



Investigating the Topical and Methodological Trends in ELT Research Conducted by English Education Students

Akhmad Yani✉, Mursid Saleh

Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

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Abstract

This study explored some students' output in doing the research articles according to their trends in topics and methodology. Therefore, this research aimed to determine the tendency and less frequent research topics interest of English Education students at UNNES Graduate. The research design of this study was longitudinal. survey design proposed by Creswell (2012) The sample of the survey was English Education students' papers at UNNES Graduate School from 2016 to 2021 and they were 77 students. The data collection technique was boia the survey and questionnaire. The study found that topic about English Language Teaching, literature, and translation as the existing individual interest were become the tendency in present period. Topics related to teaching strategies, teaching media, L2 remote learning challenges and opportunities, L2 emergency curriculum, L2 skills development, technology as well as assessment become the generate situational interest due to the covid-19 Post-Pandemic era. The study concluded that forty-four of seventy-seven students have an awareness of including remote learning environment-related topics in future research and they need some professional development on integrating remote learning environment issues into their research. Further research may be conducted in the implementation of students' situational interest by enhancing students' performance in national conferences such as those conferences using Research-Based Learning via online training. The goal of this study was supportive to be reflected on the issue of English educational development such providing the further writers to be aware with a set of writing organization techniques to complete the academic papers.

✉Correspondence Address :
Jl. Kelud Utara III No.15, Kel. Petompon, Kec. Gajahmungkur,
Kota Semarang, Jawa Tengah 50237
E-mail: akhmadyani@students.unnes.ac.id

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INTRODUCTION

Research and topic and methodology play a pivotal role in writing a research paper. Research is based on a certain topic and issue, that is currently being discussed and investigated by scholars. In light of this, the research topic is the basis for determining the possibilities of further studies and investigation of such areas. A good research topic helps scholars or researchers to identify the important areas to be investigated and explored. In addition to that, the research methodology provides a clear description and explanation regarding the research plan. Research methodology takes its role as a bridge of research problem and solution. The methodology consists of research design, research procedures, research instruments, and also analysis of research data. Considering the importance of research topic and methodology, an identification and investigation of students' research papers is required.

Topical and methodological trends in achieving a clear paper seem significant to be systematically understood by the students. The aim of this study is that the second language (L2) scholars could get the chance to review newly developed concerns and determine future needs from a local-international comparative perspective (Ma & Kim, 2014; Albiladi, 2020; Valverde-Berrocoso et al., 2020). Academic students' papers are the media of their publication to sustain the medium of knowledge; certain preceding articles were done in analyzing the component of sciences through the related paper conferences by Sarip et al. (2020); Akmilia et al. (2022); Kusuma et al. (2022); Sulistyani et al. (2022).

Before conducting a research, researchers will generally choose an interesting research topic based on the current trends and situations. It consists of primary, secondary, and connected lecture-related topics. Also, it promotes situational interest in conference subthemes, the open journal system, and current problems in English language teaching and learning (Latif, 2018). Research that is novel comprises of urgent and infrequent studies.

According to the frequency figure of the research trends, infrequent research is research that happens or occurs seldom and is uncommon in terms of study topics, designs, and methodologies. In terms of research topics, designs, or methodologies based on community needs surveys, urgent research is something urgent, critical, or requiring immediate attention (Sallam et al., 2020). Also the survey of methodological impact seems urgent to be realized by the researchers to gain their novelty of procedures. The term "methodological" refers to the plans, procedures, or methods used to gather information or proof for analysis to learn more about a subject or comprehend it better. It consists of the following: design, data collection method, sample size, sampling strategy, validity, and data analysis approach (Mazov et al., 2020).

In accordance with the issue of methodological trends in doing the study, the reliability of the study is greatly impacted by the technique used. Every aspect of how research is organized is covered by methodology, which must be supported by evidence. Researchers should be careful about the methodology they adopt in a research considering the wide variety of available research methods, even though no methodology is superior to another. Instead, different methodologies merely aim to reach different goals and produce different types of data (Ukwoma & Ngulube, 2021). Likely, the context of our research study and discuss why we chose a particular approach or technique and avoided others, so that the research findings can be assessed by the researcher or by others (Puri, 2019).

