



The Correlation between The Vocabulary Mastery and Writing Skills of the Ninth Graders of SMP Negeri 1 Bandongan

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ABSTRACT

Four language skills are needed to master a language: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Two aspects are needed to communicate in written form: vocabulary mastery and writing skills. Someone needs writing skills and extensive vocabulary knowledge to create good writing. Even so, it was found that there were still students who had difficulties in translating words from Indonesian to English and vice versa, challenges in using the right words, and problems in constructing sentences in English. In addition, some students still have limited knowledge of vocabulary. This study focused on finding the students' vocabulary mastery level, writing skills level, and the correlation between vocabulary mastery and writing skills. A person will master four language skills, including writing, easier if they have a broad vocabulary. The more comprehensive the vocabulary knowledge, the more vocabulary will be used in writing; hence, the vocabulary used in the writing will be more varied. Correlation research was used in this study. The study population was 9th graders of SMP Negeri 1 Bandongan, and the sample was 29 students from class 9B at SMP Negeri 1 Bandongan. The study instruments were a vocabulary test and a writing test. The instruments were derived from previous research. The data taken was analyzed using a correlation test with SPSS. The results of this study show no significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and writing skills with the Sig value. (2-tailed) $0.145 > 0.05$. Furthermore, the correlation coefficient is 0.278. Hence, the correlation between vocabulary mastery and writing skills was low. This study suggests that teachers and students focus on learning and mastering vocabulary and other aspects that influence writing ability and the writing itself.

Keywords: Vocabulary Mastery, Writing Skills, Correlational Study

INTRODUCTION

According to Sadiku (2015) and Mahmudah (2014), there are four language skills people need to master to master a language: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Sadiku (2015) also stated that the four skills might benefit students: providing scaffolded support, chances

for creation, situations for exchanging actual information in the language, confirmation that students have learned the material and confidence. Apsari (2017) stated that writing allows people to express their thoughts and ideas while also learning how to compose language, spell, assemble a storyline, and make

a logical case or persuade others. Thus, writing, as one of the four critical aspects of language (Arochman et al., 2024), is a way people communicate with each other besides oral communication.

Aside from reading, listening, speaking, and writing, according to Mahmudah (2014), three aspects of language play a vital role in supporting the four skills of language: vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Thus, vocabulary is necessary for mastering any language, including English (Alam, 2023). Furthermore, Rashid et al.,(2022) stated that if the students lacked a diverse vocabulary, they would be unable to comprehend the thoughts of others or express the opinions they have. Moreover, Rohmatilah (2014) stated that vocabulary plays a vital role in learning a language because vocabulary is needed to learn reading, speaking, writing, and listening. Therefore, vocabulary is essential since it is a fundamental matter in mastering a language because, with a broader range of vocabulary, it is easier for people to make any sentence they want.

The writers found some issues during the pre-observation at SMP Negeri 1 Bandongan. During the pre-observation, the writers observed that some students had considerable difficulty writing paragraphs and made mistakes. On the other hand, there were some students who did not experience significant difficulties, and they made fewer mistakes than those who made many mistakes in writing paragraphs.

First, the students could not choose the right words for certain vocabulary when translating English to Indonesian. The students used the incorrect words; for example, they translated the word 'hard' into '*keras*,' while the right meaning for the word is '*sulit*.' Meanwhile, in translating Indonesian into English, students translated word for word and literally. The students also still misspelled English words. For example, '*panas yang tinggi*' is translated into 'hight heat,' while the right translation is 'high heat.'

Next, for writing, students still need to bring their dictionary to help them translate. They had difficulties in making English forms of Indonesian words when they were forbidden to use the dictionary and vice versa. The students admitted that they felt inconvenient and uncomfortable if they had to open the dictionary whenever they found vocabulary they did not understand whether it was translating vocabulary from English or Indonesian.

Apart from having difficulties finding the correct use of words and having a limited vocabulary, students also had difficulty writing, such as when they needed to write a short text or paragraph. They already knew the structure of the text, but after they were tasked with creating one, they encountered difficulties. Some of them forgot the correct text structure and were unsure whether they had already written the text appropriately. At the same time, others had difficulty in forming English sentences. The difficulty in forming sentences is

in terms of grammar and vocabulary because they have limited vocabulary knowledge.

From the issues above, the writers are interested in conducting the study to know the students' vocabulary mastery and writing skills level, and whether there is a correlation between vocabulary mastery and writing skills among the participants of ninth graders. This is because strengthening the capacity to utilize English in six language skills: listening, speaking, reading, viewing, writing, and presenting (Rubin et al., 2023) in diverse sorts of text is the main goal of learning the language. As the students are already in the ninth grade of junior high school, they are expected to achieve the ability to communicate in English as part of life skills. Communication is not only oral but also written. This is stated in the goal of learning outcomes (*Capaian Pembelajaran*) F phase by *Kementrian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi Republik Indonesia* (2022). Thus, it is not good if the issues continue because students will use inappropriate words and have difficulty writing appropriately and adequately.

