




The correlation of English students' reading habits and their writing ability

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ABSTRACT

While writing is critical in education, it is a difficult skill to master. Reading is one of the many factors that affect writing. Numerous studies have established a link between reading and writing. With that assumption, this study will examine the relationship between English reading habits and writing ability among students enrolled in the Advanced Writing Course at the English Language Education Study Program of Lambung Mangkurat University. This study adopted a quantitative approach and a correlational design, with students from batch 2018 as the research population. Using a simple random sampling technique, 50 students were randomly selected to serve as samples. A questionnaire was used to ascertain the students' reading habits, whereas a test was used to ascertain their writing abilities. Pearson Product-Moment Coefficient Correlation was then used to determine the correlation between the variables. The result showed that the correlation coefficient was 0.211 and the significance value was 0.141, indicating that H_0 is acceptable because the sig. value was ≥ 0.05 . Therefore, there is a weak and negative correlation between students' reading habits and their writing ability. This occurred because many students with strong reading habits also have weak writing abilities, implying that the correlation between the two variables is weak. It is suggested that students develop a reading habit by beginning with small steps such as selecting a short, easy-to-read book, setting small goals, making reading enjoyable, making reading friends, and remaining consistent.

KEYWORDS

Correlation; reading habits; writing ability

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Introduction

Among English skills, writing is regarded as one of the important language skills because it is used widely in the educational field. Walsh in Klimova & F. (2013) stated that college students did many of professional communication through writing such as proposals, reports, e-mails, and etc. Students who are unable to compose good writing will have difficulties in their college life. Because of that, improving writing skills is very crucial for college students.

Besides the importance of writing, it is also considered as a difficult skill to master because of its complexity. It requires an ability to invent ideas and transfer it onto a sheet of paper in an understandable way for the readers (Brown, 2007). The ideas to write can derived from a wide range of sources and experiences, and one of them is from reading activities because students usually discover new information and knowledge from it. By doing a lot of reading activities, the students would gain more information which contributes to finding new ideas.

Reading activity which is done regularly and continuously is called reading habits (Santoso & A., 2014). Having a good reading habit will give many benefits to students and one of them is to their writing ability. Krashen in Maula (2015) stated that reading contributes to the knowledge of writing's language, grammar, vocabulary, and style of the discourse which the writer used. It will improve the writing style which is acceptable for schools, business, and scientific community. In other words, building reading habits is very good for students because it can help them to sharpen their writing ability.

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The connections between reading and writing have been discussed in many studies. Li (2015) revealed that there is a connection between reading and writing because the results of his study found that the participants of his study made good journal writing after they read material about journals. Moran & Billen (2014) explained that because of their common theoretical foundations and cognitive processes, reading and writing are linked to each other. The knowledge of phonemic, orthographic, semantic, and syntactic are needed to know to become a better reader and writer. Furthermore, both also have the same fundamental notion of communication. While writing is the act of sending information, reading is the act of receiving information. However, Farahzad & Emam (2010) said that there are some variables such as the learners' cognitive, social and emotional development that need to be considered in measuring the relationship between reading and writing. They stated that it needs a broad perspective because the learners develop at their own pace as a result of their interactions with the real world.

In addition, there are previous studies similar to this study which discussed the relationship between reading and writing skill. Some of them are from the work of (Kartal, 2017; Maula, 2015; Nazali & Mulyana, 2020; Nurizal et al., 2018). In Maula's, Kartal's, and Nazali & Mulyana's studies, the objectives were to explain the relationship between students' reading habit and their capacity to write narrative texts. The result of Maula's and Kartal's studies showed that between the variables, there is a high and significant correlation, while Nazali & Mulyana's result showed a low and no significant correlation. Meanwhile, Ardinda & Nurizal's study was aimed to investigate the students' reading habit of novels relationship with their recount text writing ability. The result showed that the correlation is low and not significant.

In comparison to the previous studies, this study has different ways in collecting the data. Although the instruments between them were the same, there was a slight difference in the scoring system for reading habit questionnaires and in writing test instructions. Furthermore, while most of the previous studies used high school students as the subject, in this study, the subjects were university students who have taken Advanced Writing Course in English Language Education Study Program. It can be inferred that the students have passed the previous writing course and had done many exercises of writing which, consequently, makes them have acquired a wide range of knowledge about writing and have improved their writing skill. Therefore, there is a considerable difference in the subjects' writing skill mastery level. Since there are some aspects that differ from this study and the previous studies, it may lead to a different result from the previous studies.

