

Local Culture Topics For Prewriting and Drafting in Teaching Essay Writing at English Department UKI Toraja

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Abstract

The objective of this research is to find out whether or not local culture topics are preferred by the students in their prewriting activities and in writing the first draft of their essays. Bringing students closer to their own culture through the use of the Local Culture Supplementing Model or local culture as a teaching resource. Additionally, it is hoped that students would develop their essay-writing abilities or perhaps create articles on Toraja to highlight the region's distinctiveness. Students' writings and those of the younger generation can help Toraja culture advance in the writing world. Regarding the findings of this preliminary study, more than 75% of students indicated that they used the following strategies when writing essays: 1) Students needed topics on the local culture for prewriting; 2) Students require topics about local culture for drafting their essay.

Key words: topics, local culture, essay writing, pre-writing, drafting

Introduction

Comparing to other language skills, the ability to write an essay is thought to be the most difficult. (Choudhury, 2013; Nguyen Thanh Huy, 2015; Rao, 2017; Senel, 2018; Tangpermpoon, 2008). Instead of beginning with sentences, moving on to paragraphs, and then creating essays with multiple paragraphs, each of which must have a single, interconnected theme from the first paragraph to the closing paragraph. (Lehman & Schraw, 2002; Wang, 1994; You, 2004)

Students at English Department UKI Toraja still struggle with essay writing, according to the reality they experience. They have failed to develop their ideas or compile them into a coherent essay. Additionally, they believe that the information being taught to them is still generic in nature and originates from other regions or nations. As a result, they struggle to write letters.

It is crucial to understand that every nation and every region has its own unique culture. This is also true of Toraja. The cultural traditions of the Toraja people are still followed today. Reading and writing skills are significantly impacted by the incorporated local culture on the competency level of class-prepared EFL students. In addition, students will find it easier to find more ideas when they write essays based on local content. (Aminullah et al., 2019; Indriyani, 2016; Nambiar et al., 2020). What's more, it was explained that in the learning process providing a local context is one of the techniques that can be used for teaching foreign languages. (Gay et al., 2020; Khan, 2016; Umasih et al., 2019; Yusniawati & Lestari, 2021) Essays are longer pieces of writing, longer than a paragraph. An essay has three main parts: an introduction, some supporting paragraphs, and a conclusion. (1). Introduction; this is the first part of an essay that is read by the reader. This paragraph format is different from other paragraph

formats. (Blanchard & Christine, 2004) explains that there are several techniques for writing an introduction - here are some examples of how to write a good one: a) Move from general to specific, b) Use anecdotes, c) Use quotes, d) Ask questions, and e) Present facts and statistics. (2) Body; the essay body consists of several supporting paragraphs that support the thesis. Supporting paragraphs are between the introductory and closing paragraphs. There must be one or more paragraphs in the body of the essay that are not directly related to the topic being discussed. (3) Conclusion; the purpose of this last paragraph is to summarize - without using the same words as the others. According to (Blanchard & Christine, 2004), there are several ways to complete a closing paragraph that get the reader to agree, disagree, or at least think about the thesis: a) Restate the main point, b) Ask a question, c) Suggest a solution; make recommendations or predictions.(Blanchard & Christine, 2010)

Writing is a skill that students acquire in school. According to (Brow.H. Douglas, 2001), writing is a form of thought. According to the previous explanation, the steps involved in writing can be outlined as follows: 1) Pre-writing; the prewriting phase of the writing process is the first. It is the stage where we investigate our initial hypotheses regarding a subject. Some of the most popular categories of prewriting strategies are listed below. Examples include free writing, brainstorming, clustering, tag, and mimics. Getting started on a piece of writing is frequently the most difficult step. (Mogahed, 2013) Prewriting is similar to pre-riding engine warm-up on a motorcycle. There are a number of things that we must perform as part of the pre-writing approach in order to get our points across clearly. Following is a list of the steps: 1) Brainstorming; 2) Clustering; 3) Free Writing; 4) Journaling; 5) Planning and Organizing. (2) Writing; writing is the second step in the writing process (Hashempour et al., 2015). We begin organizing the ideas we have gathered from the prewriting exercise in this phase. The revision process comes next. Before you are prepared to publish your work, there is one more step to complete after writing. Paragraphs are used to structure most writing that is more than a few sentences long. The most crucial thing we must do while writing a paragraph is to make our main point clear. The topic sentence for this paragraph should be one simple sentence. (3) Editing and revision; revision is a crucial step in the procedure. To improve anything, we can add new ideas, modify some old ones, or eliminate unimportant ones. edit to make grammar, punctuation, and spelling corrections (Faraj, 2015).

