
**THE CORRELATION BETWEEN CRITICAL THINKING AND
WRITING ABILITY AMONG ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
STUDENTS AT STKIP YAYASAN ABDI PENDIDIKAN**

Refna Wati¹, Roza Susanti², Dwi Settya Mahaputri^{3*}, Fadilla Taslim⁴

¹STKIP Yayasan Abdi Pendidikan
Email: refna.w4ti@gmail.com

²STKIP Yayasan Abdi Pendidikan
Email: susantiroza.buja@gmail.com

³STKIP Yayasan Abdi Pendidikan
*Email: dwisettya31@gmail.com

⁴STKIP Yayasan Abdi Pendidikan
Email: fadft.1203@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Some studies have revealed that critical thinking is related to language proficiency. This research examined the correlation between critical thinking and writing ability in English. This correlational study involved 44 students from the English educational program at STKIP Abdi Pendidikan Payakumbuh who had taken the general writing subject, using total sampling. The instruments included a questionnaire to assess students' critical thinking and official academic records for writing scores. The Pearson Product Moment formula was used to analyze the data. Results indicated a significant positive correlation ($r_{xy} = 0.362$, $p < 0.05$), confirming that critical thinking skills are related to writing ability. This finding highlights that writing, which involves the clear articulation of ideas, constructing arguments, and presenting evidence, inherently requires critical thinking skills.

Keyword : *Critical thinking, Writing ability, Correlational analysis*

INTRODUCTION

Writing, a fundamental act of human communication, is essential in delivering information and ideas through written form. Nunan et al. (2003) define writing as an intellectual activity involving idea generation and organization into clear, understandable statements and paragraphs. This complex skill, as Hannell (2007) notes, integrates concepts, language, spelling, handwriting, and punctuation. Wilson (2008) emphasizes writing's crucial role in language learning, providing an excellent platform for practicing vocabulary, spelling, and sentence structure.

Mastering writing is challenging due to its multifaceted nature, requiring more than just clear and fluent word production. It demands the ability to comprehend, process, analyze, and arrange information from various sources to enhance the significance of ideas or feelings being conveyed. This complexity necessitates critical thinking skills to facilitate effective writing. Critical thinking, rooted in Bloom's (1956) taxonomy of educational objectives, encompasses the higher three levels of cognitive capacity (Duron et al., 2006). It involves the intellectually disciplined process of conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, and synthesizing information (Malmir & Shoorcheh, 2012). In higher education, Tapper (as cited in Vyncke, 2012) defines critical thinking as the ability to select, evaluate, analyze, reflect, question, conclude, and make judgments. These skills are evident in students' writing projects through their opinions, arguments, data selection, and logical reasoning to persuade readers.

Paul and Elder (2007) further explain critical thinking as the practice of assessing and evaluating thought to improve it, focusing on the capacity to evaluate and analyze ideas to determine truth, goodness, and value. Lipman (2003) outlines eleven traits of critical thinking, including skillful use of evidence, coherent thought organization, logical inference differentiation, and the ability to challenge one's own opinions.

Previous research has explored various aspects of critical thinking in writing. Indah (2017) focused on critical thinking elements in writing, while Rachmawati (2014) and Pramonojati (2020) examined how students' critical thinking is reflected in their texts. However, there is a gap in the literature regarding the direct relationship between critical thinking and writing ability. This study aims to analyze the correlation between students' critical thinking skills and their writing ability, addressing this research gap.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to enhance both theoretical understanding and practical application in critical thinking and writing instruction. For educators, it may provide insights into developing strategies that simultaneously improve students' critical thinking and writing skills. For students, understanding this relationship could lead to more effective approaches to improving their academic writing. By examining the interplay between critical thinking and writing ability, this research seeks to contribute valuable knowledge to the field of English language education, potentially leading to improved teaching methodologies and student outcomes in academic writing.