According to Hatch & Brown (1995), the word 'vocabulary' refers to a list or collection of terms for a specific language or a list or set of words that particular language speakers may use. Meanwhile, Vossoughi & Zargar (2009) define vocabulary as the most essential learning component, and words serve as people's way of expressing emotion, thought, and world-learning (Minalla, 2024). In addition, Lolita (2016) described that one of the language skills,

vocabulary, deals with words, their definitions, glossaries, and some words used in the language that the students are highly familiar with and use to interact with others.

According to the statements above, it can be concluded that vocabulary can be defined as words or sets of words with meanings that serve as the essential elements of language or learning, used by language speakers to convey ideas and emotions or to gain knowledge about other people and things.

Furthermore, there are several definitions of writing. As stated by Nunan (2003), one of them is that writing can be a mental process that involves developing new ideas, figuring out how to communicate them, and structuring them into sentences and paragraphs so that the reader will understand. It is a process as well as a product. The writers create, plan, write, revise, and read. Writing is frequently a repetitive process that can sometimes get disorganized (Mejia, 2024). In addition, Brown & Lee (2015) stated that writing involves thinking. The thinking, drafting, and revising processes that result in written goods call for particular knowledge and abilities.

From the statements, it can be concluded that writing is an iterative process in which a person expresses their thoughts, ideas, or opinions through written media, which requires complex abilities that require them to follow rules to make writing clear and meaningful, where these rules include sentence structure and punctuation.

In addition, according to Zemach and Rumisek (2006), a process paragraph or procedure text describes how to do something. The text may explain the steps the reader needs to follow to complete an activity. Thus, procedure text instructs the reader on how to perform a task. The text is divided into three sections: the what-to-do/purpose statement, a list of materials, and step-by-step instructions.

METHODS

The writers applied correlational research to conduct this study. The objective of correlational research is to identify causes, effects, or differences that already exist between groups of people. The statistical correlation test defines and quantifies the level of connection or correlation between two or more variables or sets of scores. It is appropriate for this study to examine the correlation between vocabulary mastery and writing skills of ninth graders of SMP Negeri 1 Bandung. The first variable is the ninth graders' vocabulary mastery. This was symbolized by "X." For the second variable is the ninth graders' writing skills. This was symbolized by "Y."

The population is the ninth graders of SMP Negeri 1 Bandung for the academic year 2023/2024. The total number of ninth graders is 191 students from six classes. For the population, in the study, the writers used purposive sampling. The writers took 15% of the population. This is because, as stated by Arikunto (2006), in which the population is less than 100, it is better to take the population as

the sample. However, if the population is bigger, the sample could be 10-15% or 20-25% or more. 15% of 191 is 28.65, which then be rounded up to 29. Therefore, the writers took 29 students from class 9B as a sample since the English teacher recommended that the writers take a sample from class 9B. The 9B students' scores from assignments and tests were more varied compared to the other classes.

This study used tests as the research instrument. There was a vocabulary test consisting of multiple-choice questions and a writing test in which the students had to make a procedure text. The vocabulary test was previously used by Lia, (2023) in her study in a post-test for students of junior high school. The validity and reliability of the instrument have been tested using the ANATES 4 program. In the other hand, the writing test was previously used by Suaeni (2015) in her study of the post-test for ninth graders of junior high school to test whether or not there was an improvement in students' writing abilities. The validity and reliability of the instrument have been valid and reliable, since the writing test was developed together by Suaeni and the English teacher.

For the validity and reliability of the data obtained from the vocabulary test, the score obtained from the vocabulary test is 5 if the student's answer is correct and 0 if the answer is wrong. The score obtained by students is defined. Meanwhile, for the writing test score, the writers used scores from three different raters; the two raters besides the writers were

two other researchers. The scores from the three raters were then averaged to find the final score of the writing test.

In collecting data, the writers conducted a test. The tests were carried out to determine the vocabulary scores and writing scores, with a multiple-choice test for the vocabulary test and a procedure paragraph writing test for the writing skills test. Then, the writers analyzed the data on students' vocabulary mastery level, students' writing skills level, and data of correlation between vocabulary mastery (X) and writing skills (Y).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

From the vocabulary test carried out by the writers on 29 students from class 9B, scores were obtained with an average of 85,17. The highest score was 95, and the lowest score was 65. Meanwhile, from the writing test carried out by the writers on 29 students from class 9B; the writers analyzed the students' writing based on the writing composition score rubric by Brown (2004). Student writing results were analyzed based on organization, logical development of ideas, grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics, and style and quality. The highest score for each category was 20, and the lowest was 1. Hence, if a student gets a score of 20 for each category, he will get a score of 100. After analyzing the writing test scores, the highest total score from the writing test was 91.00, and the lowest score was 51.00. The average writing test score was 71.23.

