

CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS ON ARGUMENTATIVE TEXT WRITING SKILLS: DOES IT HAVE ANY EFFECT?

Neni Winarti¹, Audi Yundayani², Susilawati³, Fiki Alghadari⁴

STKIP Kusuma Negara, Jakarta, Indonesia

neniwinarti@stkipkusumanegara.ac.id¹, audi_yundayani@stkipkusumanegara.ac.id²,
susilawatitoto@stkipkusumanegara.ac.id³, fiki_alghadari@stkipkusumanegara.ac.id⁴

ABSTRACT

Critical thinking is now often regarded as a necessary component of writing abilities. If this is confirmed, it is crucial to highlight students' ability to think critically to develop their writing skills. The purpose of this study is to investigate if students' critical thinking skills affect their ability to write argumentative texts using a quantitative approach and a predictive design. The population in this study amounted to 62 students of a private vocational school in Jakarta. Samples were taken of as many as 25 students using the random sampling technique. Both data were obtained by conducting a critical thinking test that adapted the Watson-Glaser theory and an argumentative text writing test. The data analysis used is the Lilliefors test, linearity, and analysis of variance. This study shows that students with higher critical thinking test scores get higher scores in writing argumentative texts and vice versa. Moreover, there is a significant effect of students' critical thinking skills on their argumentative writing skills. Critical thinking ability is one factor that supports students' success in developing written ideas so that the right stimulus is needed to bring up students' critical thinking skills.

Keywords: Argumentative Text; Critical Thinking Skills; Writing Skills

ABSTRAK

Berpikir kritis sering dianggap sebagai komponen penting dari kemampuan menulis. Jika ini dikonfirmasi maka sangat penting untuk menyoroti kemampuan berpikir kritis siswa untuk mengembangkan keterampilan menulis mereka. Pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain prediktif digunakan di dalam penelitian ini yang bertujuan untuk mengetahui apakah terdapat pengaruh keterampilan berpikir kritis siswa yang signifikan terhadap keterampilan mereka dalam menulis teks argumentasi. Populasi yang terlibat di dalam penelitian ini adalah 62 siswa sebuah Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan (SMK) swasta di Jakarta. Peneliti mengambil sampel sejumlah 25 siswa dengan menggunakan teknik random sampling. Data didapat berdasarkan hasil tes berpikir kritis yang mengadaptasi teori Watson-Glaser dan tes menulis teks argumentasi. Data yang terkumpul kemudian dianalisis dengan menggunakan uji Lilliefors, linieritas, dan analisis varians. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa siswa dengan nilai hasil tes berpikir kritis yang lebih tinggi mendapatkan nilai yang lebih tinggi dalam menulis teks argumentasi dan sebaliknya. Lebih lanjut lagi ditemukan bahwa terdapat pengaruh keterampilan berpikir kritis siswa yang signifikan terhadap keterampilan mereka dalam menulis teks argumentasi. Penelitian ini menggambarkan adanya keterkaitan antara keterampilan berpikir kritis dan keterampilan siswa dalam menulis argumentasi. Kemampuan berpikir kritis merupakan salah satu faktor yang menunjang keberhasilan siswa dalam mengembangkan ide tulisan argumentasi sehingga dibutuhkan stimulus yang tepat untuk memunculkan kemampuan berpikir kritis siswa.

Kata kunci: Teks Argumentasi; Kemampuan Berpikir Kritis; Keterampilan Menulis

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the English abilities that must be taught to students at various stages of education. Writing is a process by which a writer conveys their thoughts and ideas by accumulating and arranging ideas into accessible language and transforming them into written work (Toba et al., 2019; Yundayani et al., 2017). The goal of teaching writing skills is for students to produce a variety of different forms of writing to communicate in written English. Mastery of students' writing abilities is one of the learning objectives observed in the end output, such as writing essays, taking notes, or participating in other activities during the learning process. According to the 2013 Indonesian curriculum, writing argumentative texts is one form of text that students at the secondary school level must learn. Students are expected to apply their knowledge and skills to comprehend and compose this type of spoken and written text. It is related to actual phenomena while paying close attention to the context meaning, social function, text structure, and language features of the text they are reading or writing. Text that makes convincing arguments results from a process that includes researching the subject, formulating hypotheses and supporting assertions, arranging coherent discourse, and putting thoughts into paper (Pei et al., 2017). The ability to write persuasive argumentation writings is critical for supporting one's scholastic achievement and achieving one's other general life objectives (Bakry & Alsamadani, 2015). Moreover, it is also critical in social, learning, and linguistic contexts because it promotes critical and creative thinking and allows students to express themselves through their judgment, writing styles, and vocabulary. Students must acquire this writing talent to succeed in the academic area. It is a skill required when students are required to write essays, articles, do research, or even apply for scholarships, among other situations.

