

THE EFFECT OF PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT AND GRAMMAR MASTERY UPON THE WRITING ABILITY OF THE FOURTH SEMESTER STUDENTS OF THE ENGLISH STUDY PROGRAM OF FKIP UNMAS DENPASAR IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2012/2013

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the effect of performance assessment and grammar mastery upon the students' writing ability. The research method used in this research was experimental. The population was 6 classes consisted of 180 students of the fourth semester students of the English Education Study Program of FKIP UNMAS Denpasar in the academic year 2012/2013. The sample of this study was 60 students which was divided into 2 groups, namely experimental and control group, by *Cluster Random Sampling Technique*. The research instruments used to obtain the data in this research were in form of tests which were analyzed using *Statistical Two-Way ANOVA* and *Tukey Test*. The research findings are first, there is a significant effect of performance assessment on the writing ability of the fourth semester students of the English Study Program of FKIP Unmas Denpasar in the academic year 2012/2013. Second, there is a significant effect of grammar mastery on the writing ability of the fourth semester students of the English Study Program of FKIP Unmas Denpasar in the academic year 2012/2013. Third, there is a significant effect of performance assessment and grammar mastery on the writing ability of the fourth semester students of the English Study Program of FKIP Unmas Denpasar in the academic year 2012/2013. Fourth, there is a significant effect between the students who have high grammar mastery assessed using performance assessment and assessed using conventional technique. Fifth, there is no significant effect between the students who have low grammar mastery assessed using performance assessment and assessed using conventional assessment technique.

Keywords: Performance assessment, grammar mastery, writing ability.

INTRODUCTION

Learning and assessment have a very consistent and clear relationship as these activities are done in classes where the students study. The students learn more in classes where the assessment is done as routine. From that assessment, the students will get feedback from their teachers which help them develop their understanding of what they have learned (Westwood, 2008).

Westwood (2008), stated that the terms 'assessment' and 'evaluation' are often used interchangeably by teachers, but those terms have different meaning. The term "assessment" means the process of collecting information from learners such as obtaining test scores or work samples, while evaluation means looking at that information or the result of the assessment and making some decisions in relation to instruction. So,

assessment and evaluation are different but they should be done in a proper way to be able to get the exact measurement of the students' ability.

In assessing the students' writing, some teachers in some places commonly use some types of tests to measure how far the students understand the material taught by the teachers. Multiple choice test is not appropriate to be applied in assessing students' writing ability as it is only able to assess the students' writing theory. Therefore teachers are interested in using some other techniques in assessing students' writing ability to make the students feel challenged and motivated in practicing writing. One of the techniques that is suitable for teaching writing is by applying Performance Assessment.

Students who are good at certain skills of English are neither good at speaking nor writing due to the ungrammatical English they have. So, in this case the learners have not been successful yet. For years and years of learning English, some people still have problem with their writing. Because writing is an integrated skill which requires the existence of other language skills and language components such as grammar mastery. This phenomenon encourages the writer to do research in writing.

Writing is a very important skill as it is an integrated skill which requires grammatical language. Murcia and Olshtain (2000) defines writing ability as the capability of students in producing unity and coherent written word results in a text to express their own ideas using appropriate vocabulary, grammar and other language skills through a certain process to create meaningful communication.

According to Reid (1994), there are many different reasons for people to write. They have different purposes and different audience who read their writing; moreover, they have different writing organization and language pattern.

Reid (1994) stated that based on the writer-reader relationship, there are three basic rules for successful academic writing: 1) Identify the purpose for writing.

The writer should know why they are writing and what the purpose of their writing is; (2) Write something that is familiar or known by the writer. When the writers write something they know, they will be able to communicate the information easily and clearly to the audience; (3) The writers should know the audience of their writing. As writers, they should know whom their writing is for.

Writing is not just putting some words together into sentences but it needs several steps to produce a piece of writing. Theory of writing is not the only thing that would improve the writing skill. Writing practice is the most important activity in improving writing ability. Students who are good at theory of writing do not guarantee that they are good at writing practice. They often find it difficult to apply the theory and the rules they have learned.

Writing ability is the ability of students in producing a good writing to express their own ideas using appropriate vocabulary, grammar and other language skills through a process of writing.

