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## A CORRELATIONAL STUDY ON STUDENTS' ABILITY IN LITERAL READING AND PARAGRAPH WRITING

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### Abstract

This research investigated the correlation between adult EFL students' literal reading and paragraph writing. Since adult EFL learners in tertiary education learn about literal reading and paragraph writing in more detail, a more specific investigation on the literal and paragraph writing of adult EFL students has not been conducted. The researcher uses a quantitative approach with a correlational design. This research followed by twenty-nine respondents from the second-semester student in the English Department of STKIP PGRI Jombang. The participant was taken by using a purposive sampling technique. The data were taken using reading and writing tests that the lecturers developed. The data collected were then analysed by using non-parametric Spearman's rho with the help of SPSS version 22. The results of the data analysis showed the value of Sig (2-tailed) .037. The correlational coefficient value was .388. Those values indicated a significant positive yet low correlation between adult EFL students' literal reading and paragraph writing.

Keyword: *Correlation, Literal Reading, Paragraph Writing*



### Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengetahui korelasi antara membaca literal dan menulis paragraf mahasiswa Bahasa Inggris. Mengingat bahwa mahasiswa Bahasa Inggris pada pendidikan tingkat lanjut belajar tentang membaca literal dan menulis paragraf secara lebih rinci, namun penelitian lebih spesifik terhadap membaca literal dan menulis paragraf oleh mahasiswa Bahasa Inggris belum dilakukan. Peneliti menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain korelasi. Penelitian ini diikuti oleh dua puluh sembilan responden dari mahasiswa semester dua Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris STKIP PGRI Jombang. Pemilihan responden menggunakan teknik purposive. Data diambil dari tes membaca dan menulis saat ujian tengah semester. Instrumen dikembangkan oleh dosen membaca literal dan menulis paragraf. Data tersebut dianalisis menggunakan non-parametric Spearman's rho dengan bantuan SPSS versi 22. Hasil data data analisis menunjukkan nilai Sig. (2-tailed) adalah .037 dan nilai dari koefisien korelasi adalah .388. Nilai tersebut menunjukkan signifikansi positif tetapi rendah pada korelasi antara membaca literal dan menulis paragraf mahasiswa Bahasa Inggris.

**Kata kunci:** *korelasi, membaca literal, menulis paragraf*

### Introduction

Reading and writing are essential skills for the academic success for adult EFL students (Atayeva, 2019). Adult EFL students receive more knowledge and experience from their previous learning experiences. It means that they have read many articles, books, and journals. Besides, they have also written many tasks, created stories independently, and written articles for their assignment or final project. Despite the importance of reading and writing skills on the success of adult EFL students' study, the correlation between adult EFL students' reading and writing skills has not been widely studied.

In EFL students, reading and writing are more developed. They study about literal reading and paragraph writing. In literal reading, students learn about the unity paragraph unity, main idea, supporting sentences, and concluding sentences. It helps the students understand more about the information stated in the text they read. While in paragraph writing, the students learn about topic sentences, supporting sentences, concluding

sentences, coherence, and cohesion. These aspects can support the students in writing a worthy English paragraph.

Some previous studies focused on investigating high school students (Ariyanti, Firtriana, & Juriati, 2018; Mulyana & Nazali, 2020; Prianggita & Habibi, 2018; Mailis, Delfi, & Erni, 2020) While, only two studies investigated the adult learners (Ariyanti & Qomar, 2016; Atayeva, Kassymova, Setyo, Kosbay, 2019). Those previous studies investigated the correlation between general reading and writing skills (Atayeva, Kassymova, Setyo, Kosbay, 2019), reading comprehension and general writing skills (Prianggita & Habibi, 2018), reading comprehension and writing skills in the descriptive text (Juriati, Ariyanti & Fitriana, 2018) and recount text (Mailis, Delfi, & Erni, 2020). Additionally, some studies also investigated the correlation between reading habits and general writing (Nazali & Mulyana, 2020) and reading motivation and writing recount text (Ariyanti & Qomar, 2016).