Based on the information above, this study was important to conduct because the outcome of this study would be beneficial and give valuable information about the reading- writing relationship. With the assumption that there is a correlation between the two that exists, therefore, the researcher is interested in investigating the correlation between the English Language Education Students' reading habits and their writing ability.

Furthermore, the Pearson Product-Moment Coefficient Correlation is used to test and prove the following hypothesis:

1. H₀: There is no significant correlation between the variables.
2. H_a: There is a significant correlation between the variables.

Literature review

Reading habits

Sangkaeo (1999) stated that reading habit is a behavior that expresses an individual's preference for reading that occurs on a regular basis in terms of leisure reading method, types of reading, and reading interests. Meanwhile, Santoso & A (2014) stated that reading habit is someone's repeated activity of reading which is done regularly and continuously. Zwiers (2004) added that reading habit is a natural process which involved in extracting a text's meaning. Therefore, it can be summarized that reading habit is an activity of reading in which the reader is doing it regularly and automatically because they have been doing it repeatedly in the past so it became their second nature in the present.

Reading habits indicators

Gaona & C (2011) in his study proposed some indicators in order to find his participants' reading habits behavior. The first indicator is reading frequency. Gaona explained that it is used to assess the reading level of students in their spare time. The second is the amount of books read. It measures how many books read that the students have read since they become the high school students. The third is academic reading. It means the amount of time that students expend their time in reading academic books particularly for the subjects which the students are specialist at. The fourth is non-academic reading. It means the time spent doing non-academic books reading such as novel by the students. The fifth is motivation from family environments. It is the motivation in the form of

book that the family purchases depending on the students' interest in order to motivate them. The sixth is motivation from academic environment. It is the motivation in the form of teacher report of their students' literary reading in the classroom. In conclusion, the presence of an individual's behaviour of reading habits can be determined through indicators, which are reading frequency, the amount of books read, academic reading, non-academic reading, motivation from family environments, and motivation from academic environments. Therefore, by knowing the reading habits' indicators, it hopefully will help the readers in building the reading habits.

Writing ability

Brown (2001) defined writing as thinking, drafting, and revising a written products in which require advanced knowledge of how to generate ideas, arrange them in a logical manner, review the text for clarity, edit the language for proper grammar, and produce a final work. Spratt et al (2005) added that writing is an activity to express one's ideas by using letters, terms, clauses, phrases in a sequence of connected sentences. In terms of ability, (Ekarista, 2018) stated that writing ability is someone's capacity to create a message composed of words, into sentence, into text, into coherent so that the readers can comprehend the meaning. Based on the definitions above, it infers that writing ability is an ability to express thoughts and ideas in organized way through the form of writing. It requires advanced knowledge to make a good writing in which the message and the content are clear and understandable for readers.

Reading-writing connections

The relationship between reading and writing skill is quite close. Reading text is one of the sources in getting ideas for writing. Li (2015) revealed that there is connection between reading and writing because the results of his study found that the participants of his study made good journal writing after they read material about journals. Another expert, Harmer (1998) stated that reading texts allows students to learn language skills such as grammar, vocabulary, and how to write a sentence, a paragraph, and a piece of text. Harl in Linuwih et al (2020) added that the writing ability can be gained through reading habit activity and it would improve spontaneously as a result of what the students read. In conclusion, reading influences writing and otherwise. The experts have found that there is a connection that exists between the two. Through reading, students can understand and get knowledge about how the words and sentences put in texts which contributes to their writing ability. Moreover, writing needs ideas which can get by reading texts. Because of that reasons, reading is very essential in developing writing ability.

Methods

The type of this research is correlational and the approach that is used is quantitative. The data of the research were quantitative variables; they are reading habits of the students and their writing ability. In calculating the correlation between the variables, the Pearson Product-Moment Coefficient Correlation is applied.

The population of the research was the batch of 2018 students of Lambung Mangkurat University English language Education Study Program who have taken the Advanced Writing course. Among them, 50 students were taken randomly as the samples by using simple random sampling technique. Meanwhile, for data collection, two instruments were used which are a questionnaire and a test.

There are 30 items of closed questionnaires designed by the researcher in measuring the student's reading habit score. The indicators were taken based on Gaona & C. (2011). They are: reading frequency, amount of books read, academic reading, non-academic reading, motivation from family environments, and motivation from academic environments. To determine each student's score, the formula below is used.

Meanwhile, in testing the student's writing ability, a written test was used. The task that is given to the students was to write a descriptive text about their idol figure. There is a scoring rubric and the total score of students' writing ability calculated by using the following formula.

$$M = \frac{x}{N} \times 100$$

In order to make the data interpretation easier, the researcher categorized the student's reading habit score as in the following table.