Oshima and Hogue (1983) define writing as a process of creating, organizing, writing, and polishing ideas.

The followings are steps of writing process by Oshima and Hogue (1983): 1) Creating (Prewriting), it is the first step in the writing process is pre writing. This step is done before starting to write. Choosing a topic and collecting information about the topic the writers choose are done in the prewriting. The best way of choosing the topic is by choosing the topic which interests the writers and which is familiar for them. When there is no interesting topic, the writers can look at some magazine articles or newspaper to find the topic. After the topic is chosen, it should be narrowed to limit the information. The next prewriting step is to collect information and develop ideas. Four useful techniques of brainstorming to explore are *journal writing*, *listing*, *freewriting*, and *clustering*.

In journal writing, the writers can write their experiences, dream, or a meaningful quotation. Journal writing is written for the writers themselves; moreover, the writers can write down their thoughts that they

would like to tell to the paper itself. There will be a lot of ideas coming from the journal writing.

Listing is a brainstorming technique in which the writers think about the topic and quickly write every single word, phrase or sentence that come into their mind. The purpose of it is to get many ideas in a short time and focus with the topic. Follow this procedure: 1) Write down the general topic at the top of the paper. 2) Make a list of every idea that comes into mind about the topic. 3) Don't stop writing until filling a page. Keep the ideas flowing. Try to stay on the general topic; 4) Use words, phrases, or sentences, and do not worry about spelling or grammar. 5) Rewrite the list and cross out items that don't belong or that are duplications.

Freewriting is a brainstorming activity in which the writers freely about a topic because they are looking for a specific focus. Freewriting has the same purpose as listing, to produce as many ideas as they can and write them down without worrying about appropriateness, grammar, spelling, logic, or organization. Do not worry of running out ideas. Follow this procedure: 1) Write the topic at the top of the paper. 2) Write as many ideas about the topic include supporting items as facts, details, and examples that come into mind about the subject. 3) After run out of ideas, reread the paper and circle the main idea(s) that would like to be developed. 4) Take each main idea and freewrite again.

Clustering is another brainstorming activity that can be use to stimulate the writers idea by drawing "balloon" and writing the topic in the center of that balloon. Write the ideas which come from the word in the balloon around it or draw more balloons and write the ideas in it.

The second step in writing is planning. The planning stage is organizing the ideas into an outline. Each outline should contain a topic sentence, main supporting points, and supporting details and concluding sentence if it is a stand-alone paragraph.

Step 3 in the writing process is writing the rough draft. Follow the outline as closely as possible, and do not worry about grammar, punctuation, or spelling. A

rough draft means the writing does not have to be perfect. During this writing process, new ideas will come from mind. Keep writing those new ideas which is not in the brainstorming list or outline; furthermore, deleting irrelevant ideas can be done anytime.

The fourth and final step in the writing process is polishing what has been written. This step is also called revising and editing. In revising, content and organization including unity, coherence, and logic, are checked while in editing is only checking the grammar and punctuation.

The writing steps above should be done by the students in order to be able to write good writing products. In teaching writing, some teachers emphasize these writing steps. However, some students are still low in writing. ESL students are often unsuccessful in writing because they do not understand the context in which they are trying to communicate (Reid, 1996). Therefore the students should study more to be able to improve their writing skill.

Authentic assessments are essentially those that embed assessment in real-world contexts. Authentic assessment is criterion-referenced, as the opposite of norm-referenced. Criterion-referenced assessments are designed to compare students' performance against learning task standards. By contrast, norm-referenced tests are designed to compare a student's performance against that of other students. Criterion-based standards are necessary to maintain authenticity (Tanner (2001) in Aitken and Pungur, 2012).

Wiggins (1993) in Custer describes authentic assessment as tasks and procedures in which students are engaged in applying skills and knowledge to solve "real world" problems, giving the tasks a sense of authenticity. To design an authentic assessment activity, teachers must first decide what are the actual performances that they want students to be good at and then they must decide how they can frame learning experiences in a meaningful context that provides the connections between real world

experiences and school-based ideas (Lund 1997 in Custer).

