Biormatika :
Jurnal ilmiah fakultas keguruan dan ilmu pendidikan
http://ejournal.unsub.ac.id/index.php/FKIP/

The Correlation between EFL Students' Attitudes towards Their Writing Ability (A Case Study at First Grade of One Senior High School in Bandung)

Astri Dwi Floranti[1], Hanif Nurcholish Adiantika[2]
STKIP Invada Cirebon[1], Universitas Muhammadiyah Cirebon[2]
astri.floranti@gmail.com[1], hanifadiantika@gmail.com[2]

Info Artikel

_____

Abstract

_____

This study aims at examining the relationship between students' attitude towards their writing ability. This study employed quantitative study by using Pearson-product correlation. The samples were randomly selected 35 students out of the total population 70 students in one senior high school in Bandung. The Data were obtained through questionnaire with regard to attitude and writing proficiency which are appropriate with several criteria of each writing element to scrutinize the correlation between students' attitude and writing skill ability. The findings indicate that attitude has moderate correlation (.456) with students' writing ability. In other words, it is obvious that attitudes are very essential for students to increase their writing ability. The English teachers are suggested to figure out the prominence of attitudes to their students for it has been found that attitudes is able to significantly contribute to the students' writing ability.
Keywords: **Correlation, EFL students, attitude, writing ability**

INTRODUCTION

Writing is commonly deemed as a challenging skill and complex skill to be mastered by the students in EFL context (Graham, Harris, & Mason, 2005). Inside the circumstance of English in Indonesia where it is taught as a foreign language, writing skill is considered the most fundamental skills the students should master. However, most students delineate that the writing skill is very complex as its complexity will significantly affect their writing output. Therefore, it is prominent to comprehensively teach writing skill in order to shape students' ability to write properly and appropriately.

There are many features in writing that the students should grasp since, according to Wall (1981, p. 53), it is commonly associated with intrinsically sophisticated elements covering assortment of writing mechanics and grammar, knowledge possession of issue, awareness of writing style trend, and any

other related factors in writing skill. In other words, the coverage of writing involves the mixture of the mechanics of writing along with grammar, knowledge of topic being written, current trend of writing style, so on and so forth.

Among the centers of writing complexity, writing creates its own tendency when the readers are physically missing and in some cases the authors remain unknown. Writing is denied of certain advantages for example composing straight quotations, cooperating and obtaining direct response from the readers, attaining an in-depth and consistent information on the readers' contextual acquaintance through gestures and any other paralinguistic elements (Pilus, 1993). The aforementioned shortcomings should be viewed and considered as crucial factors in English teaching in a foreign language context in general and writing skill in particular.

Writing is defined as a process where the writers discover point of views and ideas and subsequently materialize them in a visible and actual form (Raimes, 2003; Richard & Renandya, 2003; Moore-Hart, 2010). Therefore, in order to evade misunderstanding for both native and non-native speakers/writers, it is very fundamental for the writers to equalize a set of issues covered in writing skill particularly mechanics and grammar, content, audience, purpose, spelling, punctuation, and vocabulary. Furthermore, it reassures the process of thinking as well as learning, stimulates interaction, and materializes ideas and thoughts into concrete form for consideration. Non-native speakers consider writing as complicated skill since they are expected to generate written outputs that represent the possession the elements and issues in writing skill in English as a second or foreign language as aforementioned (Abu-Rass, 2001).

In relation to the aforementioned explanation, one of the essential affective factors that determine the improvement of student's learning achievement is attitudes. The issue of L2 students'/learners attitude, motivation, and perception particularly in the context of L2 learning has been circulating for years (e.g., Gardner, 1983; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Nunan, 1988; O'Neil, 1991). According to Oxford and Shearin (1994, p. 12) attitude plays an integral role in determining students' participation in L2 learning and demonstrating students' achievement in any task given in this case writing skill.

