THE CORRELATION BETWEEN STUDENTS' MASTERY OF GRAMMAR AND WRITING ABILITY OF THE TENTH GRADE

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Abstract

The objective of this research was to find out the correlation between students' mastery of grammar and writing ability of the tenth grade of SMA Negeri 1 Pasangkayu. This research used correlation research design. The research sample was X IPA 1 which consisted of 40 students which selected by using cluster sampling technique. Technique of data collection was questionnaires and tests. In analyzing the data, the researcher applied Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and Significance of Coefficient Correlation formula. The researcher used 0.05 significant level with 38 (40 – 2) degree of freedom (df), the researcher found that *t*-counted (6.748) was higher than *t*-table (2.712). The result of this research was categorized substantial. It means that there is a significant correlation between students' mastery of grammar and writing ability of the tenth grade of SMA Negeri 1 Pasangkayu.

Keywords: Correlation; Mastery of Grammar; Writing Ability

INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the important things in our life. One of the languages which is very important to be mastered is English. Mastering English helps us to communicate with people from different cultures or countries. English has already been taught in our country as foreign language. English is taught to the students in formal school from kindergarten up to university. By using English, students can develop their competence in many fields.

The students have to learn three components (grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation) and four skills (writing, speaking, listening and reading) of English. The components and skills have a correlation to one another such as grammar and writing. There is assumption "a good writing has to contain a good grammar". Based on the assumption for the people who want to write sentences, paragraphs, essays and stories, they have to master grammar as requirement of good writing. Swan (1998:19) states, "Grammar is the rule that says how words changed to show different meaning, and they combine into sentences". It

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means that grammar is the regulation of forming a different meaning of words which use to construct a sentence in writing. Concerning to the previous statement Haussamen (2003:xiii) states:

> The term grammar refers to two kinds of knowledge about language. One is subconscious knowledge, the language ability that children develop at an early age without being taught. The other kind of knowledge is the conscious understanding of sentences and texts that can help students improve their reading and writing abilities by building on that subconscious knowledge.

The statement above clearly explains that the native learners can speak or write automatically by using correct grammar without learning and the non native learners, they have to learn how to construct correct grammar firstly before they speak or write.

Langan (1984:96) states, "Writing is a skill like driving, typing, or even preparing a good meal. Like any skill can be learned". The statement shows that everybody can write a good writing, but she or he has to learn how to write correctly before starting to write. In English writing, most students think that to write well is not easy because it is more complex skill. When students want to write, sometimes they think what first should be written and what kind of tenses should be used. Lyons and Heasley (1987:2) states:

> It is very difficult to write like Shakespeare or D. H. Laurence in a language which is not your own. But you are not aiming at getting literature: you simply need to able to write clear, accurate English which has central idea and other related information and gets the meaning across to your reading.

The statement above clearly explains that it is very difficult to write sentence, paragraph, essay, and others because we are not the expert of the language. We need to know how to write English clearly and accurately. The idea or message of our writing has to able to be understood by readers.

Every student should realize that many ways can be used by them to train them selves how to get a good writing such as using kind of text which related to their school curriculum. Recount text is one kind of text which is taught at senior high school. Anderson (1997:48) defines, "Recount is a piece of text retells past events which are usually told in order in which they happened". The statement explains that recount is one of ways which can be used by any person to re-explain in detail what she or he had already done in the past time. Recount is used to relate experiences or retell events for the purpose of informing, entertaining, or reflecting. In general the tense that is often used in recount is past tense form. Azar (1999:27) states, "Simple past indicates that an activity or situation began and

ended at a particular time in the past". It is clear that we use simple past when we want to express action or activity which happens in the past.

Simple past tense as one of the materials of English lesson has been taught in the tenth grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Pasangkayu, and then the school teachers have given many books and applied appropriate approach, technique, or method to the students to improve their ability in understanding a text. However, based on the preliminary study, most students of SMA Negeri 1 Pasangkayu still have many difficulties in writing a text. It can be seen by the mistakes in using tenses and organization which they made when they write a text. The teacher showed test results in writing a text. For the students who could not write well, their test results showed there were many mistakes and errors which have been done by them but for the students who could write well, their test results showed that they wrote the text in correct way and good arrangement.