Table 1. Classification of Reading Habits' Score

Classification	Score
Very good	81 - 100
Good	61 - 80
Fair	41 - 60
Bad	21 - 40
Very bad	0 - 20

(Adapted from *Mu'awana, 2018*)

$$M = \frac{C + O + G + V + M}{20} \times 100$$

To classify the student's writing ability, the researcher used table classification as below.

Table 2. Classification of writing ability score

Grade	Range
Excellent	81 - 100
Good	61 - 80
Mediocre	41 - 60
Poor	21 - 40
Very Poor	0 - 20

(Adapted from *Chapman et al. (1986)*)

The validations of both instruments used expert judgement. A lecturer of Lambung Mangkurat University was asked to be the expert because of his area of expertise was in reading and writing skill which relate to the instruments which would be evaluated. The expert was evaluated and assessed each instrument indicator to validate the instrument, and he concluded that both instruments were valid and proper to use.

Meanwhile, in measuring the questionnaire's reliability, the internal consistency by using SPSS analysis based on Cronbach Alpha's theory is used. The result is displayed in the table below.

Table 3. Questionnaire's reliability

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.839	.838	30

Table 3 shows that the standardized items were 0.838 and the Cronbach's Alpha was 0.839. The Alpha value which ranges between 0.8 - 0.9 is considered a good level (George & Mallery, 1995). It means that all items of the questionnaire are reliable and consistently have strong reliability. Therefore, it concluded that the reading habit's questionnaire was reliable and showed a high degree of reliability.

Additionally, the Interrater Reliability was applied in order to measure the reliability of the test. Two English teachers were asked to be the raters and they used the same scoring rubric to assess the same number of students. Then, the researcher used SPSS analysis based on Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC) to determine the reliability of the test. The result is displayed in the table below.

Table 4. Questionnaire's reliability

	Interclass Correlation	95% Confidence Interval	
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Single Measures	.702	.528	.819
Average Measures	.825	.691	.901

In table 4, the ICC value can be seen in the column of average measures which is 0.825. The value of ICC can be seen in the column of average measures which is 0.825. If the ICC value is between 0,75 and 0,9, it implies that the data is reliable (Koo & Li, 2016). Therefore, it concluded that the writing test is reliable and has good reliability.

Results

Students' reading habits

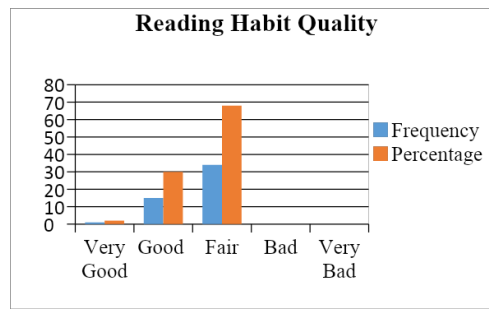


Figure 1. Students' Reading Habits Quality

Figure 1 shows the reading habits' quality of the students. There were 15 students (30%) classified in fair level, 34 students (68%) classified in good level, 1 student (2%) classified in very good level, and no student classified bad or very bad level. The average of the students' reading habit score was 64,5 which means the level of reading habit's students were classified in good level.

Students' writing ability

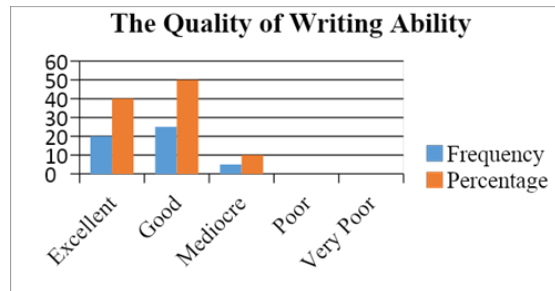


Figure 2. Quality of students' writing ability according to Rater 1

There was 1 student (2%) classified in mediocre level, 35 students (70%) classified in good level, 14 students (28%) classified in excellent level, and no students were classified in either poor or very poor level. The average of the students' writing score according to Rater 1 was 77.8 which means the level of writing ability students were classified in good level.