The normality test was carried out after getting the students' vocabulary test and writing test scores. The normality test was carried out using Shapiro-Wilk with the SPSS program. The Sig. value of the vocabulary test was 0.011, while the Sig. value of the writing test was 0.647. From these results, the Sig. value of the vocabulary test was less than 0.05, so it can be said that the data was not normal. In addition, the Sig. value of the writing test was more than 0.05, so the data can be said to be normal.

After doing the normality test, the writers determined the students' vocabulary mastery level using Arikunto's formula. First, the writers determined the class interval, then, after found the class interval was 10, the writers divided the students' score into three categories, as follows:

Table 1. Vocabulary Mastery Level

Student's Score	Categories	Number of Students	%
65 – 75	Low	4	13.79
76 – 85	Average	11	37.93
86 – 95	High	14	48.27

From the table above, classes were divided into three categories: low, average, and high. Student scores from 65-75 were categorized as 'low,' while student scores from 76-85 were categorized as 'average.' Student scores were categorized as 'high' if the student's score was between 86-95. There were 4 students (13.79%) in the 'low' category, 11 students (37.93%) in the 'average' category, and 14 students (48.27%) in the 'high' category. Therefore, most of the students were in the high category. It can be

concluded that the students' vocabulary mastery level was at a high level. With the students' high scores on vocabulary tests and their vocabulary mastery that were categorized as high level, students were considered to have extensive knowledge of vocabulary.

After determining the students' level of vocabulary mastery, the writers calculated the students' level of writing skills. The writers divided the students' scores into three categories; namely low, average, and high, as follows:

Table 2. Writing Skills Level

Student's Score	Category	Number of Students	%
51,00 – 64,33	Low	8	27.58
64,34 – 77,67	Average	13	44.82
77,68 – 91,00	High	8	27.58

A score range of 51.00 – 64.33 categorized as 'low' and a score range of 64.34 – 77.67 categorized as 'average.' Meanwhile, a score range of 77.68 – 91.00 was categorized as 'high.' There were 8 students (27.58%) who scored in the 'low' category and 13 students (44.82%) in the 'average' category. The remaining 8 students (27.58%) were in the 'high' category with the

highest scores. Therefore, most of the students were in the average category.

The students do not face significant difficulties in compiling texts with a good and correct structure. The text parts, such as the title, materials/tools, and step-by-step instructions, have been arranged well. Students were also quite good at using basic writing rules such as the use of capital letters and punctuation, although sometimes they were still missed when writing text, and there were still many spelling errors. In grammar, students have mastered basic grammar, although they still face difficulties when they have to write complex or long sentences.

Meanwhile, in the logical development of ideas and styles and quality of expression, students still have difficulty expressing ideas and developing them into writing. Apart from that, students still experience difficulties and confusion in choosing and determining the right vocabulary, thus, sometimes, they still use inappropriate vocabulary and terms in the text.

Then, to determine the correlation between vocabulary mastery and writing skills, the writers used the Rank Spearman test in SPSS. The results of the correlation test were as follows:

Table 3. Correlation Test

		Vocabulary Mastery	Writing Skills
Spearman's rho	Vocabulary Mastery	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.278
		N	29
	Writing Skills	Correlation Coefficient	.278
			1.000

	Vocabulary Mastery	Writing Skills
Sig. (2-tailed)	.145	.
N	29	29

From the correlation test, the Sig. (2-tailed) between vocabulary mastery and writing skills was 0.145. Meanwhile, the correlation coefficient value between vocabulary mastery and writing skills was 0.278. With the value of Sig. (2-tailed) $0.145 > 0.05$, there is no significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and writing skills. To determine the significance of the relationship between the two variables, using the R_{value} interpretation table, the writers determined the significance of the correlation between the two variables. With a correlation coefficient value of 0.278, it was known that the correlation between vocabulary mastery and writing skills was low. Hence, there was still a correlation between vocabulary mastery and writing skills, even though it was at a low level.

Both vocabulary mastery and writing skills were needed in written communication. However, through the results of the correlation test, it was known that there was no significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and writing skills. The correlation between the two variables was low. This was in contrast to the statement by Maesaroh & Reknosari (2021), who said that vocabulary mastery had a positive effect on writing skills. This was also in contrast to studies conducted by Farikhah (2012), and Utami (2017) where the three studies also showed results that there was a significant

correlation between vocabulary mastery and writing skills.