Inside the circumstance of writing, attitude/motivation plays a fundamental role as it will lead to inspiring significances towards the process of writing (Bruning & Horn, 2000). Furthermore, Bruning & Horn (2000) also proclaim that stimulating significances have momentous result upon process and product particularly in writing which is deemed as the complex skill to be mastered.

Ames (1992) examined classroom structures and revealed genuine assignments to be an essential of a motivated, mastery-oriented structure. Writing will tend to make students more enthusiastic and motivated when it is employed as an instrument for specific objectives (e.g., intellectual and/or social advance) instead of general ones (Cleary, 1991; Potter, McCormick, & Busching, 2001). Writing involves a set of diverse cognitive procedures that the students must carry out to succeed. The aforementioned procedures cover retrieval, goal setting, planning, problem solving, and evaluation (Flower & Hayes, 1981). The amount and intricacy of the aforementioned procedures indicate the students' high level motivation.

The study of attitude has gained extensive consideration recently in both the first and second language researchers

and scholars. Many scholars and researchers, on the attitude issue, have inferred that students' attitude is deemed as a vital part in teaching and learning process. Thus, it should be considered as an integral aspect in the pedagogy of foreign/second language learning. Gardner (1985) asserts that attitudes in the context of language learning is also believed and deemed as motivation components. In accordance with Gardner (1985, p. 10), motivation is defined as an assortment of effort combined with a desire to achieve the language objective along with encouraging attitudes towards language learning.

Wenden (1991) depicts attitude into three components: Firstly, attitudes are highly associated with cognitive component. This may comprise principles or insights regarding the substances or circumstances linked to the attitude. Secondly, attitudes possess an evaluative component. In other words, it is referred that the substances and circumstances correlated may create preferences of like or dislike. Thirdly, attitudes are referred to behavioral component. It can also be inferred that there is a tendency of certain attitudes to encourage learners/students to implement specific learning behaviors.

Concerning the inevitable relationship between motivation/attitude and success in L2 learning, Dornyei (1998) emphasizes that motivation/attitude offers the major stimulus to carry out an English teaching where it is taught as a second/ foreign language and subsequently to withstand the conservative and monotonous teaching and learning process over and over again. Deprived of adequate motivation/attitude, even the students with the most outstanding capabilities are unable to undertake long standing goal and neither are suitable programs and decent lessons sufficient to confirm students' accomplishment. Conversely, adequate motivation can construct substantial capacity and learning circumstance (p. 117).

Therefore, this study intends to investigate the correlation between students' attitude and writing ability. The result of this study will be beneficial for both students and teachers. By knowing if students' attitudes and writing ability are correlated significantly, it is assumed that if the students have positive attitudes, the writing ability will be potentially high. But, oppositely, if the students have negative attitudes, the writing ability will be potentially low.

In accordance with the purpose of the study, this study is aimed at searching answers to the following question: Are students' attitudes and writing ability correlated significantly?

The significances of the present study are portrayed into two major ways. *Theoretically,* the study is hoped to support the existing theory on the same area. *Practically,* the findings of the study are expected to be useful for English teachers concerning how to encourage students to have positive attitudes towards writing ability.

METHODS
Research Design

This study was characterized as a quantitative study. It was based on definition of co-relational research design from Borg and Gall (1993: 112, as cited by Latief, 2011) that a correlation is the measurement of the co-relationship between two or more variables using co-relational statistic to investigate the precise degree of their relationship. This research was held in one of Senior High School in Bandung, West Java. The design can be portrayed as follow:

$T1 \longrightarrow T2$

Note:

T1 refers to students' attitudes (as independent variable) measured by questionnaire
T2 refers to writing ability (as dependent variable) measured by writing test of recount text.

Two meetings were arranged to obtain the data in the present study. In the first meeting, the students were given questionnaire (T1) to seek out the students' attitude in writing skill. Subsequently, in the second meeting, the writing test of recount text (T2) was carried out to measure the students' writing skill. Consequently, the data obtained from the questionnaires (T1) were correlated with the data attained from the writing test of recount text (T2).

