

CORRELATION BETWEEN GRAMMAR MASTERY AND DESCRIPTIVE WRITING ABILITY

Siti Istiqomah, Patuan Raja, Budi Kadaryanto
Email: berlinda.marble@yahoo.com

Abstrak

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mencari tahu apakah ada hubungan antara penguasaan tata bahasa siswa terhadap kemampuan menulis deskripsi. Instrumen yang digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data adalah tes penguasaan tata bahasa dan tes menulis deskripsi. Hasil dari analisis menunjukkan bahwa ada korelasi antara penguasaan tata bahasa siswa dan kemampuan menulis deskripsi mereka sebesar 0.868 pada level signifikan dari 0.05 dengan nilai r tabel 0.361 dan nilai p nya 0.000. Hubungan antara penguasaan tata bahasa siswa dan kemampuan mereka dalam menulis deskripsi dikatakan signifikan karena korelasi koefisien lebih tinggi dibandingkan dengan nilai r tabel ($0.868 > 0.361$) dengan p (probability) 0.000 yang lebih kecil daripada 0.05. Semakin baik penguasaan tata bahasa seseorang maka semakin baik pula kemampuan menulis nya. Jadi, seseorang yang ingin memperbaiki kemampuan menulisnya harus mempelajari tata bahasa.

The objective of this research is to find out whether there is correlation between the students' grammar mastery and their descriptive writing ability. The instruments to collect the data were grammar mastery test and descriptive writing test. The result of the analysis shows that there is a correlation of the students' grammar mastery and their descriptive writing to 0.868 at the significant level of 0.05 with the critical value of r table 0.361 and p was 0.000. The correlation of the students' grammar mastery and their descriptive writing ability is significant since the coefficient correlation is higher than the critical value of r table ($0.868 > 0.361$) with p 0.000 which is less than 0.05. The better one's grammar mastery the better his or her writing ability. Therefore, those who want to improve their writing ability should learn grammar.

Keywords: correlation, descriptive writing ability, grammar mastery

INTRODUCTION

As an international language, English plays an important role in the world. We cannot deny the importance of English since in many countries we find more people communicating in English rather than those who are speaking in Indonesian, Malaysian, or Indian. Therefore, because of the importance of the use of English, The Department of Education in Indonesia has decided English as a compulsory subject.

Every language in the world composes of four skills which cannot be separated from each other. Dawson (1984:4) says that learning a language means learning pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar / structure by practicing the four skills listening, speaking, reading and writing. Therefore, grammar has very close relationship with writing and writing itself takes an important part in a process of learning a language.

Raimes (1983: 76) states that writing is a skill in which we express ideas, feelings and thought which to be arranged in words, sentences and paragraph using eyes, brain and hand. In the same way, Linderman (1983:11) defines writing as a process of communication, which uses a conventional graphic system to convey a message to reader. In short, writing is unspoken communication and it is one of ways to express ideas that involve many aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, idioms and so on.

It is clear that in writing, a writer uses his or her brain to think about ideas and delivers the ideas in a form of sentences. Gould (1989: 30) states that writing is an effort to create a dialogue with readers, and it involves exploring our relationship

to our readers in much the same way that we explore our relationship to people we talk to.

Although writing has been taught since elementary school, there are still many students who cannot write grammatically. Based on the researcher's experience during her teaching practice program (PPL 2011) in SMA N 1 Gedong Tataan. It was found that there were many students who could not write well in English, their English average score was only 50 to 60. Kenedi (1997:2) states that the difficulty of foreign language learners in writing is that students do not know how to write. It means that some students do not know how to communicate their ideas in form of writing

As one of components of writing, grammar takes an important role in writing and clearly it effects one's writing. The better one's grammar mastery, the better his or her writing. The connection between writing and grammar is very important. Grammar helps readers to understand descriptive writing. Some people may be good in writing descriptive text with lots of good ideas to express but if they lack of grammar knowledge, they will have such a trouble in communicating those ideas to other people. As a result, some students may get bad marks in school, or for some writers they may not get anything published. After that people begin learning grammar, they start speaking and learning tenses, gerund and so on. The rules of grammar help to determine the mechanics of writing descriptive text, which what makes the connection between grammar and writing is important. A good comprehension of grammar makes students write any kind of texts effectively. Giving reading and writing tasks help students with real world

applications to understand and to use grammar skills. Furthermore, Weaver (1998) states what all students need is guidance in understanding and applying those aspects of grammar that are most relevant to writing.

The research was conducted at SMA N 1 Terusan Nunyai. The researcher chose the second grade students of the school as the object of the research because the researcher thought that they already had enough grammar knowledge to be tested, since grammar has been taught when they were in elementary school. The researcher believed that it would be easier for students to write descriptive text rather than news item, narrative text or other texts suggested by School Based Curriculum (KTSP). The topics of the writing test were describing a person and a place. The marks were evaluated based on the five components of writing namely content, organization, vocabulary, grammar and mechanics. The grammar test conducted is based on the KTSP curriculum of the third year of junior high schools and it includes simple present tense, simple past tense, imperatives, adverbs and conjunctions.

Therefore, this research aims to investigate whether not there is a correlation between students' grammar mastery and their descriptive writing ability in SMA N 1 Terusan Nunyai.

METHOD

The researcher used co-relational study, which is also called an ex post facto design. To get data needed, the researcher certained the population and the sample from the population. The population in this research was all students who were in

class XI IPA second grade of the school. The sample of this research was taken from classes XI IPA chosen randomly. Then, the researcher prepared grammar test and writing test. The instruments the researcher used to collect the data were grammar mastery test and descriptive writing test. After that, the researcher tried out those tests then analyzed the result. Then, the researcher administrated both the grammar and writing tests.