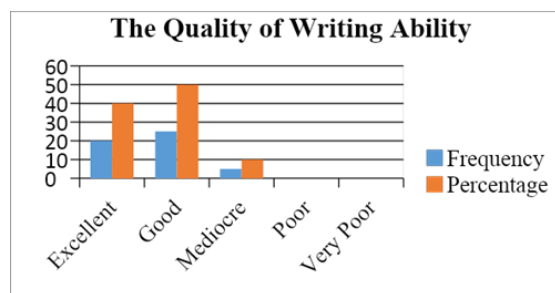


Figure 3. Students' writing ability according to Rater 2

Figure 3 presents the quality of the student's writing ability according to Rater 2. There were 5 students (10%) classified in mediocre level, 25 students (50%) classified in good level, 20 students (40%) classified in excellent level, and no students were classified in either poor or very poor level. The average of the students' writing score according to Rater 2 was 78,3 which means the level of writing ability students were classified at a good level. After getting the student's writing ability data from both raters, the average score is computed. The result is displayed in the table below.

Table 5. The average scores of the students' writing ability according to both raters

Average Score		Average Scores from Both Raters	Category
Rater 1	Rater 2		
77,8	78,3	78	Good

Table 5 presents the average student's score on the writing test according to both raters. The average of the students' writing score according to both raters was 78 which means the level of writing ability students were classified at a good level.

Correlation between variables

Prior to determining the variables', the test of normality and linearity were applied. The test of normality is a test for determining a normal data's distribution (Muawanah, 2014). The Shapiro-Wilk test in SPSS is used to analyze the data. The value of significance that greater than 0.05 means the data's distribution is normal, and the value of significance that less than 0.05 means abnormal data's distribution. The result is displayed in the table below.

Table 6. Normality test of the data

	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Reading Habit Score	.985	50	.752
Writing Ability Score	.962	50	.104

Table 6 shows that the significance's value of reading habit and writing ability score were 0.752 and 0.104 consecutively. The result informs that the significance's values of both variables are greater than 0.05. Therefore, the data's distributions of both variables are concluded normal.

Meanwhile, the linearity test is a test for finding out the relation between the variables (Muawanah, 2014). The researcher analyzed it in SPSS by using ANOVA. The variables have linearity if the significance's value greater than 0.05, and have no linearity if the significance's value less than 0.05. The result is displayed in the table below.

Table 7. Linearity test of the data

ANOVA TABLE			
			Sig.
Reading Habits	Between	(Combined)	.476
Score*Writing	Groups	Linearity	.150
Ability Score		Deviation from linearity	.529

Table 7 informs the significance's value of the variables which is seen from the column of "deviation from linearity", which is 0.529. The result showed that the significance's value of the variables is greater than 0.05 which concludes that there is a relation between the variables, and the variables are linear.

After that, in finding out the correlation between the two variables, the Pearson Product-Moment Coefficient Correlation is applied in SPSS application. The result is displayed in the table below.

Table 8. Pearson Product-Moment Coefficient correlation

		Reading Habits	Writing Ability
Reading Habit	Pearson Correlation	1	-.211
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.141
	N	50	50
Writing Ability	Pearson Correlation	-.211	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.141	
	N	50	50

Table 8 shows that the value of correlation (r) between the variables was 0.211 inferring that there is a low and negative correlation between the variables. "A negative correlation means high scores on one variable are associated with low scores on the other variable, and low scores on one variable are associated with high scores on the other" (Fraenkel et al., 2009). The information of correlation's range is shown in the table below.

Table 9. Range of Pearson Product-Moment correlation

Pearson Product-Moment	Correlation Information
0.00-0.20	Very Low
0.21-0.40	Low
0.41-0.70	Moderate
0.71-0.90	High
0.91-1.00	Very High

(Sudjono, 2004)

Discussion

In the reading habit questionnaire, there are 30 questions which are divided into 6 indicators which are reading frequency, number of books read, academic reading, non-academic reading, motivation from family environments, and motivation from academic environments.

The first indicator, reading frequency, is the students reading level in their free time. There were 19,2% of students who always take their time to read various English texts and 30% of students who often do the same. Meanwhile, there were 20% of students who rarely read in their free time and even there were 4,4% of students who never read at all. Additionally, the rest of the students (26,4%) were just doing the activity sometimes.

The second indicator is the number of books the students read. There were 26,4% and 25,6% students who expressed always and often consecutively. It means that they were excited about reading books as much as they could. On the other hand, there were 16,4% students who expressed seldom and even there were 7,2% students who stated never. It means they are not interested in reading a book. In addition, the rest of the students (24,4%) were stated sometimes.

The third indicator is academic reading. There were only 3,2% of students who always took their time reading academic books, and 22,8% of students quite often read academic books. On the other hand, there were 26,4% of students who rarely read academic books and 7,2% of students who never read their academic book at all. Furthermore, most of the students (40,4%) only read it sometimes.