This study was stimulated from certain previous papers which similarly accomplished in the field of topical and methodological trends such studies on research trends in English Studies; the insight into research trends in the area of English scopes where their contributions to particular disciplines of English major were significant is limited in those studies (Ma & Kim, 2014; Farsani & Babaii, 2018; Albiladi, 2020; Valverde-Berrocoso et al., 2022; Sallam et al., 2020; Lin & Lei, 2020).

Students, by realizing their writing competence, must participate in scientific activities such as doing research, reporting on the findings, and publishing the findings in order to contribute to the advancement of technology and science (Iftanti & Shofiya, 2017). However, the very first flaw is that most research on "Research Trends" is presented in the form of formative reports that lack coherence and follow-up action. The study should identify students and ideally conduct the study on emerging trends (Bayyurt, 2019).

The researchers then perceived this current issue of research trend in the field of publishing some authentic research. The researchers are required to possess fairness, openness, and objectivity related to numerous insights of the fields. According to Bayyurt (2019), the objectivity, honesty, openness, fairness, accountability, and stewardship that characterize scientific knowledge are based on individual and collective adherence to key values of objectivity, honesty, openness, fairness, accountability, and stewardship. In science, integrity means that the institutions that do research encourage everyone participating to live according to these standards at every stage of the research process. The research enterprise promotes knowledge by understanding the dynamics that support – or distort – practices that uphold the integrity of research by all participants.

In connection with the urgency of having a trend in any publication papers, identifying research trends, tracking research hotspots, and determining research direction in future years is relevant and valuable for researchers (Han et al., 2020). In any situation of research trend, the content is presented and updated according to the researchers' learning styles and situations using adaptive technology (Vox & Hilton III, 2018). The main problem was the lack of the existing individual research topic interest due to the current issue in English Language and Teaching, especially remote learning environment. Therefore, this study shed light on the research areas and research methodology in English language research.

Based on the critical phenomenon above, the researchers toward this academic report is

going to seek the tendency and less frequency research topics interest of English Education students at UNNES Graduate School with employed the theory of dual-level interest, they were individual interest and generating situational interest (Harackiewicz and Knogler, 2017). To realize its goal, the researchers objectively try to find the discovery and explanation the topical trends of English Education graduate students and its methodological trends.

This study could be beneficial for those who consider in doing this equal theme research. They might achieve and comprehend how the topical trends play vital in claiming the novelty of the study and to what extent the study must be sustained. There similar idea, the advantage of methodological issue which aids the researchers in systematically arranging numerous parts of thesis procedures.

METHOD

The present study aimed at investigating the topical and methodological trends in students' research papers. Quantitative approach was applied to explore and explain the topical and methodological issues on students' writings. Survey design with closed-ended questionnaire was applied (Cresswell, 2012).

The research participants of this study were students of English Education Department at UNNES Postgraduate School in the period of 2016-2020. There are 78 participants, who were chosen using purposive random sampling. Purposive random sampling was chosen since it enables the researchers to collect adequate research data. For data collection, the researchers distributed the questionnaire adapted (Lisa, 2017) by using Microsoft Form through private chat and group chat of WhatsApp messenger. For data analysis techniques, the researchers used figure of frequency to find out the tendency or most frequency topics, research method and data collecting instruments.

The researchers did some procedure to conduct the research. Firstly, the researchers gathered the problem of current situation and

ideal situation. Secondly, the researchers made a review of related literature. Next, the researchers designed a research method and the researchers make a theoretical framework that used for making questionnaire. After that, the researchers distributed questionnaire using microsoft Forms through private chat and group chat WhatsApp Messenger to the graduate students of UNNES. The gathered research data was analyzed and interpreted to indicate the research finding. Lastly, the researchers formulated the research conclusion and suggestion for future research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this section, the researchers would expose the research results and discussion to answer the problem formulation stated in the introduction section. Therefore, it would be presented in four parts. The first part is about students' demographic differences where this issue is presented to know the distribution of the researchers who was the greatest in accomplishing the research in the period of 2016-2021 and who was the lowest. The second part is analysis result of students' existing individual research interest. The third part is analysis result of building situational research interest. The fourth part is analysis result of students' awareness of research topic related to the remote learning environment in post-pandemic era. All parts present the quantitative analysis thoroughly in the form of charts. The last, research discussion presented the interpretation and analysis result of qualitative data used some related theories.