METHOD

Research Design

The study employed a correlational research design. According to Creswell (2018), correlational research is a quantitative method for characterizing and quantifying the degree of connection or relationship between two or more variables or sets of scores. The primary aim of this study was to determine the relationship between students' critical thinking skills and their writing abilities. Correlational research is particularly suitable for this type of investigation because it allows researchers to identify whether an association exists and to measure its strength and direction without manipulating any variables.

Population and Sample

Sugiyono (2018) stated that the population is the entire element that is made into the generalization area. The population of this research consisted of students enrolled in the English educational program at STKIP Abdi Pendidikan Payakumbuh. The sample included all students from this program who had taken the general writing subject, totaling 44 students. The researcher employed a total sampling technique, selecting this sample because these students had already completed the writing course. Total sampling ensures that every member of the population who meets the criteria is included in the sample, thus enhancing the comprehensiveness and representativeness of the study.

Instruments of the Research

Questionnaire for Critical Thinking

The researcher used a questionnaire to assess students' critical thinking skills. The questionnaire was designed to measure various aspects of critical thinking, such as analysis, evaluation, inference, and reasoning skills. The analysis of this questionnaire data utilized the Likert scale as described by Gay, L.R., et al. (2012). The Likert scale provides a range of responses that can capture the intensity of students' critical thinking abilities, ensuring a nuanced understanding of their skills.

Writing Scores

Students' writing scores were obtained from official documents provided by the writing lecturer, reflecting their performance in the writing course. These scores were based on

standardized assessment criteria used by the lecturer, ensuring consistency and reliability in the evaluation of students' writing abilities.

Data Collection and Analysis

After collecting data on students' critical thinking and writing abilities, the researcher examined the research hypothesis by calculating and correlating the data from the X (critical thinking) and Y (writing ability) variables. The Pearson Product-Moment correlation coefficient was used to determine the relationship between these variables. This statistical method is ideal for assessing the linear relationship between two continuous variables, providing a clear measure of how one variable may predict or relate to the other. The critical thinking questionnaire responses were coded and scored according to the Likert scale guidelines. Writing scores were directly taken from the official records. The Pearson Product-Moment correlation coefficient (r) was calculated to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between critical thinking skills and writing abilities. The resulting coefficient indicates the degree to which changes in one variable are associated with changes in the other.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Following an investigation into the relationship between English department students at STKIP Abdi Pendidikan Payakumbuh's critical thinking skills and their writing abilities, the researcher discovered that

Table 1: The Result of the Students' at Questionnaire and Writing Score

Questionnaire	Writing score
N = 44	N = 44
$\sum x = 3645$	$\sum x = 3265$
$r_{xy} = 0.362$	
$r_{table} = 0.297$	
Degree of freedom (N - 2) = 42	
Level of significant = 0,05	

The analysis revealed that the total score for students' critical thinking skills, as measured by a questionnaire, was 3645, while the total score for their writing abilities, assessed through a writing test, was 3265. To determine the relationship between these two sets of scores, the researcher employed the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, resulting in $r_{xy} = 0.362$.

The critical value from the correlation table for 42 degrees of freedom at the 0.05 level of significance is 0.297. Since the calculated correlation coefficient ($r_{xy} = 0.362$) is greater than the critical value ($r_{table} = 0.297$), the null hypothesis (H_0), which posits that there is no significant relationship between critical thinking skills and writing ability, is rejected. Instead, the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted, indicating a significant relationship between the two variables.

The obtained correlation coefficient ($r_{xy} = 0.362$) falls into the category of a moderate positive association. This implies that there is a moderate level of positive correlation between the students' critical thinking skills and their writing abilities. In other words, as students' critical thinking skills improve, their writing abilities tend to improve as well, and vice versa. However, the relationship is not extremely strong, suggesting that while critical thinking skills do influence writing abilities, other factors may also play a significant role.

