

The Correlation Between Grammar Mastery and Writing Ability of the Eighth Grade Students

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Article History:

Received: 14 November 2022

Revised: 27 November 2022

Accepted: 28 November 2022

Keywords: Grammar mastery, Writing ability, Correlation, Eighth graders

Abstract: Grammar is one of the aspects that are important in any skill of English including writing. The collaboration of grammar and writing is believed to affect the context and content to be attractive and easy to read by everyone. In this research, the researcher used the correlation method in quantitative. In collecting the data, the researcher used a grammar mastery exam with multiple choice questions and a writing ability exam with essay writing questions. As the result, this research represented that there was no significant correlation between students' grammar mastery and writing ability. The results revealed that r_{xy} was less than r_{table} , or that 0,122 was less than 0,361. It was considered that the alternative hypothesis (H_1) was rejected and the null hypothesis (H_0) was accepted. In the suggestion, students' mastery of grammar was relatively low and requires more practice to achieve good results.

INTRODUCTION

English is the language that connects the entire globe, allowing one individual to communicate with another, a group to communicate with others, and a group to communicate with another group. This language has become an international language for the entire world. English has also made its way into businesses, education, media tools, and social media, among other places. English is almost often used between an agency and an international firm. English is the world's most widely used language in global trade, politics, entertainment, international telecommunications, scientific publishing, and the printing of newspapers and other books (Rao, 2019, p.66). In the global world, the English language plays a critical role as the primary means of communication. Some people who do not speak English as their first language utilize it in their everyday life. The majority of these people reside in nations where English is necessary for external purposes, such as communicating and doing business with people from other countries and keeping up with commercial advancements. Furthermore, English is utilized to communicate ideas and cultures as well as to foster positive interactions between individuals from different nations (Prachanant, 2012, p.117). And, English, being the most widely used official language, has played an important role in bridging the gap between individuals who speak different mother tongues. Although English is the second most spoken language, its distribution looks to be far

wider than that of all other languages. English is becoming the de facto lingua franca of diplomacy and the most helpful language for global travel. The importance of English as a worldwide language is highlighted on television and by international leaders (Crystal, 2003; Lazaro & Medalla, 2004 cited in Ulfah, Petrus & Mirizon, 2021). To put it in other words, English is a language that is concerned with writing and communicating using a framework similar to that used in constructing a sentence/paragraph or speech a written or spoken speech which is referred to as grammar.

Grammar is one of aspect in speaking and writing skills concerned with the formation of meaningful sentences using the right words. Grammar, as a collection of rules for selecting words and putting them together to create meaning, is crucial in language instruction. Language does not exist without grammar. It is also difficult for students to communicate effectively in English without first knowing English grammar (Wang, 2010, p.78). Grammar can refer to one of three things. They are the study of a language's rule-based structure (or ground plan), the study object, i.e. the set of rules by which a language may combine words and the morphemes that make up those words into bigger units, and the book in which these rules are stated and presented (Kortmann, 2020, p.79). In conclusion, someone who masters grammar can make a sentence meaningful and apply it with the proper structure in sentences.

Students' grammatical mastery may be determined by how well they know how to construct a flawless sentence since if these requirements are fulfilled, students have truly understood grammar properly and appropriately. Grammar is the act of explaining the structure of phrases and sentences in such a manner that all grammatical sequences in a language are accounted for while all ungrammatical sequences are ruled out. Therefore, grammar mastery is the capacity to master a sentence's structure or sequence appropriately and correctly without making any errors in a sentence that does not follow the grammar that has been deduced from the current structure (Yule, 2010, p.81). Furthermore, grammar may make use of abilities, particularly writing skills, which are important in acquiring sentence construction. And also, grammar has parts that must be considered in compiling or structuring a sentence, i.e., part of speech and tenses too.

