THE CORRELATION BETWEEN VOCABULARY MASTERY AND WRITING SKILL OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract

The purposes of this study are to find out the score of students' vocabulary mastery and writing descriptive text ability and also the correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and writing descriptive text ability among the seventh grade students in SMP N 3 Bantul Yogyakarta academic year 2016/2017.This study used descriptive and correlational analysis. The data collection technique used were two tests, multiple choices test to find out the students' score of vocabulary mastery and essay test to find out the score of students' ability in writing descriptive text and to find out the correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and writing descriptive text ability among the seventh grade students in SMP N 3 Bantul Yogyakarta in the academic year 2016/2017.The result of this study showed that students' mean in vocabulary mastery was 67.12 greater than the ideal mean 53.5. The mean of students' writing ability was 63.79 close to the ideal mean 70. Based on the result, it is shown that there is a positive and significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and writing descriptive text ability. It means that vocabulary mastery influences writing ability.

Key words: *vocabulary mastery, writing ability, descriptive text*

Introduction

It is widely known that language is an important tool for human in communication. It does not matter whether the form of the language is spoken or written. Mastering English includes the written and the spoken forms with the ability to master four major skills, namely listening, reading, speaking and writing. Writing is one of the four skills that should be mastered by the first grade students. In writing mastery, students have to acquire through writing practice.

There are many factors which influence the students' writing difficulties such as the background of knowledge of the students, background of the English teacher, low motivation in learning English, the English learning materials, and the other supported facilities. When students want have good in writing, such as in descriptive text, they are expected to be able to write sentences in descriptive correctly.

Based on the limited observation, the writers found out that many of students in Junior High School 3 Bantul still had limited vocabulary. As a result, they were difficult to communicate using English, whether orally or in written form (writing activity). They claimed they had difficulty to speak in English and to write texts. Based on the problems, the writer intended to reveal whether there is a correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and their writing competence.

Theoretical Review

Teaching and Learning of English as a second Language and Foreign language

According to Judd in Kennedy (1989:39), when English is studied as a foreign language, it means that English is studied as one among many foreign languages and servers little communicative function for students once they finish the actual course. There are some factors that influence the success of foreign language learning, i.e motivation, language aptitude and the amount of time spent in learning; the more language learners use language to communicate, the better he becomes at communicating.

Concerning English as a foreign language, Allen and Valleta (1972) state that the teacher is the key figure in the language course. The teacher sets the tone for the learning activities. All language teachers are fluent speakers of language they are teaching. A professional language teacher continually tries to improve their competence in the foreign language.

A teacher has an important role in the successful foreign language teaching learning. The teacher is the one who probable to establish the conditions and manipulate all factors, which can facilitate and promote the learning such as the activities, the materials, the method used, etc. The attitude of the language teacher influences the students' success. A positive attitude on the part of the teacher is essential to success.

Vocabulary

1. The Nature of Vocabulary

    Vocabulary means words that someone knows then use those (words) to communicate with others in a particular language. People can find these words on the dictionary of particular language. It is in line with the definition stated by Echols and Shadily (1990) that vocabulary as "a list of words." Renandya (2002: 255) proposes that vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, read and write. Pikulski and Templeton (2004: 1) states that vocabulary is "the sum of words used by, understood by, or at the command of a particular person or group." Therefore, vocabulary can be stated as a list or a series of words that is used to express the idea or in order meaning it is used for general communication. Considering its definition, vocabulary serves important aspect when the students want to share their ideas through written or spoken way.

2. Kinds of vocabulary

    There are two kinds of vocabulary according to Nation (2001: 24) in relation to the language skills of reading, listening, speaking and writing. They are receptive and productive or passive and active vocabulary. Receptive or passive vocabulary refers to the words that native speakers and foreign learners recognize and understand but hardly ever use, it is used passively in either listening or reading. Productive or active vocabulary is utilized actively either in speaking or writing.

3. Vocabulary size

    Cameron (2001: 75) says that vocabulary size is usually measured to the nearest thousand, and counts "word families". Furthermore, Waring and Nation (in Cameron 2001: 75) state that the size of the English lexicon has been estimated at 54,000 word families for the language as a whole, and 20,000 for a university graduate.

4. The Importance of Vocabulary

    Vocabulary is basic to communication. To express an idea or ask some information, a person must be able to produce lexical items to convey his/her

meanings. Cameron (2001: 72) believes that building a useful vocabulary is central to the learning of a foreign language at primary level. Vocabulary mastery is important in writing. Without enlarging their vocabulary, students cannot write successfully. Therefore, anyone who learned a language successfully must enlarge her or his vocabulary mastery.

5. Factors influencing in learning vocabulary

There are seven factors which influence students to learn vocabulary according to Thornbury:
a. Cognate and loan word
b. Pronunciation
c. Spelling
d. Length and complexity
e. Grammar
f. Meaning
g. Range, connotation, and idiomaticity

6. The Technique and Approaches in Learning Vocabulary

Gairns and Redman make a devision of the techniques and approaches to present a new vocabulary. First is traditional technique and approaches. It consists of visual and verbal technique. Second is student-centered learning. It consists of asking others, using dictionary, and contextual guesswork.

The concept of Writing Ability

1. The nature of writing

Writing is a skill how to put the ideas into written form. Brown points out writing as an activity which is complex since it involves many skills, such as deciding what to write, determining the best way to convey it, and determining the way to put the ideas into a paper as a text which are understandable for the readers to read.