In a study conducted by Maesaroh and Reknosari (2021), which looked at the effect of vocabulary mastery on writing skills, it was known from the results that the number of samples used as respondents was 20. The average score of students on the vocabulary test was 64.5. Meanwhile, the average score of students on the writing test was 68.75. They analyzed the data using a simple linear regression test and a significant test. From the test, it is known that the value of $F_{\text{count}} > F_{\text{table}}$ is a value of $F_{\text{count}} = 5.67 \geq F_{\text{table}} = 4.74$, which shows $F_{\text{count}} > F_{\text{table}}$. The result indicates that vocabulary mastery has a positive effect on writing skills.

In the research conducted by Utami (2017), 35 items of multiple-choice questions were used as vocabulary tests, and recount text was used as a writing test. The mean for the vocabulary test was 68, while the mean for the writing test was 69.3. The students' scores on the vocabulary test and writing test varied greatly, which showed that the students' vocabulary mastery and writing skills were different. The normality test results showed that both data were normally distributed, and the linearity test results showed that both data were linear. Thus, Pearson's Product Moment correlation test was used as the correlation test. The results of the correlation test showed that r-

$\rho > r_t$, with a value of $0.909 > 0.442$, indicating that there is a significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and writing skills.

In research by Farikhah (2012), a sample of 40 students was used. The results showed that the students' vocabulary ability was 'good,' with a score of 6.8. Meanwhile, the results of the writing test using narrative text were 'good,' with a score of 6.45. The result of the normality test was that both variables were normally distributed, so the Pearson correlation test was used as the correlation test. The result of the correlation test shows a correlation coefficient value of 0.66, which indicates that there is a correlation between vocabulary mastery and writing skills at the level of 'sufficient.'

In previous studies, students' vocabulary mastery and writing ability had similar average scores. Research by Maesaroh & Reknosari (2021) shows that the average difference in vocabulary test and writing test scores is 4.25. In the research by Utami (2017) the average difference in vocabulary test and writing test scores was 1.3. Then, in a study by Farikhah (2012), the average difference between the vocabulary test and writing test scores was 0.35. The average difference shows that the level of students' ability in vocabulary mastery and writing skills is not much different, or in other words, equal.

The different result of this study may be due to the questions level of vocabulary test being considered too easy by participants in this school. Previously, the vocabulary test consisting

of multiple-choice questions was used by Lia (2023) in her study in other school. Although the vocabulary test was valid and reliable, the different level of both schools can be considered to be the cause of the result that influence the different result in this study. Moreover, the writing test used in this study perhaps was more difficult compared with participants in other school. Thus, it affected the result of this correlation of the study.

In this study, the students' vocabulary mastery level was in the high category, while the student's writing skills level was in the average category. This showed that students had extensive vocabulary knowledge, even though their writing skills level was average. This also showed that students' writing abilities were not determined by their vocabulary level alone. From a statement by Mahmudah (2014), there were three aspects of language that support the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing): vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. Therefore, the average level of students' writing skills may be influenced by other aspects besides vocabulary mastery.

Mastering four language skills are needed so that it can be integrated in learning vocabulary and grammar. Integrated skills can be used for EFL learners to learn vocabulary and grammar (Kitila et al., 2023). Since vocabulary is one of important aspects for EFL learners (Wang, 2023), thus mastering vocabulary can be also crucial factor for learners in writing. Besides, mastering vocabulary is affected by language

acquisition. Meanwhile, first or native language learners must transfer their knowledge so that they know the English vocabulary (Octaviani et al., 2024). Thus, the cognitive development of every learner is also different. Therefore, it causes their writing skill is also different.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

Based on data analysis of students' vocabulary mastery and writing skills, the writers can conclude several things as follows:

1. The students' vocabulary mastery was at a high level, with the majority of students (48.27%) scoring high on the vocabulary test. Apart from that, the students' average score on the vocabulary test was also high, with a score of 85.17. This shows that students' vocabulary mastery was extensive.
2. The students' level of writing ability was at an average level, even though their vocabulary mastery level was high. The results of data analysis of student writing test scores show that the majority of students (44.82%) scored in the average category. Apart from that, the average student writing score was 71,23. This average score was lower than the average score on the vocabulary test (85.17).
3. There was no significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and students' writing skills. This was shown by the results of the correlation test, which shows that the value of Sig. (2-tailed) between

vocabulary mastery and writing skills was 0.145. The value of Sig. (2-tailed) $0.145 > 0.05$, which indicates that there was no significant correlation between the two variables. Furthermore, the correlation coefficient was 0.278. Hence, from the R-value interpretation table, it was known that the significance value between vocabulary mastery and writing skills was low.

Suggestions

The result of this study is expected to be a valuable reference for students and teachers that it was important for students to have extensive knowledge of vocabulary, but it was also important to master other aspects that can support the four language skills, such as grammar and pronunciation. Thus, teachers need to give a good strategy so that learners can master vocabulary and increase their writing skill. Moreover, further studies can be done to find out the correlation to other language aspects like grammar or reading comprehension.

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