The fourth indicator is non-academic reading. There were 20,8% and 29,2% of students who expressed always and often consecutively. It means that they like and enjoy reading activities such as reading novels, magazines, etc. Meanwhile, there were 15,2% of students who rarely spend their time reading non-academic books, and even there were 6,8% of students who don't like the activity at all. In addition, the rest of the students (28%) were only reading non-academic books sometimes.

The fifth indicator is the motivation from the family environment. It is the motivation given by the students' family to increase their interest in reading activity. There were 10% of the students who stated always and 16% of the students who stated often in the questionnaire. It means that their family encouraged and supported them in doing reading activity. On the contrary, the students' percentage who expressed seldom and never were 25,6% and 18,4% consecutively. It means that their family environment was not paying too much attention to their reading. Furthermore, the rest of the students (30%) were stated sometimes.

The last indicator is the motivation from the academic environment. It is the motivation which comes from the students' school, their teacher, and the environment. Most of the students (36%) felt that they often get the motivation, and also 18,4% of the students who always feel motivated from the academic environment. On the other hand, there were 13,6% of the students who felt that they rarely got the motivation, and 6,4% of the students even never got it. In addition, the rest of the students (25,6%) were sometimes motivated.

From the six indicators, it can be informed that there are always students who express seldom and never. It indicates that they have low interest in reading books. Besides, most of the students enjoy reading non-academic books such as novels and magazines rather than academic books. Additionally, most of the students feel that the family and academic environment are not giving enough motivation for them. Since one of the factors that influence reading habit is motivation; therefore, it would be difficult for students to build their reading habit. This is in line with Tampubolon & P. (1990); he said that building a habit requires a longer time because motivation and interest have rule in it.

On the other hand, in the writing test, there are also aspects which are used to assess the students' score. According to both raters, the aspect in which the students get the highest average score is the content with average score of 3.45 out of 4. It indicates that most of the students are very knowledgeable about the topic in the test and are able to provide proper content that is related to the topic given. On the contrary, the aspect in which the students get the lowest average score is the grammar with average score of 2.9 out of 4. It indicates that most students have problems in the present tense usage and subject-verb agreement.

Furthermore, in testing the hypothesis, H₀ is accepted if the significance value is greater than 0.05 and H_a is accepted if the significance value is less than 0.05. Based on the result of correlation coefficient, the significance value is 0.141 which infers that the H₀ is proved while the H_a is denied. Therefore, the correlation between students' reading habit and their writing ability has no significant correlation.

The result is relevant with the result of (Nazali & Mulyana, 2020; Nurizal et al., 2018) studies. Both studies

resulted in a low and no significant correlation between the variables. On the contrary, this result is contradicted with (Kartal, 2017; Maula, 2015) studies. Both found that there is a positive and significant correlation between the variables. Compared to them, this study has quite similar scores in reading habits with them both. In Maula's study, the score is 61, and in Kartal's is 68.8, while in this study it is 64.5. Likewise, the writing score is also quite similar. Both Maula's and Kartal's have scores of 72.4 and 79.3 consecutively, while this study has scores of 78.

Although many studies and experts have shown that there is a connection between reading and writing, this study showed the opposite result. This happened because there are many students with good reading habits score, have low scores in writing ability, and vice versa, implying the correlation between the two variables is weak and indicates negative correlation which is in line with (Fraenkel et al., 2009). On top of that, in knowing how much of the reading habits' influence towards the students' writing ability, the determination coefficient (R) formula is used. The formula can be seen below.

$$R = r^2 \times 100\%$$

The result of the R is 4.4%. It informs that the reading habits' influence towards the students' writing ability is only 4.4%. This is a very small number which indicates that the influence is very weak. There are 95.6% of other factors which give more impact to the students' writing ability. This statistic is proven in the data showing that the student who got the lowest score in reading habit (42.7) still got a pretty high score in the writing test (80). Meanwhile, the student who got the highest score in reading habit (85.3) only got 63 in their writing score, which is the lowest score. In short, the students' reading habits only have little influence on their writing ability.

However, there are some students who still got high scores in both reading habits and writing ability. Most of the students, who got more than 70 in reading habit, got a pretty high score in writing ability. It indicates that maybe there are some reading habits that influence their writing ability. This is in line with Harl in (Linuwih et al., 2020); he stated that the writing ability can be gained through reading habit activity and it would improve spontaneously as a result of what the students read.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there is a low and negative correlation between students' reading habits and their writing ability of the students who have taken advanced writing course of Lambung Mangkurat University English Language Education Study Program. It suggested that the students need to improve their reading habit by starting with small steps such as picking a short easy-to-read book, setting small goals, making it enjoyable, finding reading friends, and being consistent.

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