Performance assessment consists of any form of assessment in which the student constructs a response orally or in writing (Feuer and Fulton 1993; Herman, Ashbacher, and Winters 1992) in O'Malley and Pierce (1996). The student response may be elicited by the teacher in formal or informal assessment contexts or maybe observed during classroom instructional or non-instructional settings. Performance assessment requires students to "accomplish complex and significant tasks, while bringing to bear prior knowledge, recent learning, and relevant skills to solve realistic or authentic problems" (Herman, Ashbacher, and Winters, p.2). Students may be called on to use materials or perform hands-on activities in reaching solutions to problems. Examples are oral reports, writing samples, individual and group projects, exhibitions, and demonstrations.

Some of the characteristics of performance assessment are the following (adapted from Aschbacher 1991; Herman, Ashbacher, and Winters 1992) in O'Malley and Pierce (1996): 1) Constructed Response: students construct a response, provide an expanded response, engage in a performance, or create a product, 2) Higher-order Thinking: the student typically uses higher levels of thinking in constructing responses to open-ended questions, 3) Authenticity: tasks are meaningful, challenging, and engaging activities that mirror good instruction or other real-world contexts where the students expected to perform. 4) Integrative: the tasks call for integration of language skills and, in some cases, for integration of knowledge and skills across content areas, 5) Process and product: Procedures and strategies for deriving the correct response or for exploring solutions to complex tasks are often assessed as well (as or sometimes instead of) the product or the "correct" answer, 6) Depth Versus Breadth: performance assessments provide information in depth about a student's skill or mastery as contrasted with the breadth of coverage more typical of multiple-choice tests.

Performance assessment often requires teacher judgment of student responses. To aid in making the judgments accurate and reliable, a scoring scale referred to as a rubric is used, in which numerical values are associated with performance levels, such as 1= Basic, 2= Proficient, and 3= Advanced. The criteria for each performance level must be precisely defined in terms of what the student actually does to demonstrate skill or proficiency at that level. One of the characteristics of performance assessment is that the criteria are made public and known in advance (Aschbacher 1991) in O'Malley and Pierce (1996). Accordingly, students can participate in setting and using the criteria in self-assessment of their own performance.

Grammar mastery refers to the students understanding in using the correct rules of English by changing the form of words correctly and joining them into sentence. Some experts in grammar defined grammar in different ways as the following.

Grammar is defined as a system which arranges the structure of the words in sentences or utterance into meaningful units (Morenberg, 1997). Grammar is the language that makes it possible for us to talk about language. Learning grammar is learning about how a language is structured. Grammar is not only learned in English language but also in all languages. The existence of grammar enables people to use the language correctly whether in spoken or written form; furthermore, it enables people to talk about how sentences are built, about the types of words and word groups that make up sentences.

Quirk (1985) defined grammar as a complex system which cannot be explained only a part because all parts of a grammar are mutually defining. Morenberg (1997) stated that mostly the grammarians do some analysis on some sentences constructed by the components of language such as words, phrase and clauses to find out how the relations of those components and how they connect each other to create a meaningful sentences or utterance.

Hornby (2005) defined grammar as the rules in a language for changing the form of words and joining them into sentence.

Morenberg (1997) stated that in speaking and writing, people do not just produce language by putting words in any structures they want, but they put the order of the words based on the grammatical system. People do not need to think to say some grammatical utterances because they just come naturally like what the speakers expected to say.

Morenberg (1997) also stated that most of the people think that grammar is not an interesting subject to be learned. Students at school or university find grammar as boring and complicated rule that they are forced to learn in school. But it is important to know the rule of language or grammar to be able to construct good sentences or utterances which can be understood by the people. When people know what makes sentences clear and understandable, they will become aware of the words and the structure of their sentences or utterances.

Dykes (2007) stated that the word 'grammar' often causes a negative reaction from the students. However, many people from some professions believe that when grammar is neglected or not taught, the students' literacy level would be getting low.

Sargeant (2007) mentioned that grammar has existed since long time ago when the sentence was first divided into subject and verb by Plato the philosopher from ancient Greece. Then the students all over the world have found it important to study the structure of words and sentence as grammar/ structure is needed in speaking and writing to be good language users.

Grammar and literacy are intrinsically bound. Philosophers such as Aristotle and Socrates realized the importance of grammar for all forms of language expression, particularly public speaking (rhetoric) and debate.

