**Relevance of Rhetorical Mode to the Relationship between Lexical Knowledge and Writing Performance**

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**Abstract**

While a number of studies have investigated the role of vocabulary breadth and depth on reading and listening as receptive skills, little research has been done on the role of these aspects of lexical knowledge on productive skills, specifically writing performance. Therefore, the goal of this research was to investigate the relevance of vocabulary knowledge to writing performance of EFL learners with a focus on differences between descriptive and narrative genres of writing. The descriptive correlational design was adopted to conduct this research. To this end, two tests of vocabulary knowledge, i.e., New Vocabulary Levels Test and Word Associates Test, and four writing performance tasks were administered to 101 Iranian Bachelor EFL learners. The correlation between the learners’ average performance on narrative and descriptive writing tasks and their scores on two types of vocabulary tests was analyzed. The results indicated that both breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge are positively related to the quality of writing performance, and this relationship does not depend on the type of the two rhetorical modes under study. This means that, the rhetorical mode in writing has not been a determining factor in studying the effect of vocabulary knowledge on writing performance. It is suggested that aspects of lexical knowledge are systematically treated both in developing the material and the teaching methodology. However, reaching a comprehensive picture on the generic differences in reflecting EFL learners’ writing performance requires further research with a focus on all types of rhetorical modes in foreign language writing.

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