Writing is the capacity to construct a sentence with words that have a good and accurate linguistic structure and may be used to compose a text or other document. Writing is, without a doubt, the most challenging skill to perfect for second and foreign language learners. The fundamental cause of this difficulty is that writing is a very complicated process that entails both generating and organizing thoughts as well as turning them into understandable sentences (Choudhury & PGCTE, 2013, p.27). Writing has a unique place in language instruction because it necessitates the practice and understanding of the other three language abilities of listening, reading, and speaking. It also necessitates the mastery of other abilities, such as metacognitive abilities (Klimova, 2014, p.147). And, writing is a useful technique in English teaching. It has always occupied a position in most English language classes, and it is beneficial to develop because it can connect ideas and thoughts, as well as translate someone's thoughts for others (Amelia & Surayatika, 2016, p.32). In conclusion, writing is the hardest ability to perfect, as it is the last set of skills dependents on four existing abilities: listening, reading, speaking, and writing.

Writing entails enhancing the writing by examining the components of assessment in writing, as well as writing is a work consisting of sentences ordered with words that are appropriately chosen. The writing is quite lovely, that is paying attention to the content that someone can read to be interested in the reading, clearly explaining the content of the reading with

its purpose, using good and clear grammar when writing, selecting the appropriate vocabulary, and understanding how the writing works by looking for errors. The sequence in which the five criteria are stated (organization, logical development of ideas, grammar, punctuation/spelling/mechanics, and style and quality of expression) may lead the evaluator to place a higher value on organization and logical development over punctuation and style (Brown, 2004, p.243).

People in Indonesia still have not mastered English, but some have managed to do, so because they attempt to study from anyplace in order to speak English effectively and accurately. English is not one of the languages that people in Indonesia are interested in learning, whether in a speaking environment or otherwise, because Indonesians are known for being hesitant to attempt English and are unsure of what they want to learn in a new language. People in Indonesia have a low average writing skill that has to be improved in other nations since, as previously said, Indonesia is a country that does not speak English in the globe, therefore they must use their own national language on a daily basis. It is only that certain people can communicate in English. Indonesians are hesitant to attempt something unfamiliar to them. In Indonesia, though, things are different. Only a few Indonesians were fluent in English both in writing and, more importantly, speaking when the entire globe adopted English as an international language. Writing is a skill that may be learned through practice. Writing is one of the English skills that should be included into the curriculum, yet it is regarded as the hardest language skill for students to master. It is sometimes regarded as the most challenging language talent since it necessitates a higher level of productive language control than the others. In truth, the students are incapable of writing well. They are unable to produce decent writing because of a lack of vocabulary, difficulties in creating ideas, bad grammar, and so on (Alkautsar, 2015, cited in Wahyumi, 2019, p.2).

In addition, the researcher would select eighth-grade students from SMP Negeri 38 Palembang. Because students in the eighth or second grade of junior high school were still studying English between basic and intermediate learning, especially how to write and utilize good and accurate grammar, they were still studying between basic and intermediate learning. They mastered the essentials in seventh grade, which included the ability to write and produce or compose sentences with tidy and accurate language. However, they still did not understand and did not know how to write and organize grammar properly and correctly in eighth grade, which was one of the issues that many researchers had while investigating children. Others were perplexed as to how to select the appropriate words for a sentence and produce a decent and proper statement. The researcher observed their writing when the researcher asked them to do some exercises on the whiteboard. For example, when they wrote a sentence by using a simple present tense formula, especially in verbal sentences, they always forgot the subject and got confused about the verb because they did not know which of the verb that needs to be added s/es. Not only that, when they made sentences using nominal sentences in the simple present tense, they also forgot the "to be" which the "to be" for I, you, they, we, she, he, it. Nonetheless, the researcher was interested in studying at Junior High School 38 Palembang since it has a large number of eighth-grade students, ranging from VIII.1 to VIII.7, with a total of 229 students. Before the test was provided to the class that would be tested, the researcher could pick the class that would be focused on being tested as well as the class that would be tested.

As a result of what has been stated above, the researcher was highly interested in learning more about it. It was called The Correlation between Grammar Mastery and Writing Ability of SMP Negeri 38 Palembang for 8th Grade Students. The goal of this study was to determine the

size of the association between two factors as well as the influence of the two variables. In addition, based on the above explanation, the researcher was interested in finding out any significant correlation between grammar mastery and writing ability of the Eighth Grade Students of SMP Negeri 38 Palembang.