The researcher evaluated and scored the tests, determined the normality test, the runs test and the homogeneity test. Next, the researcher analyzed the data from the instruments by using Bivariate Correlation. After that, the researcher discussed and reported the result of the data analysis and the last she made some conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

To see how far the correlation between students' grammar mastery and their descriptive writing ability at the second year of SMA N 1 Terusan Nunyai, Lampung tengah, the researcher analyzed the data gathered by using *Bivariate Correlation* (SPSS).

From the data analysis and the computing, it was found that the coefficient correlation between the students' mastery and their descriptive writing ability was 0.868 at the significant level of 0.05

The correlation of the students' grammar mastery and their descriptive writing ability is considered significant since the coefficient correlation is higher than the critical value of r table ($0.868 > 0.361$) with $p < 0.000$ which is less than 0.05 as

Hatch & Farhady (1982:84) state that If $p < 0.05$ H_0 is rejected. Therefore, it means that the correlation of the variables is significant.

The research was only conducted in the small population of students. Therefore, the findings of this study cannot be used as a basic theory in other researches with different and larger population.

Grammar is one of fundamental aspects that effects one's writing, without good grammar mastery, ones may have difficulties in conveying their ideas in writing. The importance of the use of grammar in writing is also noted by Frodesen and Eyring in Fatemi (2008) believe that a focus on form (grammar) in composition can help writers develop and enrich linguistic resources needed to express ideas effectively.

Davies (1998:25) says that learning how to write in English is important for many language learners, particularly those who are studying at colleges and universities. To write a descriptive text well, it requires not only good grammar mastery because other factors must influence one's ability in writing. One should know how to use. tenses properly, how to write logic sentences coherently with cohesion, clarity, originality and unity, how to make various sentences by using various proper words (the use of right words to convey the meaning). One should notice the use of graphic convention on the language such as capitalization, italics, abbreviation, numbers, hyphen and spelling. In conclude, those components are needed in making good descriptive paragraphs.

Viet (1989) says that knowledge of structure can also give us a tool for analyzing our writing. Besides the experts' statement about the correlation between grammar and writing, the researcher also found and related her research findings with the previous research entitled correlation between students' structure mastery and their descriptive writing ability at the first year of SMA N 1 Bandar Lampung written by Juniati (2008). In the research, from the result of the data analyzed, Juniati found that the coefficient correlation of her research was 0.656 at the level of significant of 0.001, It was higher than the critical value of r table ($0.565 > 0.446$). So, the result of her research showed there was a positive correlation between students' grammar and their descriptive writing ability. In relation to the facts, this confirms that there is a correlation between one's grammar mastery and his or her writing ability.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the data analysis, the data computing and the research findings, the conclusion can be elaborated as below:

1. There is a positive and significant correlation between students' grammar mastery and their descriptive writing ability. Based on the data analyzed by using *Bivariate* Correlation (SPSS), the researcher found that the coefficient correlation was 0.868. Therefore, the correlation of the students' grammar mastery and their descriptive writing ability is considered very significant as the coefficient correlation is higher than the critical value of r table ($0.868 > 0.361$) with p which is less than 0.05.

2. The findings of the research reveal that the students' grammar mastery can help them increase their ability in writing descriptive text. Students who are good in grammar they might also be good in writing as it can be seen from their grammar and writing score. It showed it was easier for some students who understood grammar well to write a descriptive paragraph coherently and smoothly rather than those students who were lack of grammar knowledge.

Suggestions

Related to the conclusions above, the researcher wants to propose some suggestions as follows:

1. Based on the result of the research, the researcher found that there were few students who could not write grammatically. Therefore, the researcher recommends the students to get accustomed to writing the diary in order to sharpen their ability in writing.
2. It is recommended for the SMA English teachers to focus more on teaching the students about grammar since it is one of crucial writing components.
3. In order to increase the students' ability in writing, the teacher should give more practice to the students to write various texts.

REFERENCES

- Davies, Stephen J. 1998. *Creative Writing*
<http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/usia/E-USIA/forum/vols/vol36/no4/p25.htm>.
 Retrieved on March, 11st 2014.
- Dawson, Collin. 1984. *Teaching English as A Second Language, A Practical Guide*. London: Harrap United.
- Fatemi, Mohammad A. 2008. *The Relationship Between Writing Competence , Language Proficiency And Grammatical Errors In The Writing Of Iranian Tefl Sophomores*.
http://eprints.usm.my/10398/1/the_relationship_between_writing.pdf.
 Retrieved on March, 11st 2014.
- Gould. 1989. *The Art of Writing*. New York: Random House Inc.
- Hatch, E. and Farhady, H. 1982. *Research Design and Statistic for Applied Linguistic*. Boston: Heinle and Heinle Pulisher.
- Juniati. 2008. *Correlation Between Students' Structure Mastery and Their Descriptive Writing Ability at SMAN 1 Bandar Lampung*. Bandar Lampung: Universitas Lampung. Unpublished.
- Linderman, E. 1983. *A Rethoric for Writing Teachers*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Raimes, A. 1983. *Techniques in Teaching Writing*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Viet, Richard. 1989. *Discovering English Grammar*. Boston; Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Weaver, Constance. 1998. *Lessons to Share on Teaching Grammar in Context*. Boynton-Cook, A division of Reed Elsevier Inc., Portsmouth, NH.