VOCABULARY, SENTENCE STRUCTURE, AND FICTION WRITING: A CORRELATION FOR EFL JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract

This study explores the link between vocabulary, sentence structure, and fiction writing skills in Junior High School EFL students. Using a quantitative approach and correlational research design, data from vocabulary, sentence structure, and fiction writing tests for seventh-graders at SMPN 2 Argamakmur, Bengkulu were analyzed. The results show positive correlations between vocabulary mastery and fiction writing skills, sentence structure knowledge and fiction writing skills, as well as among vocabulary mastery, sentence structure knowledge, and fiction writing skills. This underscores the significance of vocabulary and sentence structure in improving EFL students' fiction writing abilities.

Keywords*: Instagram, Social Media, Vocabulary*

INTRODUCTION

As an important language skill, language students need to have a good writing skill. Through writing students can express their knowledge, thoughts, ideas, and experiences. A competency in writing skill is writing a story or fiction writing. When writing a fiction, many factors need to be considered, such as vocabulary, punctuation, and sentence structure (Maximilian, 2023; Zulianti et al., 2016). Without paying attention to these factors, the resulting fictional story will be of less quality. In order to write a text which is easy to read for the readers, the writer is required to use the correct grammatical rules. Thus, there will be a communication relationship between language users, namely between writers and readers (Ajeng & Maximilian, 2023).

One of the rules of language that must be obeyed is vocabulary mastery. Apart from these language rules, language users are also required to be able to carry out language activities. The activities of using language cover the exercises to speak, to listen, to read, and to write (Maximilian, 2016). Characteristically, these language exercises can be independent, but in the use of language as a communication purpose,

these skills cannot be separated from one another (Maximilian, 2020). This condition shows that language is an integration of various aspects.

Likewise, related to students' skills in compiling an essay, such as writing fiction stories, the students are generally expected to master the correct grammatical rules. Therefore, the writing resulting from ideas or thoughts can be easily understood by readers. In addition, students must also have adequate knowledge related to writing fiction stories. In composing a writing, vocabulary and sentence structure are considered as the important components. They are the language components that contain information about meaning and usage in language. According to Tarigan (1985), there are two ways that can be done to have an effective vocabulary, that are through experience and through reading.

In addition, writing can be a skill of language which can be categorized as very important for students to master. In Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005 concerning National Education Standards, the Chapter V, Graduate Competency Standards, article 25, Paragraph (3) explains that the competence of graduates for Indonesian subjects emphasises the ability to read and write according to the level of education (Depdiknas, 2006). This skill has a relationship between thinking (cognitive) and psychomotor skills. According to Soedjito (1989), writing ability is the capacity to communicate thoughts, feelings, and opinions in text to those around you.

In the phrase "writing skill", the expression "skill" can be frequently used to refer to a person's various levels of aptitude. Skill can be defined as capacity to perform tasks with ease and accuracy (Sapari, 2002; Sutiyono et al., 2023). Meanwhile, according to Samsuri (1987) the word "skilled" can be also used to describe an action or work and a measure of proficiency. Considering that, it is unarguable if Tarigan (2008) argues that one of the productive and expressive language skills used to interact with others indirectly and not in person is writing. On the other hands, Byrne (Haryadi and Zamzani, 1996) states that pouring ideas into written language through sentences that are formed completely and clearly in order to adequately express them to the reader is an essay writing talent.

According to Tarigan (2008), fiction can be defined as story that is told by specific actors using specific characters, settings, stages, and other elements that originate from the author's imagination to create a narrative. Nurgiantoro (1994)

suggests that fiction is a form of story or prose narrative that has characters, actions, events, and plots produced by imagination. In addition, Haryadi dan Zamzani (1996) who mentions this fiction using the term fiction writing, describes it as a story that has characters, actions, and plots produced by imagination or imagination in a variety of prose. The logic in fiction is imaginative logic while the logic in nonfiction is factual logic. Fiction is a work that reveals the reality of life so that it can develop the power of imagination.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a correlational research method, which explains clearly the things in question and connects two or more variables. In this study, the focus of attention is the correlation of students' vocabulary mastery, the knowledge on sentence structure, and students' fiction writing skill among the seventh-grade students of SMPN 2 Argamakmur, Bengkulu. This study has three variables consisting one dependent variable and two independent variables. The three variables include the dependent variable, namely the skill of fiction writing skill (Y), the independent variable, namely the vocabulary mastery (X_1) and sentence structure (X_2). To obtain data on the dependent variable (Y), an instrument in the form of an assignment test about writing fiction was used, while the independent variables (X1) and (X2) used an instrument in the form of an objective test in the form of multiple choice, consisting 50 items, with 4 choices (A, B, C, D). Before the test is used, it is first analysed in the pilot study to check the readiness of tests or instruments used in this research. Furthermore, the technique used in data collection is the assignment technique by giving the assignments to the sample to answer questions related to the object of research, requirements in research, research procedures, research analysis and how to make conclusions. The product moment formula was used to explore the correlation between vocabulary mastery and students' fiction writing skill, as well as the correlation between sentence structure and students' fiction writing skill. Meanwhile, the correlation between the vocabulary mastery, sentence structure, and writing fiction skill was analysed using the multiple linear regressions formula

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Finding

Correlation between EFL Vocabulary Mastery and Fiction Writing Skill

Calculating product moment formula, the following computation is obtained: 0.588. To determine the reliability coefficient of the measuring instrument, the calculation is continued with the Spearman Brown formula with the result: rgg = 0.740. Based on these calculations, the reliability coefficient of the entire measuring instrument is 0.740. Because rgg = 0.740 which is higher than r_{table} (r_{table}, 5%=0.312 and 1% = 0.403), it can be concluded that there is a correlation between vocabulary mastery and fiction writing skill with the value of 54.76% (the first hypothesis is proven).