Culture in the Second Language Classroom

Since knowing a culture is equivalent to knowing a language, describing a culture is equivalent to describing a language. According to Good enough, culture is made up of people's mental models for how to perceive, relate to, and understand various things. Culture is difficult to define, which makes it difficult to teach about it in second language classes. Language and culture are interwoven, it is impossible to teach a language without culture, and culture provides the required framework for language use—all ideas that are now popular in language teaching (Hall, 2021; Kramsch C, 1996). Language and pedagogical factors are two ways that culture affects language education, according to (Matrix., Genc & Bada, 2005) It has an impact on the language's semantic, pragmatic, and discourse levels linguistically. In terms of pedagogy, it affects the selection of linguistic resources and the cultural foundation of the teaching approach.(Evans, 2003; Lê & Short, 2009; Risager, 2005; Thomas, 1983)

Incorporating culture in ELT material

There is a good chance that culture can be incorporated into ELT material because culture and language are interdependent, and English cannot be taught without the culture of the society in which it is rooted (Sardi, 2002). Additionally, (Wijaya Mahardika, 2018) claims that including information about local cultures in the curriculum aids kids in learning English. Cultures around the world differ, and teachers who are knowledgeable about these differences and sensitive to their students' needs can considerably aid their pupils in learning sociolinguistics rules. The act of teaching English to people who speak other languages reflects the changes brought about by a society that is more diverse, international, and educated. He contends that English instruction should be conducted outside of its cultural setting. Instead, situations the pupils are familiar with should be used. Not whether to incorporate cultural components into English instruction, but rather how to go about doing so. The second claim makes the supposition that language and the larger contexts in which it is employed cannot be separated. It also presupposes that these situations are influenced by the individuals' cultural origins in addition to other factors.

Methods

This present study used quantitative method of explaining the data collected through online questionnaire on Google Form.

Instruments

The data for this research were gathered using an online Google Form questionnaire. The questionnaire used was about the two main important parts of writing steps. They are prewriting and drafting. They concern of finding the students interest on using local culture topics in collecting ideas for writing and students' preferences on local culture topics in organizing ideas.

In this present study, the questionnaire consists of nine main statements relating to prewriting and drafting; six of them are about prewriting and three others are about drafting. Each statement consists of two main parts. One of them concerns on their preference on local culture topic in collecting ideas and drafting. Another one concerns about the topics of local culture that help them in prewriting and drafting.

Participants

The participants of this study were the students of English Department. There were 113 students scatter from semester 4 to semester 10 56 students are at semester 4, 40 students at semester 6, 13 students at semester 8, and 4 students at semester 10.

Data Analysis

The data collection was conducted via google form. The questionnaire link was distributed via WhatsApp group of the students. The data collected were tabulated to see the students answer on the items provided. To determine whether or not the students use local culture topics in prewriting and drafting when writing essays, the data were analyzed by using percentage.

**Result
 Findings**

Students' Preferences on Local Culture Topics for prewriting

Table 1. Students' Preferences on Local Culture Topics for Prewriting

Statement	Total Resp.	Yes		No	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
1a. Using personal experiences related to local culture to collect ideas in starting their writing when writing essays.	113	103	91.2%	10	8.8%
2a. Putting all the ideas they had in mind into a piece of writing when the topic was related to local culture.	113	104	92.9%	9	7.1%
3a. Being not worried about readers' responses in assessing their writing if the topics they write about have something to do with local culture.	113	100	88.5%	13	11.5%
4a. I prefer the topic of local culture compared to other topics in starting writing.	113	96	85%	17	15%
5a. Being able to write down ideas clearly and in good order using local culture topics.	113	93	82.3%	20	17.7%
6a. Being able to write effectively when they write essays on local culture topics.	113	88	77.9%	25	22.1%

Through table 1 above, some findings can be highlighted. As can be seen in item 1a, out of 113 participants, 103 (91.2%) use their personal experiences related to local culture to collect ideas in starting their writing when they write essays. Item 2a shows that out of 113 participants, 104 (92.9%) put all the ideas in their minds into a piece of writing when the topic was related to local culture. Item 3a reveals that out of 113 participants, 100 (88.5%) are unconcerned with readers' evaluations of their writing if the subjects they write about are local culture-related issues. Item 4a demonstrates that, of the 113 participants, 96 (85%) prefer the subject of local culture to other topics when they begin writing. Through item 5a we can see that out of 113 participants, 93 (82.3%) claim that they are able to write down ideas clearly and in good order using local culture topics. Item 6a shows that out of 113 participants, 88 (77.9%) claim that they are able to write effectively when they write essays on local culture topics.

Students' Preferences on Local Culture Topics for Drafting

Table 2. The preferred topics for drafting on local culture by students

Statement	Total Resp.	Yes		No	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
7a. writing ideas could be well structured when they use local culture.	113	96	85%	17	15%
8a. Being able to put the idea of the framework from the beginning, middle	113	97	85.8%	16	14.2%

and end in an essay using local cultural topics.					
9a. The framework in my writing was properly structured when using local cultural topics.	113	98	86.7%	15	13.3%

Some results in Table 2 call for additional commentary. Item 7a reveals that out of 113 participants, 96 (85%) state that when writing concepts incorporate local culture, they may be well-structured. Item 8a shows that out of 113 participants 97 (85.8%) claim that they are able to use local cultural topics to implement the framework's beginning, middle, and conclusion in an essay. Item 9a shows that out of 113 participants, 98 (86.7%) state that the framework in their writing was properly structured when using local culture topics.

