

Title

The Portrait of Students' Reading Habit, Writing Efficacy, and Writing Achievement: Implications for Teaching Writing in EFL Classrooms

Abstract

The main objective of the present study is to examine the relationship among students' reading habit, writing efficacy, and their writing achievement, and its implication for teaching writing in classroom practices. This study also investigate all other variables from reading habit namely reading attitude, frequency, books read, and reading accessed, other variables from writing efficacy such as content, design, unity, accuracy, and punctuation, and variables from writing achievement namely grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, fluency, and organization. The reading habit questionnaire, writing efficacy questionnaire, and writing test were administered to a group of 77 EFL students. The results of this study confirm that reading habit has significant relationship with writing achievement. Writing efficacy is also related with organization of writing, and writing efficacy in unity associated with vocabulary and fluency of writing. Those correlations are expected to be beneficial in order to achieve successful teaching writing in the classroom. In short, Students' frequent readings and their confidence of writing could give positive contribution to students' written production.

Key words: *reading habit, writing efficacy, writing achievement, EFL State Islamic University students, teaching writing in EFL classroom contexts.*

Introduction

Literacy skills include being able to read and write different sort of texts for different purposes and these skills can only be achieved and mastered by practicing intensively and continuously (Ratnaningsih & Fahrus, 2018). Reading habit should be cultivated to the students to enrich their knowledge about the global world. Nishida (2013) clarified that it is important for learners to apply what they have learnt through repeated practice of comprehending English

language texts. Reading habit deals with sources used to get reading materials and time to spend on reading. Mustafa (2012) reported out of 1000 citizen, only one has excellent reading habit. In fact, the research conducted in Indonesia covering provinces of South Sulawesi, Riau, South Kalimantan, North Sulawesi, North Sumatera, and East Kalimantan states that if reading habit is quantitatively scored from the value of 1, that is, the lowest reading habit, to the value of 7, that is the highest reading habit, then the study reported that the average reading habit score of respondents from the six provinces is 3.2. Moreover, Ifanti (2012) concluded that most of the EFL students do not indicate having good English reading habits even though they have formally learned English from Elementary school to higher education.

In line with this, anecdotal observation was conducted to understand how students' reading habit in English Literature Department of State Islamic university of Sultan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi. Researchers observed a number of relevant issues such as 'were they accustomed to reading English academic books?', 'did they read in their spare time?', and 'how was library in this department?' The researchers found that they were not accustomed to reading in English academic books. They did not read in their spare time. The library in this department did not really support them to read English books. The access to get the English books and the education environment there did not establish students' reading habit. In fact, there was no 'reading culture' in their study environment. Therefore, they were not interested and motivated to go to library in their spare time or even when they needed sources to do assignment.

Zainal and Husin (2002) point out that "a good reader usually makes a good piece of writing" (p. 2). This statement shows that reading and writing are related each other. Reading and writing are two skills which complement each other. However, many students do not realize the connection between reading and writing and how those skills influence each other. Pajares, Hartley, and Valiante (2001) confirm that writing self-efficacy refers to one's confidence in one's ability to perform writing skills and writing tasks. Based on Reio (2010), writing self-efficacy has consistently been related with writing achievement, as students with high writing self-efficacy write better than students with low writing self-efficacy. It means that self-efficacy acts as a mediator to writing achievement.

Some of students in this university still have a problem in writing achievement. As Sakkir (2018) argued that it can be happened because of weakness in grammar and vocabulary, difficulty to start and develop ideas, uninteresting topic and unsuitable teaching technique. In

accordance with this, the researchers distributed two questions as anecdotal observation to the students. First, is writing difficult for you or not? And second, what are problems you face when you do writing? They mostly answered that writing is difficult and the problems in writing are they have limited English vocabulary, they often do grammatical error, and they seldom focus on ideas.

Therefore, the researchers consider that this study is important to be conducted because a good writer must have a good reading habit. In fact, having a good reading habit does not guarantee to be good in writing achievement. In line with this, people who have a good writing achievement cannot be guaranteed that they have a good writing efficacy and vice-versa. In addition, students with high writing self-efficacy are not necessarily better writers. Therefore, it is important to investigate whether or not reading habit and writing efficacy could predict one's writing achievement.