METHOD

In this research, the researcher used correlation research. Correlation research is one of the non-experimental research methods that study the correlation between two variables with the help of statistical analysis. Correlational research does not study the effects of extraneous variables on the variables under study. Correlational designs can be used to predict scores and explain the link between factors. Investigators utilize the correlation statistical test to define and assess the degree of connection (or link) between two or more variables or sets of scores in correlational study designs. The researchers do not try to control or modify the variables like they would in an experiment; instead, they use the correlation statistic to link two or more scores for each person (Creswell, 2012, p.338).

The population of a location refers to the total number of people who live there. Population is a collection of people who share a common trait. For example, the population of instructors would include all teachers in a school district, while the population of administrators would include all high school administrators. Populations can be tiny or big, as these instances demonstrate (Creswell, 2012, p.142). As a result, the population of this study was students in eighth grade at SMP Negeri 38 Palembang in the academic year 2021/2022.

The sample is a small portion of a population that is utilized to conduct representative research in that community. Sample is a subset of the target population that the researcher intends to analyze in order to make broad conclusions about the target population (Creswell, 2012: 142). In conclusion, the researcher took the sample of thirty students that was tested in class VIII.1 at SMP Negeri 38 Palembang in the academic year 2021/2022.

Validity is a data analysis activity that necessitates evidence gathered from lots of sources to establish that the data is correct. The data will be valid if the data is correct. Validity is the process of gathering evidence to show that the intended test interpretation (of the idea or construct that the test is supposed to measure) corresponds to the test's intended purpose. Test content, response mechanisms, internal structure, relationships with other factors, and testing outcomes all contribute to this data (Creswell, 2012, p.630). As the result, the researcher gave the test to two experts to check the content validity before giving it to class VIII.1 and all of the results obtained in checking the validity of the two expert judgments are valid and also, it got 1,00 and 0,875 were greater or > 0,4.

Reliability is an activity in which researchers evaluate data in order to measure the tests offered in such a way that the findings stay consistent throughout the measurement procedure. The term "reliability" refers to the stability and consistency of an instrument's scoring. When researchers give the instrument numerous times at different times, the results should be almost identical. Scores must also be consistent. When a person answers a question one way, he or she should continue to answer closely similar questions in the same manner (Creswell, 2012, p.159).

Table 1. The Result of the Reliability with Using the SPSS Computation

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,765	50

As the result, a test was regarded to be reliable if its reliability coefficient was between $0,7 \leq \alpha < 0,9$ because the Cronbach's Alpha value was 0,765. The scale was consistent internally.

In this study, the researcher collected data using the test as the instrument. There were two tests: a test of grammar mastery for parts of speech and a test of writing abilities for descriptive text. The researcher conducted tests to examine the following in this study: The first test was the knowledge of grammar in terms of parts of speech. The purpose of the grammar mastery test on part of speech was to collect data on students' grammar mastery of part of speech. The test was an objective multiple-choice test with a total of 30 questions. Each question had four options, such as a, b, c, or d. The second exam was a descriptive text writing skill test. The purpose of the descriptive text writing ability exam was to gather information about students' descriptive text writing abilities. The students would be asked to write three paragraphs with 250 words in the writing and in those paragraphs, the student might write 50-100 words in each paragraph.

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The researcher used correlation method for using the SPSS 25 version to analyze the data to determine whether there was a correlation between students' knowledge of parts of speech and their ability to write descriptive text. And, this research calculated the grammar test score, the writing test score, the frequencies, the percentage, normality test, and linearity test that would be computed to identify the correlation between two variables of SMP Negeri 38 Palembang.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Researcher had examined previously tried tests, as well as computed and found research findings depending on what had been researched. Existing assessments, notably a grammar exam in terms of part of speech and a writing ability test in text descriptions, were used to validate the findings. This grammar test selects the correct one, which is a multiple-choice test consisting of 30 questions based on the previous semester or the first semester of eighth graders materials and a test of the ability to produce descriptive writing consisting of three paragraphs.

The researcher tested the test used the normality test and ensured that whether the data was normally distributed or not. In the normality test, the researcher used the calculation using SPSS in the 25 version. The calculation for the grammar and writing numbers obtained was below.