The findings highlight the importance of fostering critical thinking skills in students to enhance their writing abilities. Since the correlation is moderate, educational strategies that aim to improve critical thinking may also positively impact students' writing performance. This relationship underscores the interconnected nature of cognitive skills in academic performance, suggesting that a holistic approach to education that emphasizes critical thinking could be beneficial for improving overall academic outcomes.

In conclusion, the study provides evidence that there is a significant, moderate positive correlation between critical thinking skills and writing abilities among English department students at STKIP Abdi Pendidikan Payakumbuh. This relationship can inform educational practices and interventions aimed at enhancing both critical thinking and writing skills in students.

Discussion

The result of this study indicated that there was a correlation between students' critical thinking and their writing ability. It implies that in order to support students' writing abilities, critical thinking skills are crucial. Observation, reflection, analysis, and selecting and

presenting information are required in writing. Writing requires one to clearly state ideas and present evidence to support those ideas, processes that are fundamental to critical thinking. This statements was supported by Chaffee (2002) stated that critical thinking facilitates thoughtful writing, gives way to thoughtful writing, helps ideas to flourish and generates substantive ideas. It implies that students become more logical thinkers and write more critically and effectively the more critical thinking skills they possess. Adhitya et al. (2018) adds that the students who are more critical of themselves also develop their writing ideas creatively, which helps them to achieve good writing. Moreover, critical thinking provides more benefits for students in develop their writing ability.

In writing, the topic should be discussed must be clear and make sense. Writers can better arrange their thoughts, prioritize their points of importance, and construct coherent arguments by applying critical thinking techniques. Writing requires opinions and arguments as well. Students also require supporting phrases, supporting data, and evidence while writing an argument or opinion. Through analysis of many viewpoints and data points, authors can present compelling arguments supported by sound reasoning. All of those tasks require the ability to think critically. It was supported by Ruggiero (2012) stated ideas will appear and flow as critical thinking ability is employed in writing. Then, Susilawati et al. (2019) also adds that writing requires the application of critical thinking. In light of this, improving students critical thinking should be taken as consideration in learning writing.

Critical thinking is a highly valued skill in higher education and is included in many programmers' objectives and results (Guleker, 2015). Students that use critical thinking are better able to think, work, and make more precise connections between various ideas. Students that possess critical thinking skills will engage in debate and gather pertinent data to bolster their ideas and opinions. When it comes to writing, critical thinking abilities will assist students in selecting the sources of information to utilize, understanding how to interpret that knowledge, and structuring their writing to be more precise and logical. It is in line with Delfi et al. (2018) mention that the students' writing ability will increase when there's an increase of their critical thinking. It prove that students' critical thinking play important role on students' writing development.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This research reveals a significant correlation between students' critical thinking skills and their writing ability in the English Department. The statistical analysis supports the

acceptance of the hypothesis, indicating that these two skills are interrelated and mutually influential. Critical thinking, encompassing analysis, reflection, evaluation, creativity, and careful reasoning, plays a crucial role in the writing process. These cognitive skills contribute to more logical and accurate written expression. The findings underscore the importance of integrating critical thinking development alongside writing instruction in English language curricula. This relationship suggests that enhancing one skill may positively impact the other, potentially leading to overall improvement in students' academic performance. Based on the research findings, several recommendations are proposed to enhance the synergy between critical thinking and writing skills in English language education. Lecturers should incorporate explicit critical thinking instruction within writing courses, design challenging assignments that apply these skills, and provide feedback addressing both writing mechanics and depth of thought. Students are encouraged to actively engage in critical thinking activities like debates and analytical reading, apply critical thinking throughout the writing process, and seek peer review opportunities. Curriculum developers should revise course objectives to include critical thinking alongside writing proficiency and develop assessment tools that evaluate both skills in tandem. Future research could explore specific aspects of critical thinking that significantly impact writing ability and investigate the long-term effects of integrated instruction. Implementing these suggestions can help maximize the relationship between critical thinking and writing skills, potentially leading to improved academic outcomes for English language students.

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