However, a more specific investigation of tertiary education learners' reading and writing skills has not been conducted. Since adult EFL learners in tertiary education learn about literal reading and paragraph writing in more detail, a more specific investigation on the literal and paragraph writing of adult EFL students has not been conducted. The literal reading's topics focus on paragraph unity, which includes the main idea, supporting, and concluding sentences. Like the topics in literal reading, paragraph writing's topics are about topic sentence, supporting sentences, concluding sentences, coherence, and cohesion. This similarity of the topics is believed to support students' achievement in literal reading and paragraph writing. Thus, the researcher is interested in investigating the correlation between literal reading and paragraph writing.

## Research Method

The research used a quantitative approach with a correlational design. The population in this research is the students of the English Department of STKIP PGRI Jombang, and the sample is second-semester students (batch 2020). The data were collected in two stages: reading and writing tests. The lecturer develops the instrument of this research.

The reading test is focused on literal reading. There were ten items, and the questions were categorized into two groups: essay and multiple-choice. The questions include skills in identifying the text's topic, the paragraph's main idea, and the paragraph's controlling idea. The test was

held on 27th April 2021 with 100 minutes, followed by twenty-nine students. The test was done through the WhatsApp group.

The writing test focused on paragraph writing. There were three items, and the questions were essays. The questions include the skill of developing appropriate topic sentences or particular paragraphs, developing appropriate topic sentences for particular topics, and developing supporting and concluding sentences for the chosen topic sentences. The test was held on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2021 with 90 minutes and was followed by twenty-nine students. The test was conducted through google Classroom.

The research data were the literal reading and paragraph writing test scores. The researcher used statistical analysis by using SPSS 22 version. Then, used correlational analysis. The researcher also did the three assumptions test to test the normality, linearity, and outlier. The correlation analysis was conducted by using Pearson correlation if the assumptions are fulfilled. While if the assumptions are not fulfilled, the analysis is done by implementing Spearman correlation. The correlation is considered to be significant if the significant value is less than .05.

## Results and Discussion

The researcher used some tests of assumptions. There are assumptions of normality, assumptions of linearity, and outlier. The assumptions of Normality, it calculated by using Saphiro-Wilk with the help of SPSS version 22. The result presented in Table 1.

**Table 1 Result of Normality Test**

	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statis	Df	Sig.
Literal reading	.956	29	.258
Paragraph writing	.875	29	.003

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

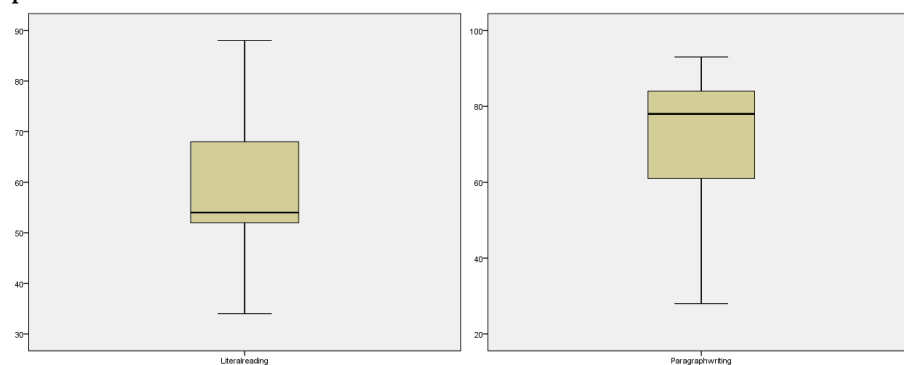
According to the table above, the Sig. value of literal reading is .0258, which is higher than .05, which means that the data distribution of literal reading score is normal. Furthermore, the Sig. value of paragraph writing is .003. The value is lower than .05, indicating that the data distribution is not normal. It

can be concluded that the assumption of normality is not fulfilled. Then, the assumption of linearity, the result, is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2 Result of Linearity Test**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Literal reading *Between (Combined) Paragraph writing Groups	4829.388	15	321.959	1.175	.389
Linearity	1395.923	1	1395.923	5.095	.042
Deviation from Linearity	3433.465	14	245.248	.895	.582
Within Groups	3561.750	13	273.981		
Total	8391.138	28			