Writing an argumentative text is a challenging activity since the purpose of this writing style is to convince and persuade the reader to do something or not to do something in particular. Writing argumentative writings is a problematic endeavour. Argumentative writing is often a complex type of writing because compiling argumentative writing requires students to have critical thinking skills and scientific ideas and argumentative expression necessary to succeed (Marni et al., 2019). Written arguments are divided into two categories: exposition and discussion (Knapp & Watkins, 2005). As a result, when teaching this genre, it is best to start with exposition, a text type that focuses students on the aim of argumentation, which is to provide a point of view and provide evidence to back it up. To produce good argumentative writing, students must also pay attention to a few things. The elements that make up this paragraph are the thesis statement, transition, body paragraphs, evidential support, and conclusion.

Critical thinking abilities are critical in writing and they have a direct impact on the outcomes of writing assignments (Susilawati et al., 2019). People who think critically are not only better at creating engaging and clear writing, but they are also better at writing argumentative essays in English, which is a skill that many people

lack. They will construct logical assumptions and correct conclusions, demonstrating that critical thinking is one of the most critical abilities in putting together an argumentative writing piece of work (Hashemi et al., 2014). As a result of these explanations, it can be concluded that critical thinking is one of the most important talents to have while putting up argumentative writings. According to expectations, students with strong critical thinking abilities are expected to generate tremendous and engaging argumentative writing.

As information has been more readily available, education has switched its focus in the twenty-first century. It is vital to teach students how to absorb and critically assess the information they receive. The discipline of English language teaching has accepted critical thinking in response to ongoing educational trends (Nejmaoui, 2019). Critical thinking abilities are one of the intellectual talents explored in the field of education as we prepare for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Rafzan et al., 2019).

Critical thinking abilities are required for success in two areas: academics and professional endeavours (Lombardi et al., 2014). Moreover, it is the act of thinking intelligently and reflectively based on the underlying ideas (Lu & Xie, 2018). The ability to recognize and detect inconsistencies and common errors in reasoning is essential for critical thinking. A critical thinker can create and evaluate arguments, determine the relevance and importance of an idea, and reflect the truth of one's beliefs and values, among other things (Suhartoyo, 2017). The majority of these abilities are necessary when writing argumentative texts. Students are expected to evaluate a general issue and make assertions following their ideas, among other things. Then they must be able to demonstrate a logical connection between one thought and another to support their claim. Furthermore, to offer supporting evidence in an argumentative text, it is necessary to include relevant, correct, thorough, and up-to-date information. Students must summarize their work in the conclusion by successfully reiterating the topic, subject, and thesis statements. This final section is critical since it will have an impact on the reader's overall perception.

Preliminary data (Lin et al., 2020; Putri, 2018; Resti & Anwar, 2018) indicates that most students at the high school level have been taught how to create different sorts of argumentative essays. Although many students have an excellent command of the English language and vocabulary, they struggle when asked to produce argumentative papers. Students frequently find it challenging to communicate their thoughts, ideas and provide important information about the subject matter under consideration. They appeared to be deafeningly quiet throughout the writing process. In addition, they have difficulty developing arguments, organizing them logically and clearly, and drawing effective conclusions from their arguments. These difficulties affect the achievement of the target value in writing argumentative texts. Although some students have achieved the target value, most of them still get a score below the minimum standard of completeness. Based on the explanation above, the researcher wants to investigate if students' critical thinking

skills affect their ability to write argumentative texts.