Correlation between Sentence Structure and Fiction Writing Skill

Calculating the product moment formula, the following computation is obtained: 0.679. To determine the reliability coefficient of the measuring instrument, the calculation is continued with the Spearman Brown formula with the result: rgg = 0.809. Based on these calculations, the reliability coefficient of the entire measuring instrument is 0.809. Because rgg = 0.809 which is higher than r_{table} (r_{table}, 5%=0.312 and 1% = 0.403), thus, the correlation between sentence structure and fiction writing skill with the value of 65.45% is proven (the second hypothesis is proven).

Correlation between Vocabulary Mastery, and Sentence Structure, with Fiction Writing Skill

Table 1. Regression Statistics

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0,715471291
R Square	0,511899168
Adjusted R Square	0,485515339
Standard Error	3,601016806
Observations	40

The interpretation of the adjusted r square is that the variation of the Y variable can be explained by the X_1 and X_2 variables by 51.1%, the remaining are coming from the variables outside the model.

Table 2. Anova Table

	df	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*Significance F*
Regression	2	503,184	251,5920	19,402004	1,72753
Residual	37	479,790	12,9673		
Total	39	982,975			

Observation statistics: Significance value is 0.05, so H_0 is rejected H0. We can also compare the F value in the output table with the F value in the standard F table. The decision is H_0 is rejected. It can be concluded that the two independent factors together have a substantial impact on the dependent variables with an alpha level of 5%. That is, there is a relationship between the ability to write fiction and the ability to grasp both sentence structure and vocabulary through repeated regression (the third hypothesis is proven).

Table 3. Regression Output Table

	Coefficients	*Standard Error*	*t Stat*	*P-value*
Intercept	50,85315435	4,381564679	11,60616311	6,80669
Vocabulary	0,151352322	0,077185924	1,960879837	0,057453244
Sentence Structure	0,209034676	0,058940194	3,546555609	0,001079742

Table 4. Confidence Interval Table

	Lower 95%	*Upper 95%*	*Lower 95.0%*	*Upper 95.0%*
Intercept	41,97526109	59,73104761	41,97526109	59,73104761
Vocabulary	-0,00504121	0,307745858	-0,00504121	0,307745858
Sentence Structure	0,0896105	0,328458852	0,0896105	0,328458852

To interpret these outputs, the value of t and the significance of each variable can be considered. For the t value, we can say it is significant if the value of |t|>t is a standard table. If we use the significance value, we can say that the variable is significant if the value of sig < α (in this case the value of α = 5%). In the table, we can see that the two independent variables have a significant effect on the dependent variable. It could be read as follows. Each increase of 1 unit of variable X_1 will increase the value of variable Y by 0.077 units with the assumption that other variables have a fixed value. Each increase of 1 unit of variable X_2 will increase the value of variable Y by 0.058 units with the assumption that other variables have a fixed value. Based on the table above, it was obtained that R is 0.512 and according to the criteria, it was included in the moderate/enough criteria. So that, it can be seen that the level of closeness of the multiple correlation between vocabulary mastery and sentence structure with fiction writing skill is moderate/sufficient.

Discussion

Referring to the research results, all alternative hypotheses in the study are proven accepted significantly. The data in the study support the requirements of the research

hypothesis. The first hypothesis contends that language knowledge and proficiency in fiction writing are significantly correlated for seventh grade students of SMPN 2 Argamakmur, Bengkulu. The second hypothesis states that there is a significant relationship between sentence structure mastery and fiction writing skills for seventh grade students of SMPN 2 Argamakmur, Bengkulu. While the third hypothesis states that there is a significant relationship between vocabulary mastery and sentence structure with the fiction writing skill of seventh grade students of SMPN 2 Argamakmur, Bengkulu.

The first, second and third hypotheses are also proven to be all significant. It indicates that the study has succeeded in proving the correlation between vocabulary mastery (X_1) and fiction writing skill (Y), sentence structure mastery (X_2) and fiction writing skill (Y). In addition, this study has also proven that vocabulary mastery (X_1) and sentence structure (X_2) together have a very positive relationship with fiction writing skill (Y). The clarity of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables can be described briefly as follows.