Research Participants' Demographic Differences

Firts, the following chart presents the volume of demographic differences:

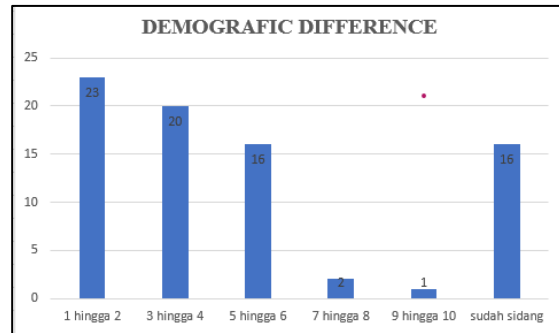


Figure 1. Research Participants' Demographic Differences

The chart presented in Figure 1 provides the information on how the researchers found the data about the students of UNNES who were representative to do a research. Based on the data, there are 23 students who were in their first and second semester, 20 students who were in their third and fourth semester, 16 students who were in their fifth and sixth semester, 2 students who were in their seventh and eighth semester, 1 student who were in their ninth and tenth semester, and 16 students who have pursued their thesis exams. This following chart signified the role of the writers:

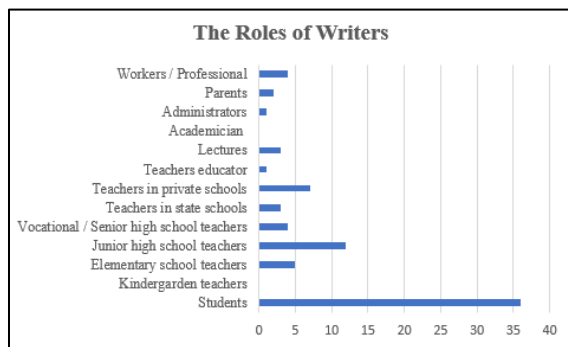


Figure 2. Research Participants' Roles

According to Figure 1 and 2, they presented demographic differences of the students of English Language Education Study Program. The students consisted of first, second, third, fourth, and fifth years and who had completed the study. Most of the students occupation were regular students (36), followed by junior high school teachers. Besides that, there were elementary school teachers, vocational or senior high school teachers, teachers in

state or government schools/institutions, teacher in private schools/institutions, teacher educators, lecturers, administrator, parents, and worker / professional. Unfortunately, among the 78 students, there was no kindergarten teacher and academic. The researchers could explain that the most demographic participant was the students since the forum of this field is addressed to the students of the university.

The second finding was about recent research accomplished by the students; the following was as the chart:

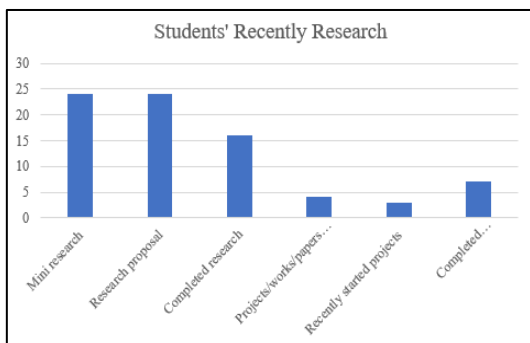


Figure 3. Students' Recent Research

Figure 3 shows the students' recent research. It was based on The 4th UNNES Student Conference 2021 handled by English Department. It is presented that some students were still doing their research while the others have completed their research.

Furthermore, it is revealed that mini-research and research proposal (background, purpose/objective, methods, and assumption/hunch) have the same number (24), then followed by Completed research (background, purpose/objective, methods, outcomes/results, and conclusion and implication). Then, they were followed by completed project/work/paper (background/rationale, methodology, outcomes, discussion—lesson learned and future direction). Meanwhile, project/work/paper being contemplated (background/rationale,

methodology, and expected outcome) and recently started project/work/paper (background/rationale, methodology, progress, and expected outcome) have almost same number (4 and 3)

Research Topic Interest

Continued, the next findings was about related topics of lectures, this research was aimed at finding out the tendency and less frequency research topics interest of English Education students at UNNES Graduate School with employed the theory of dual-level interest, they were individual interest and generating situational interest (Harackiewicz and Knogler, 2017). The results of students' research topic interest is presented in Figure 4.