Population and Sample

The population belonged to the first grade of one senior high school in Bandung, West Java. There were two classes of the first grade of MA with the total population of students is 70 students. The numbers of the students in each class are approximately 35 students.

Based on the population, the sampling was carried out by simple probability sampling through lottery. The researcher had committed to conduct the sample by initiating simple random where each individual inside the population had an opportunity to be a sample of the research. Then, simple probability sampling generated the concrete result where X-A class which consisted of 35 students, had been selected as the population and sample. It became manifestation according to consideration that entire class possessed the identical probability to be selected. It also had a fundamental purpose to avoid the subjectivity that might occur in the study.

Instrumentation and Material

In order to collect the required data, two instruments were employed in the present study. They are:

Writing Test

Writing test ability is initiated to gain the data of students' writing ability. In writing test ability, recount text was chosen as the genre of writing test. The writing test titles consisted of four tentative themes belong to the recount text. The four tentative themes
were visiting tourism place, at the beach, going to the zoo, and holiday.

Students' scoring system of writing ability was employed in order to judge the validity of the test. This scoring system is very fundamental to represent five elements of writing skill that should be mastered by the students. They are considered as content, organization, language use, vocabulary, and mechanic. There are several criteria of each writing element which are modified by Heaton (1991).

Questionnaire

Questionnaire of attitude was administered to obtain the information about students' attitude toward language learning. The questionnaire delivered to the students was adapted from "Attitude Questionnaire" proposed and developed by Setiyadi (2006) designed to examine students' attitude toward English language.

A set of questionnaires were administered in order to scrutinize the students' attitude in English learning in general and writing skill in particular. The questionnaires consisted of 28 items. Each item had a numerical value according to Likert scale, for example:

4 = strongly agree
3 = agree
2 = disagree

1 = strongly disagree

Data Collecting Procedures:
There were several sequential procedures to gather the data required. The procedures were carried out as follow:

1. Distributing the Questionnaire
   This procedure was conducted in the very first meeting. Questionnaires were administered in order to examine the students' attitude toward English language.

2. Conducting Writing Ability Test
   Students were given a test in order to measure their writing ability. The test consisted of four tentative themes belong to the recount text.

3. Analyzing the Data
   The results of writing test as the manifestation and the concrete evidence belongs to students' writing ability and the questionnaires have been analyzed by using Pearson Product Moment Correlation formula as proposed by Hatch and Farhady (1982: 198):

$$r_{xy} = \frac{N(\sum XY) - (\sum X)(\sum Y)}{\sqrt{[N\sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2][N\sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}}$$

   The data were manually calculated to scrutinize whether there is correlation between those two variables or not.

4. Testing Hypothesis
   In order to infer a possible correlation between students' attitude and students' writing ability, the criterion of hypothesis acceptance was utilized. To decide whether the first hypothesis

is accepted or rejected, the following criteria for acceptance:

$$H_0 = r_{value} < r_{table}$$
$$H_1 = r_{value} > r_{table}$$

Notes:

H_0 : There is no correlation between students' attitude and students' writing ability. If r_{value} is lower than r_{table}, it means that the hypothesis is acceptable.

H_1 : There is a significant correlation between students' attitude and students' writing ability. If r_{value} is higher than r_{table}, it means that the hypothesis is acceptable.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Findings

Two meetings were initiated to conduct this study. The first meeting was held on January 3th, 2020. In the first meeting, the questionnaires-based students' attitude towards English was distributed. Subsequently, at the second meeting, students' writing ability test was done on January 5th, 2020. After the data collected, they were quantitatively analyzed by using manual computation through Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The computation using Pearson Product Moment Correlation is indicated as follow:

$$\frac{N(\sum XY) - (\sum X)(\sum Y)}{\sqrt{[N\sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2][N\sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}}$$

$$r_{xy} = \frac{35(6157.56) - (2369)(90,57)}{\sqrt{[35\,(165643) - (2369)^2][35\,(235.0449) - (90.57)^2]}}$$