Discussion

Students' preferences on local culture for prewriting

The first stage in writing an essay or paper without being given a specific topic is thinking about ideas and selecting what you want to write about. The least systematic and most creative step in academic writing is concept generation. Though there are countless ways to generate ideas, there is no foolproof formula for producing quality ideas. When writing essays, students gather ideas by drawing on personal experiences connected to the local culture. (Irawati, 2015) investigated the interesting topic like culture including lifestyle, costume, and custom is necessary to be offered in Academic Writing class. It also supported by (Nurlia & Arini, 2017) stated that local culture in English language teaching enables students to learn English skills well because students are asked to discuss or describe something they know very well. In searching for a topic, the students try to think of something they enjoy writing about or a method to tie their passions into it, so they use their experience connected to local culture to gather the ideas they need for their essay writing. Align with (Yu & Zhou, 2022) showed Chinese EFL learners showcased uniqueness in some aspects of SLWA (Second Language Writing Anxiety) under cultural influences, regarding ethnic culture, local culture, academic culture, and disciplinary culture.

Furthermore, when the subject matter involves the local culture, the students write down everything that come to their minds. (Valdes, 1988) introduced some essays that language teacher can used with a basis for introducing a cultural component into their teaching writing essay. With local culture topics the students are equipped to express their ideas in their writing. As (Hinkel, 1999) stated that language and culture is interrelated. This is because they relate their ideas for writing with their background knowledge. It is easier to write when we have something in mind that we know much or better.

In addition, being not worried about readers' responses in assessing our writing is also very helpful in developing our ideas in writing because feeling confident of what we write can enhance us to write much better. (Astuti, 2016; Valdes, 1988) Through this research, it was found out that the students feel the same thing when the topics they write about have something to do with local culture.

One of the hardest tasks a writer must complete is putting the first sentence down on paper. When they start writing, they favor local culture over other subjects. This is because finding a specialty that appeals to the writers, one that speaks to the writers

and about the writers will get more interest. This specialization is so beneficial in handling the hardest part of writing.(Astuti, 2016; Irawati, 2015; Valdes, 1988)

People don't want to modify anything if it's already excellent, but they should make sure that the ideas are arranged so that readers will truly understand the point as the writer imagines it: flawless, brilliant, and full of unique insight. According to the students, they can use local cultural issues to write down their ideas effectively and in a logical way. Additionally, they feel that writing essays about aspects of local culture allows them to express themselves clearly.

This finding is supported by (Fox, 1994), that students' writing is influenced by cultures where people communicate indirectly and holistically, value the wisdom of the past, and downplay the individual in favor of the group. And (Alodwan & Saleh Khalaf Ibnian, 2014) recommended that in teaching writing is not only about the product but also attaching more emphasis on the pre- writing stage as its vital role in the writing process.

Students' preferences on local culture for drafting

The first draft is created when the writer completes the work for the first time after moving past the outline stage.(Faraj, 2015) stated that drafting is the second stage of process writing after pre-writing. The term rough draft is frequently used to describe the initial draft, and as the name implies, it will be quite imperfect. The key elements of the writing framework are focused on the knowledge and abilities that students require in order to produce various types of writings. (Ceylan, 2019) said many factors can influence students in writing such as L1 writing ability, L2 Proficiency, and writing both experiences in both language. Thus, their knowledge of their own culture can fill up the slot. This is supported by (Hashempour et al., 2015) that the Iranian EFL students influenced by their experiences to participate, engage, and understand of the oral and written forms and the social and academic genders of English. In addition, the UKI Toraja students claim that writing ideas that include local culture can be well-structured. The students also claim that they are able to use local cultural topics to implement the framework's beginning, middle, and conclusion in an essay, so the framework can be well-structured. (Richard, 2002) wrote the writer developed and organized their ideas on a topic, can write differences of essay at the influence of cultural factors. Then, the writing framework offers a big-picture map to help the writers comprehend what progress looks like with its signposts for each area. Relating to this idea, the students background knowledge of their own culture is needed. That is the reason why the students feel confident in writing their first draft with local culture topics.

Conclusion

Having seen the discussion of this research, conclusion can be drawn. From the discussion in the previous part, it is clearly defined that local culture topics can help the students in prewriting such as generating ideas, putting down ideas, feeling confident to write, as well as writing the first draft of their essays.

Acknowledgements

To Jurnal Onama, Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra I would like to convey my sincere gratitude for their invaluable assistance and cooperation on this publication.

I also like to express my gratitude to Universitas Kristen Indonesia Toraja for helping to make this research possible financially. Their support of this project's significance helped it to be finished.

I owe a debt of gratitude to Judith Ratu Tandi Arrang and Dr. Yizrel Nani Sallata for their advice, criticism, and support. Their suggestions and criticism were quite helpful in determining the course of this investigation.

Finally, I'd like to express my gratitude to all the volunteers and research subjects who voluntarily contributed their time and energy to this study. Without their participation, it would not have been possible to conduct this study. Without the joint efforts of these people and organizations, the completion of this project would not have been possible, and I would like to express my sincere gratitude for that.

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