigate an idea, evaluate evidence, expound on the idea and set forth an argument concerning that idea in a clear concise manner. Almost all written material that people read and write is exposition. We can conclude that the exposition writing is a type of writing where the purpose is to clarify, inform, explain, describe or define the author subject to the reader. Exposition tells the readers what particular thing is all about, what is or what its functions are and how the parts of thing are related to the other parts or things.

Exposition which is grouped as argumentative writing is a text that specifically describe something in order to give information. There are two types of exposition: 1) analytical exposition, and 2) hortatory exposition. Analytical exposition is a descriptive arguments that ends with paragraph to strengthen the thesis. On the other hand, hortatory exposition is a suggestive arguments that makes a recommendation for readers. The key words of this kind of text are “what do you think?” or “Do you want to argue?”

An analytical exposition text can be written based on the fact. The text elaborates the writer’s idea about the phenomenon surrounding. Its social function is to persuade the reader that the

idea is important matter. This type of text is popular among scientists, academic community, and educated people. There are three steps in writing exposition text which called generic structure, 1) thesis stated the writer’s point of view about the topic being discussed, 2) arguments consist of point and elaboration the arguments to support the thesis are developed, and 3) reiteration restates the thesis, and just like a conclusive paragraph from the previous statement.

Analytical exposition text is the type of text that we can find in scientific books, journals, magazines, newspaper articles, academic writing, speech or lectures, research. Analytical exposition focuses on generic human and non human participants. It uses a mental process to state what the writer or speaker thinks or feels about something. Besides that, it uses emotive language to add strong description to facts that plays role in persuading the readers. Evaluative words to persuade readers and to agree with the writer’s opinion. Enumerations such as firstly, secondly, thirdly, etc. is sometimes necessary to show the list of given arguments. Declarative sentences are used in the simple present tense, the present perfect and conjunctions to show the cause and effect.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research used a quantitative design which emphasized on the effects of grammar mastery and vocabulary mastery towards argumentative writing. It was conducted at private senior high schools in Cibinong in school year 2011-2012. The method is a survey with multiple-correlational technique. The sampling method used in this research is cluster random sampling. Clusters or the selection of groups of subjects are selected randomly from the larger population of cluster.

The total respondents are 50 students of eleventh grade in first semester. The sources of data of independent variables are the answers of students' related to grammar and vocabulary tests. The source of data for dependent variable is the students' essay of argumentative writing especially analytical exposition. The instruments that are used in research were valid and reliable. The technique of data analysis is a descriptive statistic which contains mean, median, and mode as well as normality test and linearity test. The research hypothesis is tested using inferential statistic to find the value of partial correlation, multiple correlation, linear regression, and multiple regression. The hypotheses were formulated statistically.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. The influences of Grammar Mastery and Vocabulary Mastery simultaneously towards Argumentative Writing, using the description of data finding which tested using SPSS program, the correlation coefficient is 0.859 and determination coefficient is 73.8 percent. The result proved that the correlation coefficient is not significant. This means that there are no influences of X1 (grammar mastery) and X2 (vocabulary mastery) independent variables simultaneously towards Y dependent variable (argumentative writing).

The regression analysis was obtained that the equation of regression line is $\hat{Y} = 30.251 + 0.575 X1 + 0.239 X2$. The constant value = 30.251 determined that the students with the lowest of grammar mastery and vocabulary mastery will be difficult to raise good grades in argumentative writing. While the

value of regression coefficient are 0.575 and 0.239 indicate that there are positive influences of X1 (grammar mastery) and X2 (vocabulary mastery) independent variables simultaneously towards Y dependent variable (argumentative writing). Thus, based on the equation value can be predicted that the score of argumentative writing will raise 0.575 when the score of grammar mastery raise one point. Similarly, every time the score of vocabulary mastery raised one point, the score of argumentative writing will raise 0.239 to computations using SPSS computer program SPSS

Referring to the result of regression line linearity test, the regression line is linear. The significant test showed that the regression coefficient is significant. This means that there are positive influences of X1 (grammar mastery) and X2 (vocabulary mastery) independent variables simultaneously towards Y dependent variable (argumentative writing).

Argumentative writing is the act of forming reasons making introduction, drawing conclusion and applying them to the case in discussion. Grammar mastery which is understood as a knowledge of and ability to use the grammatical structures of a language in communication and vocabulary mastery which is the development of vocabulary has the relationship to the argumentative writing. The competency of the writer to write well performed sentences, paragraphs and text and the writer's development of rich vocabulary will help the writer to present an argumentative essay.

Using the quantitative information findings and theories the researcher concluded that there is no

significant influence of grammar mastery and vocabulary mastery simultaneously towards argumentative writing.

2. The Influence of Grammar Mastery towards Argumentative Writing, the result of testing hypothesis obtained the value of $Sig = 0.000$ and $t_{test} = 6.813$; whereas, $t_{table} = 2.010$. As the value of $Sig < 0.05$ and $t_{test} > t_{table}$, then hypothesis null (H_0) is rejected. This means that there is significant influence of X1 independent variable (grammar mastery) towards Y dependent variable (argumentative writing). Based on the synthesis of theory on Chapter II, grammar mastery is a knowledge of and ability to use the grammatical structure of a language in communication.

Using the quantitative information and theories, researcher conclude that there is positive and significant influence of grammar mastery (X1) towards argumentative writing (Y).

3. The Influence of Vocabulary Mastery (X2) towards Argumentative Writing (Y), observing from the that there no significant influence of X2 independent variable result of hypothesis testing, the value of $Sig = 0.005$ and $t_{test} = 2.938$, meanwhile $t_{table} = 2.010$. As the value of $Sig < 0.05$ and $t_{test} > t_{table}$ then null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected. This means that there is significant influence of X2 independent variable (vocabulary mastery) towards Y dependent variable (argumentative writing). According to the synthesis theories existing on Chapter II, learning is the process and the acquisition is the end result of the vocabulary development. The development of a rich vocabulary

is very important element in the acquisition of a foreign language especially English. The number of words that the students learn and the degree of vocabulary knowledge depends on the ability to pick the information from context in oral or written. Consider the quantitative information and theories, the researcher conclude that there is no positive and significant influence of vocabulary mastery towards argumentative writing.

CONCLUSION

The writer suggests the students must be given more time to write an analytic exposition in order to develop the writing skill, the students must read a lot of English book in order to gain the vocabulary, the students must given writing assignments to improve their ability to write correct sentences, and the teachers must give the students more examples of analytic exposition writing, must correct the students' writing and return the paper to them, and also for the other researchers must do another research to prove the hypotheses.

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