The Correlation between Vocabulary Mastery and Fiction Writing Skill

The results showed that there was a significant relationship between vocabulary mastery and fiction writing skill (r count = 0.740 at test level α = 1% r table = 0.403 and at test level α = 5% r table = 0.312). It answers the first hypothesis, namely that there is a significant relationship between vocabulary mastery and fiction writing skill for seventh grade students of SMPN 2 Argamakmur, Bengkulu. The statement is based on the calculation results that the r obtained is greater than the r table. This also means that vocabulary mastery contributes significantly to the fiction writing skill of seventh grade students of SMPN 2 Argamakmur, Bengkulu.

Vocabulary mastery of the students will increase if he uses methods or forms in the form of giving numbers for every activity carried out by students related to the use of vocabulary. The design of learning creative features must also encourage student learning activities and inventiveness in vocabulary acquisition. In the classroom or among the pupils, there needs to be more competition. By establishing themselves as facilitators and motivators of learning, rather than as the sole source of knowledge, teachers can help students gain more confidence. The conclusion that can be made based on the findings of this study is that one of the crucial factors that need more focus

in order to enhance students' ability to write fiction is their command of the vocabulary. Students' ability to write fiction can be improved if they have solid language skills.

The Correlation between Sentence Structure and Fiction Writing Skill

The results showed that there is a significant relationship between mastery of sentence structure and fiction writing skills (r count = 0.809 at test level α = 1% r table = 0.403 and at test level α = 5% r table = 0.312). Consulting with the correlation criteria, r count = 0.809 is included in the high criteria. It answers the second hypothesis, namely that there is a significant relationship between sentence structure mastery and fiction writing skills for seventh grade students of SMPN 2 Argamakmur, Bengkulu. The statement is based on the calculation results that the r obtained is greater than the r table. This also means that the mastery of sentence structure makes a significant contribution to the students' fiction writing skill. The correlation coefficient value obtained is 0.809 which is very significant. These data indicate the level of strength of a positive relationship between mastery of sentence structure (X_2) and fiction writing skill (Y). It can be said that the higher the mastery of sentence structure, the higher the students' fiction writing skill.

Thus, the higher the mastery of the student's sentence structure, the tendency of the students' fiction writing skill to increase is also higher. This is also in accordance with the results of interviews conducted to several students and teachers of SMPN 2 Argamakmur, Bengkulu. The results are (1) students' writing skills in fiction stories are lacking because students' sentence structure mastery is also lacking, (2) students is lacking to practice in writing the fictional stories because they have lack mastery of sentence structure, (3) in the implementation of learning, the teacher pays less attention to individual differences. It is natural that students have differences in terms of thinking maturity, language skills and intelligence levels.

The skill of writing fiction stories will be better if students master sentence structure well. In other words, if the mastery of sentence structure is high, the students' fiction writing skills will be better. Thus, the conclusion that can be drawn from the results of this study is that mastery of sentence structure is one of the important variables that needs attention in order to improve the fiction writing skills of the junior high school students. The mastery of sentence structure is an important part that must be mastered by students in order to improve writing skills of fiction. The skill of writing

fiction stories will increase if students have high mastery of sentence structure. The higher the student's mastery of sentence structure, the higher the students' fiction writing skills.

The Correlation between Vocabulary Mastery, and Sentence Structure, with Fiction Writing Skill

The results showed that there was a significant relationship between vocabulary mastery and sentence structure mastery with fiction writing skill, as evidenced by the r value (0,512) while the suggested r value (0,485). It answers the third hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between vocabulary mastery and sentence structure mastery together with the fiction writing skills. The statement is based on the results of calculations that r obtained is greater than the table r (0.512> 0.485). It means that the students' vocabulary mastery and sentence structure mastery together can make a real contribution to the writing skill of fiction stories. That is, by increasing vocabulary mastery and mastery of sentence structure, the students can improve their fiction writing skill. Based on this finding, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and alternative (H_1) is accepted, which means that there is a positive and significant relationship between vocabulary mastery and sentence structure mastery with fiction writing skill. Since the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted, it means that there is a relationship between vocabulary mastery and sentence structure mastery together with fiction writing skills.

Thus, the conclusion that can be drawn from the results of this study is that the mastery of vocabulary and the mastery of sentence structure are considered as the important variables that need more attention in order to improve the students' writing skill of fiction stories. Fiction writing skill will be improved if students have high vocabulary mastery and sentence structure mastery. Both aspects need to be improved by the teacher in line with efforts to improve fiction writing skills in Junior High School level. It proves that vocabulary mastery and sentence structure mastery have a relationship in improving fiction writing skill.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the data analysis that has been discussed previously, it can be concluded that the students' fiction writing skill is positively related to the vocabulary mastery and sentence structure mastery of Junior High School students. The

results of the first analysis test prove that there is a significant positive relationship between the vocabulary mastery and fiction writing skill. The result of the second analysis test is that there is a significant relationship between sentence structure mastery and fiction writing skill. Moreover, the result of the third analysis test is that there is a significant relationship between vocabulary mastery and sentence structure mastery with the fiction writing skill of the Junior High School students. This illustrates that these variables have a positive relationship with each other. In other words, if students' vocabulary mastery is high, then students' fiction writing skill is also high, and if students' sentence structure mastery is high, then students' fiction writing skill is also high. In addition, if students have the high vocabulary mastery as well as the high sentence structure, then the students' fiction writing skill could also be high.

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