David Crystal in Dykes (2007) wrote that nowadays, people think that grammar is difficult and it is not related to the real

life. But in fact, grammar is very simple and important.

Dykes (2007) stated that all people use grammar since they are able to speak, because grammar is related with 'the abstract system of rules in terms of which a person's mastery of his native language can be explained.' Some people assume that the use of grammar happens naturally but it is still needed to be learned to understand and define how English works when people learn another language or going to teach English to others.

The objectives of this study were: 1) to investigate whether there is a significant effect of performance assessment on the writing ability of the fourth semester students of the English Study Program FKIP Unmas Denpasar in the academic year 2012/2013, 2) to investigate whether there is a significant effect of grammar mastery on students' writing ability of the fourth semester students of the English Study Program FKIP Unmas Denpasar in academic year 2012/2013, 3) to investigate whether there is a significant interactional effect of performance assessment and grammar mastery on the writing ability of the fourth semester students of the English Study Program FKIP Unmas Denpasar in academic year 2012/2013, 4) to investigate whether there is a significant different effect between the students who have high grammar mastery assessed using performance assessment and assessed using conventional assessment technique, 5) to investigate whether there is a significant different effect between the students who have low grammar mastery assessed using performance assessment and assessed using conventional assessment technique.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This experimental study was restricted on studying the effect of performance assessment and grammar mastery upon the writing ability of the fourth semester students of English Study Program FKIP Unmas Denpasar in the academic year 2012/2013. The population of this study consisted of 180 students in which the researcher used 60 samples by using the cluster random sampling technique.

The research design used in this study was 2x2 factorial design. It investigated the interactional effect between performance assessment and grammar mastery upon students writing ability. The research was conducted in the fourth semester students of the English Education Study Program FKIP Unmas Denpasar. The research sample was grouped into two, namely experimental group in which the students were assessed using performance assessment and control group in which the students were assessed using conventional assessment. In each group, there are high grammar mastery students and low grammar mastery students.

The data instruments that were used to collect the data were in the form of writing test and grammar mastery test. There were 3 writing post tests and 40 items of grammar mastery test

administered in this study. The treatment instruments used in the experimental group were analytical writing rubric, peer-assessment writing rubric, and also self-assessment checklist.

Teaching material used for both of the groups were lesson plans and teaching handouts. The data instruments were tried out and it was found that the instruments were reliable and valid. The collected data were analyzed by using Two-Way Anova and Tukey test assisted by SPSS 16.0.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Data descriptions of the central tendency (median, mean, and mode) and the spread of dispersion (standard deviation, variance, range, minimum, and maximum) of the eight groups of data (A1, A2, X1, X2, A1X1, A2X1, A1X2, A2X2) were presented in Table 01 below.

Table 01. The Summary of the Calculation of Central Tendency and Dispersion

Statistic	Group							
	A1X1	A2X1	A1X2	A2X2	A1	A2	X1	X2
Mean	80.70	67.49	61.33	59.73	71.01	63.61	74.09	60.53
Median	82.00	66.67	64.00	57.33	71.67	63.17	74.83	58.00
Mode	82.00	66.33	50.33	53.00	50.33	73.67	66.33	58.00
Std. Deviation	4.08	7.28	8.85	8.13	1.19	8.55	8.87	8.39
Variance	16.68	53.12	78.33	66.15	142.87	73.13	78.83	70.41
Range	14.66	26.67	25.67	26.00	35.33	26.67	34.33	27.00
Minimum	70.67	51.00	50.00	51.00	50.00	51.00	51.00	50.00
Maximum	85.33	77.67	75.67	77.00	85.33	77.67	85.33	77.00

Before analyzing the collected data using Two Way Anova, two major assumptions must be revealed, namely normality testing and homogeneity testing. Normality testing was administered through Kolmogorov-Smirnov formula while homogeneity testing was done through Levene's test of Equality of Error variance.

Based on the data calculated by SPSS 16.0, it was found that the distribution of all the groups of data was normal. It was proven by the value of Kolmogorov-Smirnov in which *Asymp. Sig (2-tailed)* > 0.05 for all groups of data.

