

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the conclusions drawn from the entire research project. The discussion begins with a summary of the main findings, followed by an examination of the research's theoretical and pedagogical implications, the limitations of this study, and recommendations for future researchers interested in exploring similar topics.

A. Conclusion

This study aims to investigate the correlation between morphological awareness and lexical richness in EFL academic writing amongst university students. Specifically, this study examines whether students with higher morphological awareness tend to exhibit greater lexical diversity, lexical density and lexical sophistication in their academic writing. Based on an analysis of data collected from 80 EFL students at UIN Syekh Wasil Kediri using Spearman's rho correlation test, the following conclusions were drawn.

Firstly, regarding the relationship between morphological awareness and lexical diversity, Spearman's rho correlation test revealed a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.110$ with a significance level of $p = 0.165$ ($p > 0.05$). This indicates that there is no significant positive relationship between students' morphological awareness and their lexical diversity. Furthermore, based on the interpretation table, the coefficient value of 0.110 falls within the range of 0.00–0.199, which is categorised as a 'Very Low Correlation'. This finding suggests that morphological awareness does not contribute substantially to the variation in vocabulary used by students in their academic writing.

Secondly, regarding the relationship between morphological awareness and lexical density, the analysis revealed a correlation coefficient of $r = -0.328$ with a significance level of $p = 0.001$ ($p < 0.01$). This finding is statistically significant, indicating a significant negative relationship between the two variables. In terms of strength, the absolute value of 0.328 falls within the range of 0.20–0.399, which is categorised as a ‘Low Correlation’. This means that students with higher morphological awareness tend to produce texts with lower lexical density, although the strength of this inverse relationship is relatively weak.

Thirdly, regarding the relationship between morphological awareness and lexical sophistication, the analysis revealed a correlation coefficient of $r = -0.328$ with a significance level of $p = 0.002$ ($p < 0.01$). This finding is also statistically significant, indicating a significant negative relationship between these variables. Based on the interpretation criteria, a coefficient value of 0.328 falls within the range of 0.20–0.399, which is categorised as a ‘Low Correlation’. This indicates that students with higher morphological awareness tend to use less sophisticated vocabulary in their academic writing, although the strength of this negative relationship is still relatively low.

In summary, these findings collectively suggest that the relationship between morphological awareness and lexical richness is more complex than theoretically assumed. Contrary to theoretical expectations derived from Carlisle (2000), Nagy and Anderson (1999), and Kuo and Anderson (2006), this study found that higher morphological awareness does not necessarily translate into richer lexical production. Conversely, for lexical density and

sophistication, a significant but low-order negative correlation was found, whilst for lexical diversity, a non-significant and very low-order correlation was found. This suggests that students with strong morphological awareness may prioritise grammatical accuracy over lexical complexity, possibly due to cognitive constraints in the writing process, which supports Krashen's Monitor Model (1985) and Skehan's Trade-off Hypothesis (1998).

B. Implication of The Research

The findings of this study have several important implications, both theoretical and practical, in the field of English language education. For theoretical implications, this study contributes to the body of knowledge by challenging the linear assumption that morphological awareness directly enhances lexical richness. The significant yet low-order negative correlation found for lexical density and sophistication indicates that the relationship between morphological awareness and lexical richness is not straightforward. This supports the Monitor Model proposed by Krashen (1985), which states that over-reliance on consciously learnt rules can hinder fluency and creativity in language use. Furthermore, the results of this study are consistent with Skehan's (1998) Trade-off Hypothesis within the Complexity, Accuracy, and Fluency (CAF) framework, which suggests that learners may sacrifice lexical complexity (density and sophistication) in favour of morphological accuracy, although the strength of this association is relatively low.

There are two implications for pedagogical. Firstly, for EFL teachers and curriculum developers, these findings provide valuable insights for instructional design. The research findings suggest that explicit morphological

instruction alone is insufficient to enhance lexical richness in academic writing. Writing instruction should integrate training in morphological awareness with strategies to reduce cognitive load and writing anxiety. Secondly, these findings suggest that students can benefit from explicit instruction on how to balance accuracy and complexity in academic writing. Teachers can help students develop an awareness of when to use sophisticated vocabulary and dense structures versus simpler, more accurate forms. Thirdly, writing pedagogy should address affective factors such as writing anxiety, which may mediate the relationship between morphological awareness and lexical richness.

C. Limitations of the Study

Although this study provides valuable insights, there are several limitations that must be acknowledged when interpreting the findings. Firstly, this study employs a correlational design, which limits the ability to draw causal conclusions. The observed relationships may be influenced by other unmeasured variables. Secondly, the sample was drawn from a single institutional context (UIN Syekh Wasil Kediri), which may limit the generalisability of the findings to other populations or educational settings. Thirdly, the measurement of lexical richness was limited to three dimensions (diversity, density and sophistication), whilst other aspects of writing quality, such as grammatical accuracy, coherence, cohesion and argumentative structure, were not examined. Fourthly, the morphological awareness instrument consists of 23 items covering three dimensions; although this instrument demonstrates adequate reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.805), it may not capture all aspects of morphological awareness relevant to academic

writing. Fifthly, the cross-sectional nature of the study provides only a snapshot of students' abilities at a specific point in time. The last, considering that the soft-file (Word) drafts analysed in the present study were not screened using AI-detection tools thus leaving the possibility that some students may have employed generative AI in their writing future researchers are strongly advised to incorporate such detection software to validate the authenticity of digital textual data.

D. Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the finding and limitation study, several directions for future research are recommended. Firstly, future research should employ a longitudinal study to examine the relationship between morphological awareness and lexical richness over time. Secondly, it is recommended that future research expand the sample to include more than just one university. Thirdly, future research could investigate the role of other variables to understand the mechanisms underlying the negative findings in this study. Fourthly, qualitative research methods could be employed to explore the balance between morphological accuracy and lexical richness. Fifthly, experimental research could be used to test whether explicit instructions on balancing accuracy and complexity lead to an increase in lexical richness without compromising morphological accuracy. Finally, future research should take this into account by first verifying students' soft-file writings before inputting them into LCA-AW.

In conclusion, although this study has contributed to our understanding of the complex relationship between morphological awareness and lexical

richness, there is still much to be explored. These findings challenge simplistic assumptions about the benefits of morphological awareness and highlight the need for a more nuanced approach to writing instruction and research. By following up on the recommendations outlined above, future research can build upon these findings and contribute to the development of more effective pedagogical practices in EFL writing education.