According to the table above, the result of the linearity test is the Sig. value of deviation from linearity is .582. The value is higher than .05, meaning the data distribution of literal reading and paragraph writing is linear. Thus, the second assumption of linearity is fulfilled. Furthermore, the last assumption is outliers. It is to know whether the data have outliers; the box plots were used. The box plots of literal reading and paragraph writing are presented in Picture 1.



**Picture 1 Boxplots of Literal Reading and Paragraph Writing**

Referring to the boxplots above, it can be seen that there were no data points that are located outside the whiskers of the box plots. It indicates that there are no outliers both in literal reading and paragraph writing scores. Thus, the third assumption is fulfilled. Since the normality assumption of the data is not fulfilled, the researcher conducted the hypotheses test by using the non-parametric Spearman's Correlation test.

**Table 3 The Result of the non-parametric Spearman's Correlation Test**

		Literal reading	Paragraph writing
Spearman's rho	Literal reading	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.037
		N	29
	Paragraph writing	Correlation Coefficient	.388*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.037
		N	29

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Based on the table above, the result of Sig. (2-tailed) is .037, lower than .05. Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted. It means that there is a correlation between literal reading and paragraph writing. In addition, the Spearman's rho value is .388. Referring to the table of Correlation Coefficient Classification, the value includes low positive correlation.

**Table 4 Correlation coefficient classification**

Coefficient of Correlation	Interpretation
0.91-1.00	Very high correlation
0.71-0.91	High correlation
0.41-0.71	Moderate correlation
0.21-0.40	Low correlation
0.00-0.20	Very low correlation

## DISCUSSION

This research investigates the correlation between adult EFL students' literal reading and paragraph writing achievements. According to Brown (2003), Literal reading includes one of macro skills. Literary reading focuses on knowing, understanding and analyzing the main idea, supporting

sentence and concluding sentence. While, paragraph writing belongs to the micro skills of writing proposed by Brown (2003). Paragraph writing in this research, the adult EFL students asked to developing the topic sentence, supporting and concluding sentence through the process brainstorming, planning, drafting, revising, and editing.

The data analysis on the correlation between adult EFL students' literal reading and paragraph writing was conducted by using non-parametric Spearman's Correlation because the normality assumption was not fulfilled. Based on the result of the data analysis, the value of Sig. (2-tailed) is .037, lower than .05. It indicates a significant correlation between literal reading and paragraph writing.

The researcher assumes that the low correlation of students' literal reading and paragraph writing in this research is caused by different focuses of the materials in literal reading and paragraph writing. The literal reading only focuses on the topic of the text, the main idea and the paragraph's controlling idea. While paragraph writing has a broader material which focuses not only on the topic sentence and main idea but also supporting sentence, concluding sentence, and supporting details.

## Conclusion

This research investigated the correlation between adult EFL students' literal reading and paragraph writing. The researcher calculated the data using non-parametric Spearman's rho because the normality assumption was not fulfilled. The value of Sig (2-tailed) was .037, higher than .05 and the correlational coefficient was .388. It means that adult EFL students' literal reading and paragraph writing skills have a significant positive correlation but are categorized into low correlation. It is assumed that the focus difference between the literal reading and paragraph writing materials caused the result.

Regarding the limitation found during the research, some suggestions are made for better future research. Firstly, it is suggested that future researchers make sure that the focus of both skills' material is similar. Secondly, to ensure that the research instruments match the research objectives, future researchers should develop their own instruments to collect the data.

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