Meanwhile, based on the Levene's test of Equality of Error Variance, it could be concluded that the significant values based on mean were all above 0.05. Therefore, it was ensured that the writing ability data were homogenous.

There were 5 hypotheses tested in this study. The result was the first four null hypotheses were rejected while one null hypothesis of the last hypothesis was accepted.

The result of the first hypothesis testing has successfully rejected the null hypothesis (H_0) and accepting the alternative hypothesis (H_1) stating that

there is a significant effect in students' writing skill assessed by using performance assessment. From the calculation, it was gained F_{ob} 17.315 while $F_{cv} = 4.00$. Meaning that $F_{ob} > F_{cv}$ so H_0 was rejected. The criterion is If F_{ob} is higher than F_{cv} ($F_{ob} > F_{cv}$), H_0 is rejected.

The second hypothesis testing showed that the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) was accepted. It means that there is a dhm significant effect of grammar mastery on students' writing ability. From the calculation it was obtained F_{ob} 5.990 while $F_{cv} = 4.00$. Meaning that $F_{ob} > F_{cv}$ so H_0 was rejected. The criterion: If F_{ob} is higher than F_{cv} ($F_{ob} > F_{cv}$), H_0 is rejected.

The result of the third hypothesis testing rejected the null hypothesis (H_0) and accepted the alternative hypothesis (H_1) showing that there is significant effect of performance assessment and grammar mastery on students' writing ability. From the calculation it was gained F_{ob} 9.379 while $F_{cv} = 4.00$ meaning that H_0 was rejected. The criterion: If F_{ob} is higher than F_{cv} ($F_{ob} > F_{cv}$), H_0 is rejected.

The fourth hypothesis testing was calculated using Tukey Test. The hypothesis testing has successfully rejected the null hypothesis (H_0) and accepted the alternative hypothesis (H_1). It was found that there is significant interactional effect between the students who have high grammar mastery assessed using performance assessment and assessed using conventional technique. The criterion is If Q_{ob} is higher than Q_{cv} ($Q_{ob} > Q_{cv}$), H_0 is rejected. It was gained the value of Q_{ob} 3.91 while the value of Q_{cv} was 2.98 meaning that H_0 was rejected.

Tukey Test was also used in calculating the fifth hypothesis testing and it showed that the alternative hypothesis (H_1) was rejected while the null hypothesis (H_0) was accepted which means that there was no significant effect between the students who have low grammar mastery assessed using performance assessment and assessed using conventional assessment technique. The criterion is If Q_{ob} is higher than Q_{cv} ($Q_{ob} > Q_{cv}$), H_0 is rejected. It was obtained

the value of Q_{ob} 0.59 while the value of Q_{cv} was 2.98 meaning that H_0 was accepted

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the findings and discussion above, it can be concluded as follows. (1) There is significant effect of performance assessment on the writing ability of the fourth semester students of the English Study Program FKIP Unmas Denpasar in the academic year 2012/2013, (2) there is significant effect of grammar mastery on the writing ability of the fourth semester students of the English Study Program FKIP Unmas Denpasar in the academic year 2012/2013, (3) there is significant effect of performance assessment and grammar mastery on the writing ability of the fourth semester students of the English Study Program FKIP Unmas Denpasar in the academic year 2012/2013, (4) there is significant effect between the students who have high grammar mastery assessed using performance assessment and assessed using conventional assessment technique, (5) there is no significant effect between the students who have low grammar mastery assessed using performance assessment and assessed using conventional assessment technique.

There are some suggestions which can be given for the readers as following: (1) The lecturers of the English Study Program FKIP Unmas Denpasar are suggested to implement performance assessment technique especially in teaching writing, (2) It is recommended to the lecturers of the fourth semester students of the English Study Program FKIP Unmas Denpasar to use the performance assessment in teaching writing particularly to the high grammar mastery students, for performance assessment considered as a very appropriate assessment technique to assess the writing of the high grammar mastery students, (3) since grammar has significant effect to writing ability, it is recommended to the lecturers of the English Study Program FKIP Unmas Denpasar to be concerned on students grammar mastery to enable them write better English, (4) It is suggested that

other researches that will be conducted in the English Study Program FKIP Unmas Denpasar done in different assessment technique and different skills.

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