2. The Stages of Writing

Writing is ongoing process of considering alternatives and making choices. The better writers understand the writing process, the better writer will write and the more they can enjoy writing. So, when writing is viewed as a process, it can be broken down into many stages. They are planning, drafting, editing, and final draft (Harmer, 2004).

3. The Purpose of Writing

According to Grenville (2001), writing has some purposes. First, writing to entertain. It is a writing that may engage the readers' feeling through its plot or the emotion provided in the writing. Second, writing to inform which is intended to tell readers about something. Third, writing to persuade. It means the writing is aimed to convince the readers of something through providing evidence.

4. Features of Good Writing

Hairston divided features of a good writing into six characteristics. There are significant, clear, unified and well organized, economical, adequately developed, and grammatically acceptable.

5. Descriptive writing
   a. Definition of descriptive writing

Descriptive writing or called as description may be considered as writing which use is to describe the appearance of persons, animals, things, or other physical items as well as object whose features are concrete and touchable.

Oshima and Hague assert, "Descriptive writing appeals to the senses, so it tells how something looks, feels, smells, tastes, and sounds.

b. Kinds of descriptive writing

Heffernan and Lincoln divided descriptive writing into three forms. There are informative descriptions, analytical descriptions, and evocative description.

c. Structure of descriptive writing

Oshima and Hague(1994) stated that the basic structure of descriptive writing consists of some parts. There are topic sentences that state the main idea of paragraph, supporting sentence develop and explain the topic sentence by giving reasons and examples, concluding sentence that gives signals the end of paragraph and leaves the reader with important point to remember.

Method

This research consists of one independent variable and one dependent variable. To find out and get the empirical evidence of the relationship between two variables covering an independent variable and a dependent variable, the writers used correlation analysis using *SPSS 16.0* program. Furthermore, to measure the students' score of vocabulary mastery of the students, the writers used multiple choices test that covered 40 test items. For scoring the test, the total of students' correct answers were multiplied by 100 and divided by 4. Besides, to measure the students' achievement in writing descriptive text, the writers used essay test. A descriptive text in Bahasa was provided. Then, students were asked to paraphrase it into English form. For scoring the essay test, the writers categorized into four items: 30 on content, 30 on organization, 20 on vocabulary, and 20 for quality. Thus, if the students' essay have been fulfilled the four items, they will get score of 100.

Findings and Discussion

Vocabulary Mastery and Writing Ability Achievement

There are 56 participants in this test, but two students did not join one test. The vocabulary test consists of 40 items of multiple choices and it must be finished in 90 minutes. The writing test consists of an essay text in Bahasa in which the students were asked to translate it into English. Below is the table presenting the descriptive statistics of the scores.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
X	54	12.50	95.00	67.1296	17.76688
Y	54	45.00	95.00	63.7963	11.15648
Valid N (listwise)	52				

From the analysis, the result shown that the maximum score of vocabulary test was 95, the minimum score of vocabulary test was 12.5, the mean score of students' vocabulary mastery was 67.12 and the SD score was 17.76. For the writing essay, it is shown that the students' maximum score was 95, the minimum score was 45, the mean score was 63.79 and the SD score was 11.15.

The Correlation between Students' Vocabulary Mastery and Students' Writing Descriptive Text Ability

On the correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and their writing skill, table 2 shows the result.

Table 2. Correlations

		X	Y
X	Pearson Correlation	1	.344*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.013
	N	54	52
Y	Pearson Correlation	.344*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	
	N	52	54

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

Based on table 2, the value of rxy = 0.344 with p value = 0.013. It means that there is a positive and significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and writing ability.

Discussion

The ability to write especially in descriptive text is well influenced by internal and external factor. Based on the results of this study, the writers can conclude that there are significant correlations between vocabulary mastery and writing descriptive text ability. Writing involves more than just producing words and sentences. To be able to produce a piece of writing in descriptive text, students should be able to write a connected series of words and sentences which are grammatically and logically linked, so that the purpose they have in their mind will suit the intended readers. Based on the research findings above, the writers concluded that this research findings supports the theories that vocabulary relate the writing ability in descriptive text. In this case, the mastery of vocabularyr in descriptive text correlate with writing descriptive text, because writing descriptive text needs a good vocabulary mastery. The correlation between students' mastery of vocabulary and their achievement in writing descriptive text among the seventh grade students of SMP N 3 Bantul in the academic year 2016/2017 was 0.344 (positive and significant).

Conclusion

The writers concluded that the score of vocabulary mastery among the seventh grade students of SMP N 3 Bantul Yogyakarta was high. The empirical mean of vocabulary mastery was 67.12, while the ideal mean was 53.5. The level of students' achievement of the writing ability among the seventh grade students of SMP N 3 Bantul Yogyakarta was high. The empirical mean of writing ability was 63.79, while the ideal mean was 70. From the result of correlation coefficient, there was a correlation between vocabulary mastery and writing ability. The positive correlation means that if students can master vocabulary in descriptive text well, they will be able to make a good writing descriptive text P value = 0.013 < 0.005, it means that there is a significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and writing ability. From the research findings above, it is clear that vocabulary mastery gives a significant

contributing to writing ability in descriptive text. The students who want to write well, they should have a good mastery of vocabulary. It can be said that vocabulary one of the most important aspects in learning writing. Therefore, the students should expand their vocabulary, in order that they can create a good writing because students cannot write well if they fail to develop their idea because of limited vocabulary.

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