RESEARCH METHOD

The purpose of this study is to investigate if students' critical thinking skills affect their ability to write argumentative texts using a quantitative approach with an observational perspective and a predictive design. The subjects of this study were sixty-two students from twelfth-grade students of *Setia Karya* Senior Vocational High School in Depok who participated in the study. This correlation study was conducted from August 24th to October 12th, 2020, during the odd semester, 2020/2021. It takes approximately two months to find the correlation between students' critical thinking and their skill in writing argumentative text. A random sampling technique was used to select a representative sample of 25 students from the general population. Both critical thinking and argumentative text writing skills were examined in this study, with critical thinking skills serving as the independent variable and argumentative text writing skills serving as the dependent variable.

An argumentative text writing test and a critical thinking test were utilized in this study to gather information. To create the critical thinking test, it was decided to modify the Watson and Glaser theory (Watson & Glaser, 2002), which comprised 18 statement items. An expert judgment carried out a content and construct validity evaluation. During a questionnaire administered to 19 students outside of the sample, the researcher reported that in the following step, the researcher computed the validity test using the Rpbis formula and the reliability test using the KR 20 formula.

The students were required to produce an argumentative essay about the current issue of online learning for the argumentative text writing test, which the researcher administered. The outcomes of the writing test were evaluated using the analytic scoring rubric adapted from Hyland (2019). Expert judgment was also used to evaluate the validity of the content and the concept. The reliability test was calculated using Cronbach's alpha formula.

The researchers collected data after determining the validity and reliability of the two research instruments. Only ten of the eighteen critical thinking test items were valid and could be used to collect data, with the remaining eight being invalid, according to a sample of twenty-five students who were given valid and reliable instruments to complete. The analytical evaluation rubric indicators (Hyland, 2019) are used to calculate the score for argumentative text composition, which includes forty points for form and content, twenty points for organization and coherence, and forty points for sentence construction and vocabulary. An inter-rater system was used to determine the final score on this writing test.

According to Watson and Glaser (2002), critical thinking test scores were produced from five parts of critical thinking criteria, which were as follows: drawing accurate conclusions, identifying assumptions, deducing, interpreting, and assessing arguments. Each student receives one (one) point for each valid answer and zero

(zero) points for each incorrect response. The final score for the critical thinking test is obtained using the calculations described in equation (1) below.

$$\left(\text{Final Score} = \frac{\text{Correct answer}}{\text{Total questions}} \times 100 \right) \quad (1)$$

After data collection, the researcher performed several data analysis techniques, including normality test using Lilliefors test, linearity test using simple linear regression test, and F test. Furthermore, the researcher used the T-test and coefficient of determination. The test was conducted to prove whether the factor of critical thinking skills influenced the skill of writing argumentative texts.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The findings of this study provide answers to two related questions. First is whether higher scores in critical thinking skills predict higher scores in argumentative text writing skills and vice versa. The second is whether there is a statistically significant effect of students' critical thinking skills on their argumentative text writing skills.

Based on the student's critical thinking ability test results, the highest score was 80, while the lowest score was 30, with an average value of 55.2, median of 60, mode of 60, variance of 176, and standard deviation of 13, 26. When compared with the interpretation table of critical thinking skills by Halpern (Butler, 2012), the average value of students' critical thinking scores is categorized into a medium level of critical thinking. The value results of the argumentative text writing skill test obtained the highest score of 89, the lowest score of 46, the average value of 62.62, the median of 6.004, the mode of 58.3, the variance of 111.36, and the standard deviation of 10.58. The findings of the two tests are summarized in Table 1, which follows.