EFL teachers have been seeking ways to help students become more successful in learning and communicating in foreign language (Ghahari & Ebrahimi, 2004). Rahimi, Sadighi, & Dastkheyr (2009) pointed that teachers need to help students become efficient readers and enhance their reading ability. As Li & Chan (2012) stated that a better understanding of the correlation among the language cognitive and affective factors will prepare teachers with more efficient guidance on the students. Hiromori, Matsumoto, & Nakayama (2012) also stated that the factors such as proficiency, motivation, strategy use, beliefs, and others appear to be learned by different types of learners. Larekeng (2018) argued in fact, teaching writing skill is not easy or challenge for some teachers. It is important to be conducted as research for more pedagogical improvement. Thus, novelty of this study can be stated that this study also investigated all variables related; it is included the components of reading habit (attitude, frequency, books read, and reading accessed), the components of writing efficacy (content, design, unity, accuracy, and punctuation), and components of writing achievement (grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, fluency, and organization).

In the same time, the implications of this present study are expected to be used in today's era. As the digital world develops, the education system will automatically adapt. Being a teacher in digital era, teacher should be flexible, and being able to adapt to change (Cox, 2018). It means that teacher should be aware toward technology used in the classroom. Below are also

presented some studies that highlighted teaching writing and reading by using digital learning media.

There are variety tools for education made possible by digital advances, for example, educational blogs often be used for assessment practices (Guenther, 2018). Tucker in Simon (2016) states that most classroom offer limited technology options and rarely share students' work. Meanwhile, young people are routinely sharing ideas and images online. Technologies can bridge these gaps. Soep in Simon (2016) also highlighted that young people are now using digital tools to find issues that concern them in real time. Technologies especially social media in pedagogical use has the potential impact to increase students' motivation for writing, strengthen their awareness of audience and authorship and promote writing development (Zheng, Yim, & Warsthauer, 2018). Therefore, digital media should be applied in the classroom nowadays.

A survey of 2,465 Advance Placement (AP) and National Writing Project (NWP) found that today's digital tools have tangible, beneficial impacts on student writing; it provides students to share their work with a wider and more varied audience, encourage greater collaboration among students, encourage students' creativity and personal expression (Purcell, Buchanan, & Friedrich, 2013). Besides that, the note menu in Edmodo which is used during the writing process supports students to do interactive and meaningful writing tasks (Purnawarman, Susilawati, & Sundayana, 2016). As writing skill continue to develop as a result of constant evolving of tech, teachers must discover innovative techniques to help their students grow in creativity and originality. Technology is not only improves students' writing skills, but it is also a way for students to express their own ideas through different multimedia projects (Bowen, Moore, Niemeyer, & Holmes, 2014). It is strengthen that digital media facilitate writing class to be innovative.

Not only writing, teaching reading also uses digital media. There are some examples of ways that the digital media can be incorporated into teaching reading; the use of online dictionaries and vocabulary lists, hyperlinking complex words and phrases with videos, and other explanatory resources, use of e-reader and other devices made for e-books, using quizzes media, and interactive games to test vocab retention and content basics. Educational technology allows live feedback into reading achievements (Lynch, 2017). Therefore, based on explanations above, this correlational study also recommended that digital media is tangible, meaningful, and beneficial for teaching writing that can be applied in the classrooms today.

Method

The data of this study were quantitative data. The instruments of the data were first, reading habit questionnaire adopted from Janthong and Sripethpun (2010). It consists of 20 items measuring reading habit of the participants. The Participants responded to a 5-point Likert Scale for each item with 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 signifying strongly agree, agree, averagely agree, disagree and strongly disagree.

Second, Writing efficacy questionnaire which is ready-made questionnaire that developed by Erkan (2004: 174). It consists of 28 items to assess the students' self-efficacy in writing. Writing self-efficacy scale is to grade the strength of subjects' belief in their writing ability. The Participants responded to a four-tier scale for each item with 1, 2, 3, and 4 signifying 1= I do it very well, 2 = I do it well, 3 = I do not do it well, 4 = I do not do it well at all.

Third, the students' writing test was scored by three raters independently. The test was constructed by Muschla (2006). The score based on the Rubric used for the analytic scoring of the writing sample by (Hasson, 2001) cited in (Hasson, 2005).

Statistical analysis of Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to estimate the correlation among those variables. To test predictions about reading habit and writing efficacy influenced writing achievement, this study used analysis using multiple regression. Reading habit was first regressed on writing achievement, and then four reading habit variables (reading attitude, frequency, books read, and reading accessed) regressed on writing achievement, next those four reading habit variables regressed on writing achievement variables (grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, fluency, and organization). Writing efficacy was second regressed on writing achievement. Then, five writing efficacy variables (in content, in design, in unity, in accuracy, and in punctuation) regressed with writing achievement. Last, those variables of writing efficacy regressed with those variables of writing achievement.

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