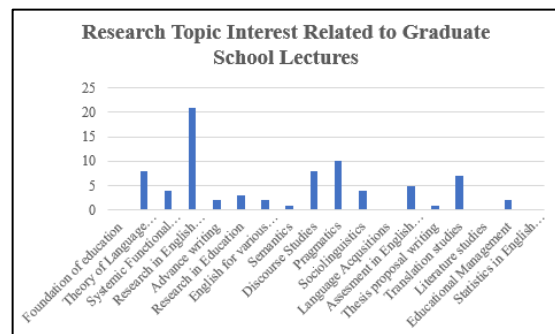


Figure 4. Students' Research Topic Interest

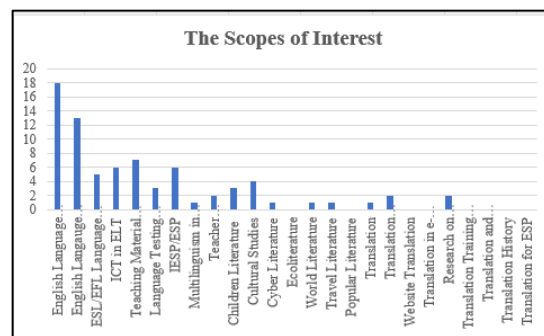


Figure 5. The Scopes of Interest

According to Figure 4 and Figure 5, they revealed the research interest within 78 students' questionnaire responses. From the figure above, there were several types of research topic interest found from the study. Those are foundation of education, theory of English language teaching, systemic functional linguistics, advance writing training and assessment, research in education,

English for various purposes, semantics, discourse studies, pragmatic, sociolinguistics, language acquisitions, assessment in English language teaching, thesis proposal writing, translation studies, literature studies, educational management, and statistics in English. However, it found out that Language Teaching and Literature were most favorite topic interest. The research argued that this scope of journal article was popular among students therefore they did the research within that theme; Language Teaching and Literature was then relevant to the students' focus and their interest.

Research Methodology Used

The sixth, data analysis instrument is formulated based on three types of research, quantitative, qualitative and mixed. Data analysis instrument in Sozbilir's (2016) paper classification form also consists of quantitative and qualitative. The researcher involves mixed instrument since several researches in English education also employ both quantitative and qualitative within the analysis.

Then, category is research design and method which can be broadly categorized into quantitative, qualitative and mixed (the combination of both quantitative and qualitative). Creswell (2012) mention that experimental, correlation, and survey belong to quantitative designs. While, grounded theory, ethnography, and narrative belong to qualitative designs.

Mixed methods and action research designs belong to combine designs. Furthermore, Fraenkel and Wallen (2009) also proposes that experimental, correlation and survey belong to quantitative. While content analysis, ethnography, and historical research belong to qualitative. They also mention mixed method and action research. In the different term, Ary et al. (2010) make a clear distinction between the two. The quantitative is composed of experimental and non-experimental. While the qualitative consists of case study, content analysis, ethnography, grounded theory, historical, narrative, and phenomenological. The research design and method, therefore, are

formulated based on the classification of those experts and what have been found in the research reports.

Moreover, the researchers found through the distribution of research survey to factually gain methodological issue. This following was the figure represented methodology of research design:

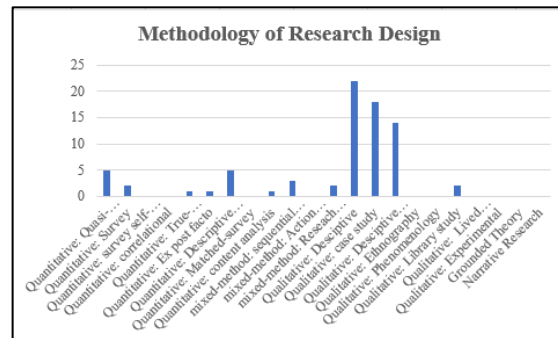


Figure 6. Methodology of Research Design

Figure 6 presents the use of design/method within 78 students' questionnaire responses. From the figure above, there were several types of design/method found from the studied research interest. However, it found out that Qualitative Descriptive Design (22 researches) were widely used unlike other design/method. Followed by 18 studies were found to use Qualitative-Case Study. Also, 14 researches were found to use Qualitative-Descriptive Qualitative. According to the findings, the design which mostly functioned by the students was qualitative descriptive design as this design of methodology was familiar and easy among the students.

Seventh, the data gathering instrument consists of several tools which are commonly used to obtain data for both quantitative and qualitative research. Ary et al. (2010) have defined various data gathering instruments such as field note, observation, interviews, written responses (questionnaire), performance measures and student's information which can be in the form of portfolios or work samples, tests, and many others. They also point out two instruments used in educational research which aim at measuring the value, namely achievement test and aptitude test (Ary et al., 2010). Creswell (2012) mention that qualitative data can be

collected through several instruments such as observation, interview, document and audiovisual materials. Considering the use of these instruments, the researcher will put them in classification if the researcher finds at least two or more than twice.

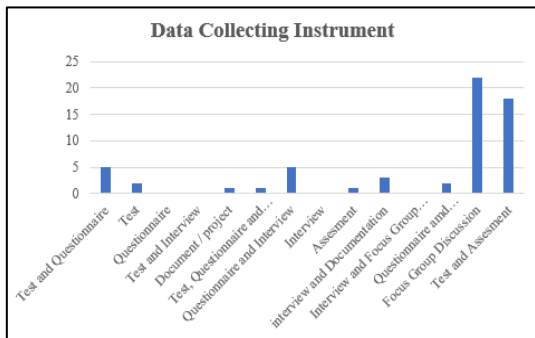


Figure 7. Data Collection Instruments

Figure 7 presents the use of data collecting instruments within 78 students' questionnaire responses. From the figure above, there were several types of instruments found from the studied research interest. Those are test, questionnaire, interview, document analysis, documentation, focus group discussion, and assessment. However, it found out that Document/Project (19 researches) are widely used, unlike other tools. Based on the figure displayed which was commonly employed by the students was documentation; this instrument among the students was quite familiar.

Furthermore, it then followed by 12 types of research are found to use questionnaires and interviews. Also, 10 researchers are found to use tests and questionnaires. Document/Project is known to be used in qualitative research. In line with the previous section which found out that the majority of research method and design investigated is qualitative research.

The present study was conducted to intensively investigate the trends of current and methodological issues discussed in UNNES ELT publications, where the case at hand had not yet been published, which added freshness to the study. The results of this study is significant to provide such a research data in the areas of ELT research trends. It helps future scholars to identify research problems in English language teaching

and practices. The investigation of research methodology could shape the ideas of research plan in solving and finding research data regarding English language practices. In light of this, students of university need to understand the key areas of research data. They have to better understand the limitation and suggestion from others scholars before conducting a research. By understanding the limitations of each, they can figure out what they need to study and further explored.

CONCLUSION

After conducting the research, it was found that topics of English language teaching, literature, and translation as the existing individual interest became the tendency in the present period. Topics related to teaching strategies, teaching media, L2 remote learning challenges and opportunities, L2 emergency curriculum, L2 skills development, technology as well as assessment become generate situational interest due to the covid-19 Post-Pandemic era. Currently, forty-four of seventy-seven students have an awareness on including remote learning environment-related topics in future research and they need some professional development on integrating remote learning environment issues into their research. This study focuses only on discovering the topical and methodological trends published by Students of Universitas Negeri Semarang from 2016 to 2021 which then could be meaningfully impacted to English Education Department as the major clue to publish the research article was innovation; topical trends and its methodological might influenced the readers to comprehend its scopes so the further issued could be elevated. About the findings in this study, further studies are needed to explore the application of students' situational interest theory by enhancing students' performance in national conferences such as the implementation of students' conference using Research-Based Learning via online training.

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