UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' ENGLISH PROFICIENCY TEST SCORE AND THEIR CUMULATIVE GRADE POINT AVERAGE

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Abstract

English Proficiency Test (EPT) is popularly used in higher education as a requirement of graduation. However, in fact, some students have not passed the minimum score of the test whereas English language proficiency is important in English Department. Since the class mostly use English to deliver the course, the students' proficiency need to be concerned. Previous research (David, 2014) suggests that English language proficiency can be a predictor of academic achievement. Thus, this study purposed to find out whether there is any significant positive correlation between English Proficiency Test (EPT) score and Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA). Pearson product moment correlation was conducted to compute 35 data of EPT score and CGPA. The results show that there is a significant positive correlation between EPT score and CGPA of English Department students in a university of Purwokerto. Thus, the students should concern to their language proficiency in order to get successful academic achievement.

Keywords: *Achievement test, correlation study, cumulative grade point average, English proficiency test*

INTRODUCTION

Mostly higher education in Indonesian universities require their students to fulfill English language proficiency test before they graduate. There is a minimum score of it to pass the requirement. Every university has different forms of English language proficiency test such as TOEFL, IELTS, EPT, and other forms which are in accordance with its own institutional purpose. One of universities in Purwokerto, Central Java, demands the students of English Department to pass English Proficiency Test (EPT) before they take a final examination or popularly known with thesis examination. The reason for this would be due to the importance of English language proficiency test. Proficiency test aims to establish a candidate's readiness for a particular communicative role, for example in a work or educational setting (McNamara, 2008). Thus, before the students graduate from the university, their English proficiency has to be assessed in order to prepare them for area of work in the future.

In reality, based on the observation, some students have not fulfilled the requirement score of EPT in a university of Purwokerto. They have to take an EPT test over and over again until they pass the minimum score. They feel that they have lack of English language proficiency although they are students of English Department. Indeed, mostly instructions and courses are delivered in English. This situation of the students' weakness in English may a drastic impact on their academic success (Hasan & Akhand, 2014). In fact, Hasan & Akhand also assume that they fail to understand fully the context of discourse using the language use or the contexts of many situations involving the language. Therefore, the students' language proficiency might be able to

determine their academic achievement in a class.

In this case, there are several considerable studies conducted in this area. Hasan and Akhand (2014) studied the relationship between English language proficiency and academic achievement and found that there is a significant connection between English language proficiency and cumulative grade points average. Further, David (2014) showed the results that English language proficiency of the students has a significant impact of English language proficiency on students overall academic achievement. In addition, Morris & Maxey (2014) found that TOEFL test is the one that yields statistically significant incremental information content about academic success. On the other hand, Addow, Abubakar & Abukar (2013) revealed that English language proficiency has insignificant positive relation with their academic achievement and there is an insignificant impact of English language proficiency on students' achievement.

According to the description above, this present study purposed to determine the relationship between English Proficiency Test (EPT) score and Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA). Therefore, the research question of this study is *Is there any significant positive correlation between EPT score and CGPA of English Department students in a university of Purwokerto?* Regarding to the research question, the null and the alternative hypothesis of this study are as follow: (1) Ho: There is no significant positive correlation between students' EPT score and CGPA; (2) Ha : There is a significant positive correlation between students' EPT score and CGPA.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This section discusses the proficiency test and achievement test considering that English Proficiency Test (EPT) score are obtained from proficiency test that was conducted in the institutional university and Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) are acquired from achievement test of all semester.