Table 1. Descriptive Data

Description	Critical Thinking	Writing Argumentative Text
Total questions	10	1
Sample	25	25
The highest score	80	89
Lowest value	30	46
Average	55.2	73.6
Median	60	61.94
Mode	60	58.3

Variant	176	111.36
Standard deviation	13.27	10.58

The results of calculating the normality test analysis from the critical thinking and argumentative text writing tests are illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2. Normality Test Results

Variable	N	L _{count}	L _{table}	α	Results
Critical thinking	25	0,119	0,173	0,05	Normal distribution
Writing argumentative text	25	0,135	0,173	0,05	Normal distribution

Table 2 explains the results of the calculation of the normality test data for critical thinking obtained by L_{count} of 0.119. When compared with the Liliefors table at a significant level of 0.05, with N of 25, so that L_{table} is 0.173, then L_{count} is 0.119 < L_{table} = 0.173, so it is known that the data is normally distributed. The results of the calculation of the normality test data for argumentative texts obtained L_{count} of 0.135. When compared with the Liliefors table at a significant level = 0.05, N is 25, then L_{table} = 0.173, meaning L_{count} = 0.135 < L_{table} = 0.173, so it can be said that the data is normally distributed.

The results of simple linear regression calculations obtained the regression line equation which is explained by equation (2) below

$$\hat{Y} = a + bX = 37,665 + 0,446X \quad (2)$$

In the preceding equation (2), it is demonstrated that the value of writing argumentative text abilities (Y) can be determined from the value of critical thinking (X), multiplied by 0.446, and added by the constant 37.665 can be calculated. As a result, if X rises by one, it is projected that Y will increase by 0.446. On the whole, it can be claimed that the greater one's X (critical thinking abilities), the higher one's Y (writing skills for argumentative texts), and vice versa. Using the F test, a linearity test was carried out after the researcher had obtained the regression line equation. The F test is intended to evaluate if the effect between the two variables follows a linear pattern or not. The findings of the F test obtained by the researcher are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Linearity Test

N	F _{count}	F _{table}	α	Results
25	2,11	2,90	0,05	Linear pattern

Based on the F_{test} calculation results, it was obtained that F_{count} of 2.11 with *df* numerator four and *df* denominator 19 at a significance level of α = 0.05, which was then compared with F_{table} = 2.90. In short, F_{count} = 2.11 < F_{table} = 2.90, then the two variables have a linear pattern.

Tabel 4. ANOVA Test the Effect of Critical Thinking on Writing Argumentative Text

<i>n</i>	<i>df</i>	Mean Squares	<i>F</i>	<i>t</i> _{count}	<i>t</i> _{tabel}	Sig.	Test Results	<i>R</i> ²
25	1	839.950	11.772	3.431	2.069	0.002	There is an effect	0.339

Based on the regression line equation $(Y)=a+bX=37.665+0.446X$, students' argumentative writing skill score (Y) can be estimated from their critical thinking score (X), multiplied by 0.446, and contribution with a constant 37,665, which means if X increases by 1, then Y increases by 0.446. So, when the higher the value of students' critical thinking skills, the higher the value of their argumentative text writing skills. A significant effect was found in (Hasanah, 2015), which aims to find the relationship between critical thinking and argumentative writing skills in students using the Cornell Critical Thinking Test. About 33.9% of critical thinking contributed to students' argumentative writing. The research also revealed that students with higher critical thinking skills were better at their argumentative writing skills. Elder in Hashemi et al. (2014) stated that people who think critically could do clear and interesting writing. This means that they must be more skilled in writing argumentative essays in English so that, in the end, they will be able to build logical assumptions with accurate conclusions.

Discussion

Based on the calculation results and statistical analysis, the researchers found a significant effect on students' critical thinking skills to their skills in writing argumentative texts. The researcher obtained the results of the t-test was greater than the t-table ($3.432 > 2.069$). This means that H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted. Meanwhile, the coefficient of determination test results showed that 33.9% of students' critical thinking skills contributed to the results of writing their argumentative texts.

In line with several previous research findings (Fahim & Hashtroodi, 2012; Khunaifi, 2015; Srinawati & Alwi, 2020), it is evident that there are effective critical thinking skills to students' ability to write argumentatively. Following that, Afshar, Movassagh, & Arbabi (2017) looked at the link between critical thinking, producing argumentative texts, and sub-skills in various situations. A strong link between factors was also discovered in the study's findings. Furthermore, Putri (2018) investigated the link between critical thinking skills and argumentative writing skills by administering the Cornell Critical Thinking test and an argumentative writing test to 60 undergraduate students. As a consequence of the study, critical thinking was shown to have made a 48.4% contribution to the students' argumentative writing ability.