Table 2. The Result of Normality Test

Tests of Normality			
	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Grammar	,935	0	,067
Writing	,788	0	,000

In the normality test, the researcher used the calculation of the normality test with Shapiro-Wilk and it represented that the result of the grammar test on the normality test was 0,067. 0,067 was greater than 0,05 or on the other hand $0,067 > 0,05$. It meant that Null Hypothesis (H_0) was accepted. Therefore, Alternative Hypothesis (H_1) was rejected. As the result, the data was normally distributed on grammar test in terms of part of speech. Not only that, but it also represented that the result of the writing test on the normality test was 0,000. 0,000 was less than 0,05 or on the other hand $0,000 > 0,05$. It meant that Null Hypothesis (H_0) was rejected. Therefore, Alternative Hypothesis (H_1) was accepted. As the result, the data was not normally distributed on writing test in terms of descriptive text.

After the normality test, the researcher conducted a linearity test to ensure that whether the data had a linearly significant relationship or not. In the linearity test, the researcher used the calculation using SPSS in the 25 version. The calculation for the grammar and writing numbers obtained was below.

Table 3. The Result of Linearity Test

ANOVA Table							
			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Grammar *	Between Groups	(Combined)	575,733	9	63,970	,783	,635
		Linearity	93,933	1	93,933	1,150	,296
Deviation from Linearity		481,801	8	60,225	,737	,659	
Writing	Within Groups		1634,133	20	81,707		
	Total		2209,867	29			

In the linearity test, the Linearity Sig. value was 0,296 greater than 0,05 or on the other hand $0,296 > 0,05$. And also, based on the F-value above, the calculated F-value was 0,737 less than F-table was 2,45 or on the other hand, $0,737 < 2,45$. The number of 2,45 was from Df for numerator (Deviation from Linearity was 8) and Df for denominator (Within Group was 20). It could be concluded that there was a significant linear relationship between the grammar test in terms of part of speech and writing ability in terms of descriptive text.

The researcher had found the number for frequency and percentage with category of the students' grammar mastery in terms of part of speech and writing ability in terms of descriptive text were shown in the table below.

Table 4. The Frequency and Percentage with Category of The Students' Grammar Mastery in Terms of Part of Speech

Number	Score Range	Frequency	Percentage	Category
1	85-100	0	0%	A
2	75-84	0	0%	B
3	60-74	6	20%	C
4	55-59	3	10%	D
5	<55	21	70%	E
TOTAL		30	100%	

Table 5. The Frequency and Percentage with Category of The Students' Writing Ability in Terms of Descriptive Text

Number	Score Range	Frequency	Percentage	Category
1	85-100	2	6,67%	A
2	75-84	1	3,33%	B
3	60-74	1	3,33%	C
4	55-59	3	10%	D
5	<55	23	76,67%	E
TOTAL		30	100%	

After being calculated manually, the percentage obtained in grammar mastery by students was 70% with a score range of <55. The highest number of this percentage was than the other percentage obtained. This percentage obtained also occupied the "E" category and got 21 students. The lowest percentage score for this grammar mastery was 0% with two categories such as "A" and "B" categories with 0 student. Furthermore, the highest percentage score for students' writing abilities was the same as the highest percentage for grammar mastery, which was 76.67% with a score range of <55. The highest number of this percentage was than the other percentage figures. This percentage obtained occupied the "E" category and got 23 students. The lowest percentage score for this writing ability was 3.33% with two categories, such as "B" and "C" categories, with 1 student.

After the linearity test, the researcher conducted a correlation test to ensure that whether the data had a significant correlation or not. The researcher used the SPSS version 25 program to confirm the results of the following calculations. SPSS was used to examine the data to see if there was a correlation between students' understanding of parts of speech and their ability to produce descriptive texts. The SPSS computation is explained below.