Considering the purpose of tests, two kinds of tests are designed for measuring the students' ability and performance. These are proficiency test and achievement test. Proficiency test is designed to measure people's ability in a language and to show what level student has reached at any one time (Hughes, 1989; Harmer, 2007). Indeed, it gives general picture of a student's knowledge and ability (rather than measure progress) in order to look to the future situation of language use without necessarily any reference to the previous process of teaching (McNamara, 2008; Harmer, 2011). The forms of proficiency test are various types or integrated specifically in the form of mixture of direct and indirect, discrete-point and integrative testing in which this combination gives a good overall picture of student ability (Harmer, 2011). The content of proficiency test is not based on the content or objectives of language courses but it is based on a specification of what candidates have to be able to do in the language in order to be considered proficient (Hughes, 1989; McNamara, 2008). Some types of proficiency tests are generated by some institutions for example TOEFL, IELTS, TOEIC, and EPT.

On the contrary, achievement tests are different with proficiency tests. Achievement test is directly related to language courses (Hughes, 1989). Hughes says that it aims to establish how successful individual students, group of students, or the courses themselves have achieved the objectives or to see whether and where progress has been made in terms of the goals of learning. Futher, Hughes also explains that there are two kinds of achievement test: final achievement tests and progress achievement tests. Final achievement tests are those administered at the end of a course of study. In the views of some testers, the content of a final achievement test should be based directly on a detailed course syllabus or on the books and other materials used. This final achievement can be described in the CGPA.

The related research about language proficiency and academic achievement revealed various results. Hasan & Akhand (2014) found that there is a significant connection between English language proficiency and cumulative grade point averages which indicate academic achievement. In particular, their study concluded that English language proficiency proves to be

a good indicator and predicator of academic achievement for those students who are aspiring to earn degree in the context of Bangladesh. In addition, David (2014) showed the results that English language proficiency of the students has a significant impact of English language proficiency on students overall academic achievement. Indeed, his study found that English language proficiency is a good indicator and predictor of academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Nigeria. Moreover, Morris & Maxey (2013) reported that TOEFL test is the only one that yields statistically significant incremental information content about academic success. Specifically, their results indicate that the TOEFL total score and component scores are more highly associated with academic success than the GMAT total score and component score. Further, Addow, Abubakar, & Abukar (2013) found that there is weak relationship between English language proficiency and academic performance of Somali higher education students.

Regarding to the difference results of the previous research about the relationship of English language proficiency test and academic achievement, this study would like to fill the gap from them in which this study aims to find out the correlation between English Proficiency Test (EPT) score and Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of undergraduate students in English Department.

METHOD
This study was conducted by employing correlation research design. The main purpose of this study is to find out whether there is any significant positive correlation or not between EPT score and CGPA. There are 35 students as samples of this study selected by using purposive sampling techniques considering the availability and the reliability of the data to be collected. The data about EPT score and CGPA were collected through questionnaire.

Pearson product moment correlation analysis was used to analyze the data to describe whether there is any significant positive correlation between EPT score and CGPA. Indeed, the number of data is close to the normal distribution (Hatch & Farhady, 1982) so that it did not need to compute the normality. Nevertheless, there are some principal assumptions which have to be fulfilled for that correlation analysis (Hatch & Farhady, 1982). The assumptions are: (1) the two variables are continues, (2) score on X and Y are independent of each other, and (3) the relationship between X and Y is linear. The formula is as follow.

$$r_{xy} = \frac{n \sum XY - (\sum X)(\sum Y)}{\sqrt{(n \sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2)(n \sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2)}}$$

Description:
r_{xy} = coefision Pearson correlation
n = the number of cases in the sample
X = variable 1 (EPT score)
Y = variable 2 (CGPA)

To determine the statistical significance of the correlation, t-formula was conducted. The formula is as follow.

$$t = \frac{r_{xy}(N-2)}{1-r_{xy}^2}$$
$$df = N - 2$$

Where:
t = t test
r_{xy} = correlation coefficient
N = the number of cases in the sample

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data were collected through questionnaire presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Data of English Proficiency Test score and Cumulative GPA