$$r_{xy} = \frac{215515 - 214560}{\sqrt{[5797505 - 5612161][8226.572 - 8202.925]}}$$

$$r_{xy} = \frac{954,27}{\sqrt{[185344][23.6466]}}$$

$$r_{xy} = \frac{954.27}{\sqrt{4382755}}$$

$$r_{xy} = \frac{954.27}{2093.5}$$

$$r_{xy} = 0.45582$$

$$r_{xy} = 0.456$$

Based on the aforementioned data analysis by using Pearson Product Moment Correlation, the findings reveal that the value of two-tailed significance correlation (r_{value}) between attitudes and writing ability is 0.456. Therefore, based on reliability emphasized by Setiyadi (2006), the correlation between those variables is considered *moderate.*

Discussion

The findings of the study are similar with the study conducted by Hashemian and Heidari (2012) and Pajares (2006). They revealed that there was a relationship between participants with integrative type of motivation and writing skills even though running Pearson-product correlation did not indicate any relationship between participants with instrumental type of motivation and success in academic writing in L2. In other words, the result of the study indicated that the positive attitude became one of the fundamental factors that affected students' writing skill. Furthermore, the similarity between the relevant literature review and previous related research emphasize that motivation/attitudes is one of the most fundamental factors in writing competence. Students, with lack motivation/attitude to write, have no capability to engage in academic writing. The high anxiety potentially occurs to the students with the lack motivation to write. Therefore, in this previous study, it can be inferred that the positive attitude turned out to be the fundamental aspect that affected writing skill because there was a significant correlation between both of them.

In contrast, study from Jahin and Idrees (2012) showed that there was no significant correlation between participants' attitude towards learning English and their overall English language proficiency, as exemplified by their GPAs. It was unavoidable that in the previous study, there was a significant correlation between L2 students' motivation/attitude the positive attitudes and writing skill. However, in this previous study, the result displayed that there was completely no significant correlation between the students' attitude towards their English

learning and their whole English language proficiency.

The findings of the study, based on the aforementioned Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis, indicate that attitude has an integral role towards students' writing ability. Nonetheless, based on the correlation between those variables which is considered *moderate*, it represents that the attitude has considerably affected students' writing achievement as it is relevant with Pajares (2006), Jahin & Idrees (2012), Johnson (2012), and Dehbozorgi (2012) that motivation/attitude to write is an essential element in writing skill. Motivation to write plays an integral part in writing skill as the students who lack attitudes/motivations to write will be difficult to involve themselves in writing particularly academic-based writing (Pajares, 2006). Furthermore, the students with the tendency as aforementioned may undergo excessive anxiety towards writing, low self-confidence for writing, and lack of self-resilience and self-fortitude in writing. It is also congruent with Gardner (1985, p. 91-93) that attitude is considered as an evaluative reaction to some object of reference or attitude, concluded based on individuals' principles or thoughts regarding the referent. In other words, the evaluative reaction will lead to the emergence of positive and negative attitudes. Both of them will significantly affect the success of students' language learning for instance English teaching in general and writing skill in particular.

In other words, language attitude is deemed to be essential as it plays an integral part in language teaching and learning especially in EFL and ESL classroom. It appears consistent with Prodromou (1992) that a positive learner is the one who holds positive attitude towards the target language. Attitude is one of the crucial elements that affects English as a second/foreign language learning. It is because how much efforts students put into language learning depends somewhat on attitude (Gardner, Lanlonde, and Moorcroft, 1985). Therefore, students' attitude plays an integral part of learning and it should become an indispensable component of foreign and second language learning pedagogy. Additionally, the attitude of students will turn out to be more optimistic when they recognize interest in written communication and understand that they are able to write well by giving them meaning to experiences and matters related to them (Bruning & Horn, 2000, Gau, Hermanson, Logar, & Smerek, 2003).