Table 7. Finding Correlation with Using SPSS 25 Version Program

Correlations				
			Grammar	Writing
Spearman's rho	Grammar	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,122
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	,521
		N	30	30
	Writing	Correlation Coefficient	,122	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,521	.
		N	30	30

After manual calculations, the researcher also calculated using SPSS to see whether or not there was a significant correlation between the two variables. In the calculation process, the researcher found a value in the table with the value of Sig. (2- tailed) was 0.521 greater than 0.05. Also, based on the Correlation Coefficient (r-xy) column, it got a value of 0.122. And to compare the Correlation Coefficient (r-xy) values, the researcher used the number of Df and looked at the values in a table called the r-table. The r-table was obtained with the number 0.361. After getting the Df value, we could compare the r-xy value, which was 0.122, which was less than the rho-table, which was 0.361. The result reveal that there was no correlation between students' grammar mastery in terms of part of speech and writing ability in terms of descriptive text and also, the interpretation of that was "No or Negligible Relationship".

According to the correlation data, students' lacked knowledge of grammar, how to apply language was inappropriate, and with these issues, students' mastery of grammar was relatively low and requires more practice in order to get amazing outcomes. Students with a low level of grammar mastery, on the other hand, there were some students who did not necessarily perform poorly in writing and some students who did perform poorly in writing. On the other hand, while some students had a high level of grammar mastery, others perform poorly in writing. Grammar errors are mainly caused by issues with students' cognitive abilities and individual characteristics (Mayer, 2002, p.227–232). Language teaching strategies used by a teacher might also lead to errors (Thornbury, 1999, Uibu and Männamaa, 2014, p.96– 131 cited in Uibu & Liiver, 2015, p.72).

In addition, this research was same as the two previous researchers. The first was Patmara (2019) that there was a positive correlation but not significant between the grammar mastery (X) and writing ability (Y) of the sixth semester students of English Education program of UNNES and got the weak correlation (r-xy was 0.241). The second was the research was by Septiani (2014) that there was no correlation between grammar mastery and writing ability and got the very low correlation (r-xy was 0.165). She said that the students' poor performance on the grammar test might be due to a lack of understanding of the grammatical sections and a lack of time to complete the test. They might be perplexed as to how to put the proper words together to form the correct phrases. Other factors that impacted students' writing abilities included the capacity to think creatively and generate ideas, the ability to select outstanding language, the ability to write with appropriate grammar and punctuation, and so on. It simply illustrated those students who did not have strong grammar in their writing might be good in other factors that are often employed in the writing assessment rating scale.

And, evidence related to the previous study written by Joseph J.B. (2010), many people are concerned with "proper grammar" because it is easy to blame grammar when they are having difficulty understanding something. When a writer with poor sentence structure, spelling, and comma usage takes the effort to create an excellent outline, many readers fail to notice the lack of grammatical abilities. Similarly, many writers who believe they have weak writing abilities concentrate on their competence with grammar. Similar situation with previous study of Istiqomah, Raja, & Kadaryanto (2011), grammar, being one of the components of writing, is an important part in writing and definitely affects one's writing. The better one's mastery of grammar, the better one's writing. Some people may be good at producing descriptive text and have many wonderful ideas to express, but they will struggle to express those ideas to others if they lack grammatical skills.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis and discussion in the preceding section, it was possible to conclude that there was no correlation between students' grammar mastery in terms of part of speech and writing ability in the descriptive text of SMP Negeri 38 Palembang in class VIII.1. It was demonstrated by the fact that r_{xy} was 0.122, indicating "No or Negligible Relationship". As a result, the researcher concluded that from the correlation data, students' lacked of knowledge of grammar, how to apply language is inappropriate, and with these issues, students' mastery of grammar was relatively low and requires more practice in order to get amazing outcomes. Students with a low level of grammar mastery, on the other hand, there were some students who did not necessarily perform poorly in writing and some students who did perform poorly in writing. On the other hand, while some students had a high level of grammar mastery, others perform poorly in writing. Who claims that such competence is explicitly focused on the knowledge and skill required to understand and accurately articulate the literal meaning of utterances. Grammatical competence, according to them, is concerned with language aspects and regulations such as vocabulary, word formation, sentence formulation, pronunciation, spelling, and linguistic semantics (Richards and Schmidt, 1983, p.7 cited in Syahara, 2012, p.12).

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