Ss	EPT (X)	CGPA (Y)
1	556	3.79
2	525	3.29
3	510	3.45
4	510	3.45
5	520	3.41
6	505	2.99
7	590	3.60
8	505	2.86
9	490	3.10
10	520	3.10
11	590	3.80
12	355	2.60
13	435	3.19
14	615	3.82
15	510	2.92
16	355	2.60
17	465	2.96
18	437	3.03
19	475	3.12
20	503	3.57
21	470	3.10
22	430	3.06
23	585	3.77
24	460	3.14
25	492	3.50
26	480	3.60
27	490	3.41
28	530	3.70
29	370	2.91
30	490	3.26
31	480	3.05
32	520	3.58
33	480	3.38
34	505	3.31
35	460	3.39

N = 35

Concerning the assumptions mentioned in the previous section, these data fulfill the requirements for that correlation analysis. The data above are shown as two variables that are continues, and independent for each other. To show that the third assumption is fulfilled, this scattered plot is presented in Figure 1.
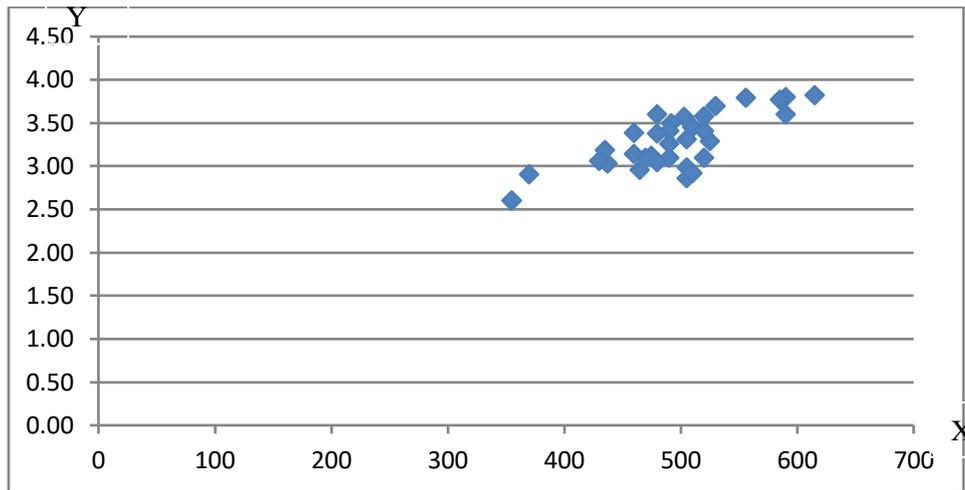
Figure 1. Scattered Plot of the Data Collection

Figure 1 shows that the data are linear since the scattered plots are not in pattern. Thus, the three assumptions have been fulfilled so that the Pearson correlation is able to be conducted as follow.

Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis

$H_0 : \rho = 0$
$H_1 : \rho > 0$

Level of Significance

$\alpha = 0,05$

Statistical Test

$$r_{xy} = \frac{n \sum XY - (\sum X)(\sum Y)}{\sqrt{(n \sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2)(n \sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2)}}$$

Computation

Table 2. Computation Table of Pearson Correlation

No	EPT (X)	GPA (Y)	XY	X^2	Y^2
1	556	3.79	2107.24	309136	14.36
2	525	3.29	1727.25	275625	10.82
3	510	3.45	1759.50	260100	11.90
4	510	3.45	1759.50	260100	11.90
5	520	3.41	1773.20	270400	11.63
6	505	2.99	1509.95	255025	8.94
7	590	3.60	2124.00	348100	12.96
8	505	2.86	1444.30	255025	8.18
9	490	3.10	1519.00	240100	9.61
10	520	3.10	1612.00	270400	9.61
11	590	3.80	2242.00	348100	14.44
12	355	2.60	923.00	126025	6.76