Regarding the relationship between writing and attitude in the field of English as a foreign language, attitude to write is viewed as one factor that may affect students' writing competence in EFL classroom. Therefore, in improving their attitudes/motivation in the context of writing skill in EFL context, it is very prominent to regularly diminish their negative attitudes/motivation. The development of writing in EFL context has become a priority of the contemporary education culture. As a result, it is no wonder that the researchers or scholars themselves have requested further studies with regard to the relationship between attitudes and their writing skill (Kear, Coffman, McKenna, & Ambrosio, 2000). Behaviors play a primary role to supports students for writing and education betterment such as growing their writing skills, expressing their ideas and thoughts, and advance the students' competence to compose a writing.

Therefore, it is very fundamental to examine crucial relationship between writing and attitude in EFL context as writing will tend to make students more enthusiastic and motivated when it is employed as an instrument for specific objectives (e.g., intellectual and/or social advance) instead of general ones (Cleary, 1991; Potter, McCormick, & Busching, 2001). Writing involves a set of diverse cognitive procedures that the students must carry out to succeed. The aforementioned

7

procedures cover retrieval, goal setting, planning, problem solving, and evaluation (Flower & Hayes, 1981). The amount and intricacy of the aforementioned procedures indicate the students' high-level motivation. Particularly in their writing process inside the circumstance of EFL context.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION
Conclusion

Referring to both findings and suggestion of this study, it can be inferred that there is positive moderate correlation between students' attitude with their writing ability. Moreover, there was no relationship between negative attitude and success in students' writing, but there was a relationship between positive attitude and the writing skill which is indicated by moderate correlation. Hence, it can be determined that students' attitude and writing ability correlated significantly. Students' attitude determines the result of their writing proficiency significantly. The correlation is significant because between students' attitude and their writing ability are tied to each other as the manifestation of the significant correlation. This is relevant with what Gardner (1985, p. 91-93) emphasizes that attitude is considered as an evaluative reaction to some object of reference or attitude, concluded based on individuals' principles or thoughts regarding the referent. In other words, the evaluative reaction will lead to the emergence of positive and negative attitudes. Both of them will significantly affect the success of students' language learning for instance English teaching in general and writing skill in particular.

There are some suggestions that can be described as follows:

1. This study applied recount text as the main material of writing test. Further research should be conducted by other genres of the text for example: narrative, descriptive, procedure, report, etc.
2. For the objective of the further study, it should also be conducted to investigate the correlation between students' attitude and other English language skills such as listening, reading, and speaking.
3. The English teachers are advised to explain the importance of attitude in English learning to the student for it has been revealed that the attitude is able to significantly contribute to students' writing ability.

REFERENCES

Abu Rass, R. (2001). Integrating reading and writing for effective language teaching. *English Teaching Forum, 39* (1), 30-39.

Alsamdani, H. A. (2010). The relationship between Saudi EFL students' writing competence, L1 writing proficiency, and self-regulation. *European Journal of Social Science, 16* (1), 53-63.

Bruning, R., & Horn. C. (2000). Developing motivation to write. *Educational Psychologist, 35* (1), 25-37.

Cleary, L. (1991). Affect and cognition in the writing processes of eleventh graders. *Written Communication, 8*(4), 473-507.

Dehbozorgi E. (2012). Effects of Attitude towards Language Learning and Risk- taking on EFL Students' Proficiency. *International Journal of English Linguistics.* 2(2): 41-48. doi:10.5539/ijel.v2n2p41.

Dornyei, Z. (1998). Survey Article: Motivation in second and Foreign Language Learning. *Language Teaching, 31,* 117-135.

Flower, L. S. & Hayes. J. R. (1981). A cognitive theory of writing. *College Composition and Communication, 32,* 365-387.

Gardner, R. C. (1983). Learning another language: A true social psychological experiment. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 2*, 219-239.

Gardner, R. C. (1985). *Social Psychology and Second Language Learning*: *The Role of Attitude and Motivation.* London: Edward Arnold.