The results of a significant effect of students' critical thinking skills on their skills in writing argumentative texts when integrated with supporting theories are as follows: (1) critical thinking as an attitude tends to consider wisely problems and subjects that are within the range of one's experience; (2) critical thinking as

knowledge of methods of inquiry and logical reasoning; (3) critical thinking is a skill that requires a way to apply the method (Fisher, 2011). Students can employ symbols and languages to discuss their ideas and express their opinions via writing, considered a productive talent. The act of gathering ideas and working with them until they are refined and accessible to readers is referred to as the process since writing is both a process and a final product (Yundayani et al., 2019). Critical thinking requires a persistent effort to examine a belief or presumed form of knowledge based on the evidence supporting it and the further conclusions that lead to it. This theory supports those critical thinkers who have personalities that tend to apply attitudes to consider things wisely. They can also integrate their experience and knowledge to analyze, identify, and evaluate information to provide logical reasons and evidence and then draw effective conclusions.

Critical thinking necessitates a consistent effort to scrutinize any belief or ostensibly formed form of knowledge in light of the facts that support it and the conclusions that it leads to. Critical thinking tends to be reasonable, thoughtful thinking geared at deciding what to believe or do (Ennis, 1989). It also refers to the ability to think clearly and rationally (Lau, 2011). It entails thinking clearly and methodically, and according to the laws of logic and scientific reasoning. Critical thinkers are skilled at efficiently assessing, questioning, and evaluating information. They can also obtain and evaluate credible information because they are proficient in reading and writing. They must also be able to communicate well to express their arguments logically. They also came up with logical reasoning and facts to back up their claims and finally came to a practical and logical conclusion.

The research results also reflect students' critical thinking skills since they construct strong and logical arguments, analyze and synthesize available information, and make possible assumptions and conclusions. Moreover, students' critical thinking skills are about their ability to evaluate information and draw appropriate and effective conclusions (Assessment Day Practice Test Experts, 2018). These abilities affect students' ability to make good argumentative texts. They state their own opinion regarding the given topic to make and draw possibilities from various assumptions and conclusions. Since writing is a complex process, students possess a wide range of mental, psychological, rhetorical, and critical thinking abilities to complete it successfully (Ardiasih & Rasyid, 2019).

Furthermore, according to the study's findings, students appear to comprehend the concept of argumentative writing as a type of writing. Because of their views, they can articulate their point of view on a particular subject. To present a convincing argument, students must provide adequate and logical evidence to support their claims (Afshar et al., 2017). They must give an intriguing and compelling conclusion to entice the readers' attention at the end of their work. Moreover, students applied two aspects associated with good argumentation. First, the need to present ideas so that viewpoints are well supported and alternative views are recognized but shown via rebuttals to be less persuasive than the main arguments; the second, the quality of

reasoning of the arguments should be relevant, accurate, and structurally logical (Stapleton & Wu, 2015). On the other hand, they also need to support their opinion with strong and logical arguments. Students must analyze and evaluate all the information they provide to draw effective conclusions to support their thesis and arguments, which becomes important to convince the reader to agree with the author's point of view.

CONCLUSION

The ability to think critically plays an important role in mastering the art of writing an argumentative text. According to the findings of this study, students who score higher on the critical thinking test will also score higher on the argumentative writing test. Students who receive lower scores on the critical thinking test, on the other hand, will receive lower scores on the argumentative text writing test. This study discovered a statistically significant effect of critical thinking skills on the ability to write an argumentative text, demonstrating the relationship between critical thinking skills and writing ability. A student's ability to use critical thinking is one factor that contributes to his or her success in developing written ideas; therefore, the right stimulus is required to bring up students' critical thinking abilities. The limitations of this study are related to the limited time available for data collection as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, which may impact the results of the experiments. Further investigation is recommended to determine whether critical thinking skills impact other language skills, including both receptive and productive skills.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We want to convey our sincere appreciation to *STKIP Kusuma Negara* and *Setia Karya*, Senior Vocational High School, for their support of our study. We also thank the anonymous referees for their valuable suggestions. We are very grateful.

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