13	435	3.19	1387.65	189225	10.18
14	615	3.82	2349.30	378225	14.59
15	510	2.92	1489.20	260100	8.53
16	355	2.60	923.00	126025	6.76
17	465	2.96	1376.40	216225	8.76
18	437	3.03	1324.11	190969	9.18
19	475	3.12	1482.00	225625	9.73
20	503	3.57	1795.71	253009	12.74
21	470	3.10	1457.00	220900	9.61
22	430	3.06	1315.80	184900	9.36
23	585	3.77	2205.45	342225	14.21
24	460	3.14	1444.40	211600	9.86
25	492	3.50	1722.00	242064	12.25
26	480	3.60	1728.00	230400	12.96
27	490	3.41	1670.90	240100	11.63
28	530	3.70	1961.00	280900	13.69
29	370	2.91	1076.70	136900	8.47
30	490	3.26	1597.40	240100	10.63
31	480	3.05	1464.00	230400	9.30
32	520	3.58	1861.60	270400	12.82
33	480	3.38	1622.40	230400	11.42
34	505	3.31	1671.55	255025	10.96
35	460	3.39	1559.40	211600	11.49
$\sum$	17213	114.81	56985.91	8585453	380.26

$\sum X$	17213
$\sum Y$	114.81
$n\sum XY$	1994506.85
$\sum X\sum Y$	1976224.53
$n\sum X^2$	300490855
$(\sum X)^2$	296287369
$n\sum Y^2$	13309.0685
$(\sum Y)^2$	13181.3361

$$r_{xy} = \frac{n\sum XY - (\sum X)(\sum Y)}{\sqrt{(n\sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2)(n\sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2)}}$$

$$= \frac{1994506.85 - 1976224.53}{\sqrt{(300490855 - 296287369)(13309.0685 - 13181.3361)}}$$

$$= 0.79$$

Decision of the test
Because obtained $r_{xy} = 0.79 > 0$, thus H_0 is rejected

Statistical Significance Test of Coefficient Correlation r_{xy}
Hypothesis

$H_0 : \rho = 0$

$H_1 : \rho > 0$

Level of Significance

$\alpha = 0{,}05$

Statistical Test

$t = \frac{r_{xy}(N-2)}{1-r_{xy}^2} \; ; (N-2)$

Computation

In the preceding computation, obtained $r_{xy} = 0.79$, and known that N = 35

$$t = \frac{r_{xy}(N-2)}{1-r_{xy}^2}$$
$$= \frac{0.79(35-2)}{1-0.79}$$
$$= 25.41$$

Critical Value of t in one-tailed test

$t_{0.025;33} = 2.042$

Decision of the test

Because obtained $t = 25.41 > 2.042$, t falls into the critical area, thus H_0 is rejected.

After computing the data regarding to the correlation and significance of the correlation coefficient, the findings show that H_0 is rejected, therefore we must accept H_1. Therefore, the result of the correlation reveals that EPT score of English Department students of a university in Purwokerto correlates positively with their CGPA. The correlation coefficient of the two sets of scores is $r_{xy} = 0.79$ at the 0.05 level of significance, one tailed test. This suggests that as EPT score increases, so does CGPA increase. Moreover, the significance of the correlation coefficient can also be seen by results of t-formula with $r_{xy} = 0.79$, t=25.41>2.042, t falls into the critical area, thus H_0 is rejected. Since, H_0 is rejected, we must accept H_1. It means that the correlation coefficient is significance, in other words there is a statistically significant positive correlation between EPT score and CGPA.

These results are in line with some previous research about the language proficiency and academic achievement. Those research presented that there is a significance correlation between language proficiency and academic achievement (Morris & Maxey, 2013; Hasan & Akhand, 2014; David, 2014).

CONCLUSION

Considering the results and discussion presented on the previous section, the research question is answered that there is a significant positive correlation between EPT score and CGPA of English Department students in a university of Purwokerto. In other words, it can be concluded that EPT score correlates positively with CGPA, therefore, it can be predicted that the students who have high EPT score may have high CGPA. Concerning the findings, the students are suggested to improve their English proficiency in order to accomplish their successful academic achievement.

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