Gardner, R. C., & MacIntyre, P. D. (1993). A students' contribution to second language learning (Part II): Affective variables. *Language Teaching, 26*, 1 - 11.

Gardner, R.C., & Lalonde, R.N., & Moorcroft, R. (1985). The role of attitudes and motivation in second language learning: Correlational and experimental considerations. *Language Learning, 35* (2), 207-227

Gau. E., Hermanson. J., Logar, M., & Smerek, C. (2003). *Improving student attitudes and writing abilities through increased writing time and opportunities*. (Report No. CS12508). East Lansing, MI: National Center for Research on Teacher Learning. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 481441)

Graham, S, Harris, K. R. & Mason, L. 2005. Improving the writing performance, knowledge, and self-efficacy of struggling your writers: The effects of self-regulated strategy development, *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 30* (2), 207-241)

Graham. S., & Harris. K. R (1989). A components analysis of cognitive strategies instruction: Effects on efficacy. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 81*, 353-361.

Hashemian, M. & Heidari, A. (2012). The relationship between L2 learners' motivation/attitude and success in L2 writing. *Akdeniz Language Studies Conference.* Retrieved on November 28, 2020 from http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042813000864

Hatch, E & Farhady, H. (1982). *Research Design and Statistics for Applied Linguistics.* California: Newbury House Publishers, Inc.

Heaton, J. B. (1991). *Writing English Language Test*. New York: Longman.

Hidi, S., & Boscolo, P. (Eds). 2007. *Writing and motivation*. Oxford: Elsevier.

Jahin JH, Idrees MW. 2012. EFL major student teachers' writing proficiency and attitudes towards learning English. Umm Al-Qura University *Journal of Educational & Psychologic Sciences. 4*(1):10-72.

Johnson Y. (2012). Attitudes towards EFL learning and extensive reading in Japanese engineering students. *10*: 65-81.

Kear, D. J., Coffman, G. A., McKenna, M. C., & Ambrosio, A. L. (2000). Measuring attitude toward writing: A new tool for teachers. *The Reading Teacher, 34*, 10-22.

Moore-Hart, M. A. (2010). *Teaching writing in diverse classrooms, k-8: Enhancing writing through literature, real-life experiences, and technology*. Pearson/Allyn and Bacon.

Nunan, D. (1988). *The learner-centered curriculum: A study in second language teaching.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

O'Neill, R. (1991). The Plausible myth of learner-centeredness: Or the importance of doing ordinary things well. *ELT journals, 45*, 293-304.

Oxford, R.L., & Shearin. J. (1994). Language learning motivation: Expanding the theoretical framework. *Modern Language Journal, 78*(1), 12-28.

Pajares, F. (2006). *Self-efficacy beliefs and motivation in writing development* in MacArthur, S. Graham, & J. Fitzgerald (Eds). Handbook of writing research (pp. 158-170). New York: Guilford Press.

Pilus, Z. (1993). *Considerations in Developing Materials for the Teaching of Writing at the Pro-University Level*. The English Teacher, vol. 22.

Potter, E., McCormick. C., & Busching. B. (2001). Academic and life goals: Insights from adolescents' writers. *High School Journals, 85*(1), 45-55. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers.

Prodromou, L. (1992). What culture? Which culture? Cross-cultural factors in language learning. *ELT Journal, 46*(1), 39-50.

Raimes, A. (2003). *Ten Steps in planning a writing course and training teachers of writing*. In J. C. Richard, Methodology in language teaching (pp. 306-314). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C., & Renandya, W. A. (2003). *Methodology in language teaching*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press

Setiyadi, A., B. (2006). *Metode Penelitian untuk Pengajaran Bahasa*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Graha Ilmu.

Wall. D. 1981. *A pre-sessional writing course for postgraduate students in economics*. Practical papers in English Language Education, vol. 4, 34-105, United Kingdom: University of Lancaster.

Wenden A. (1991). *Learner Strategies for Learner Autonomy*. Englewood Cliffs, N. J: Prentice Hall.