Based on the explanation above the researcher conducted the research about the correlation between students' mastery of grammar and writing ability of the tenth grade of SMA Negeri 1 Pasangkayu. The research question was formulated as follows "Is there any significant correlation between students' mastery of grammar and writing ability of the tenth grade of SMA Negeri 1 Pasangkayu?". The objective of this research was to find out the correlation between students' mastery of grammar and writing ability of the tenth grade of SMA Negeri 1 Pasangkayu.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher employed correlation research design. Best and Khan (2006:378) state, "Correlation is the relationship between two or more paired variables or two or more sets of data". The research was analyzed by using product moment correlation. It is usually used to correlate two variables based on its correlation coefficient value. It is useful to describe and to find out the significance of the correlation between those two variables, variable X and variable Y.

mastery of grammar $\longrightarrow$ writing ability

$\qquad$ X $\qquad\longrightarrow\qquad$ Y

Best (1981:8) defines, "Population is any group of individuals that has one or more characteristic in common that is interest to the researcher". There were two vocations of the tenth grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Pasangkayu, they were science and social. In this

research, the researcher took the science classes as the population because the problem of the research was found there. It could be seen in the following table:

Table 1: Science Class Distribution

No.	Classes	Number of Students
1.	X IPA 1	40
2.	X IPA 2	40
3.	X IPA 3	40
4.	X IPA 4	41
5.	X IPA 5	39
Total		**200**

Best (1981:8) states, "A sample is a small of the Population that is selected for observation and analysis". Based on this statement, the researcher took science vocation which consisted of five parallel classes. Considering the large number of the students, the researcher needed to select a sample. This could make easy to conduct the research. In selecting the sample, the researcher used cluster sampling technique. There were some steps in selecting the sample. First of all, the researcher prepared five pieces of paper and wrote the name of each class. Then, they were fold and put into the glass, and then the researcher shook the glass thoroughly. After that, the researcher dropped out one of them from the glass. The first paper which fallen from the glass was the sample of this research. It was class X IPA 1.

Best and Khan (2006:167) state, "Variables are the conditions or characteristics that the experimenter manipulates, controls, or observes". In this research, there are two variables: students' mastery of simple past tense as variable (X), and students' ability in writing recount text as variable (Y).

In conducting his research at SMA Negeri 1 Pasangkayu, the researcher used two instruments, they were questionnaire and test. The questionnaire consisted of 10 questions given in the class room and collected it after 15 minutes. The tests were in subjective and objective test which consisted of 20 questions. The subjective text was designed based on their own words and ability in writing text. The students wrote a paragraph which tells about recount text. It was given at the second meeting and collected it at the end of the meeting. The objective test was in completion and multiple choice tests where the students changed and chose the form of verb into simple past tense. It was given on the first meeting after the students collected the result of their questionnaire and collected it at the end of the meeting.

The result of questionnaire was analyzed by using the percentage formula by Hatch and Farhady (1982:92) as follows:

$$P = \frac{F}{n} \text{ x } 100\%$$

Where:

P   = percentage
F   = frequency
N   = number of students

The researcher computed the scores of the tests. The researcher used the formula by Purwanto (1987:102) as follows:

$$NP = \frac{R}{SM} \text{ x } 100$$

Where:

NP   = student's individual score
R   = raw score
SM   = maximum score
100   = constant number

The researcher used analytical scoring system considered best evaluation of learning some major elements in writing. In scoring subjective test, the researcher used the scoring system which was suggested by Weigle (2002:116) as follows:

Table 2: The Scoring System of Organization in Writing

20-18	17-14	13-10	9-7
Excellent to Very good	Good to Average	Fair to Poor	Very poor
Fluent expression • Idea clearly stated/supported • Succinct • Well organized • Logical sequencing • Cohesive	Somewhat choppy • loosely organized but main ideas stand out • limited support • logical but incomplete sequencing	Non-Fluent • Ideas confused or disconnected • Lacks logical sequencing and development	Does not communicate • No organization • Or not enough to evaluate

In scoring objective test, the researcher used the scoring in line with grammar level suggested by Brown (2004:244) as follows:

Table 3: The Scoring System of Grammar

20-18	17-15	14-12	11-6	5-1
Excellent to good	Good to adequate	Adequate to fair	Unacceptable	Not college level work
Native – like fluency in English grammar	Advanced proficiency in English grammar	Ideas are getting through to the reader	Numerous serious grammar problems	Severe grammar as problems

Statistical analyses of two variables were set up in the table as follows:

Table 4: The Calculation of the Pearson *r*

No.	Subject	Variable X Simple Past Tense Mastery	Variable X The Ability in Writing Recount Text	X²	Y²	XY
1.	A					
2.	B					
3.	C					
4.	D					

The researcher measured the relationship between two variables. To find out that the two variables had a correlation, the researcher used Pearson's Product Moments coefficient of correlation in Bungin (2005:207). The formula is:

$$r\,\text{xy} \;=\; \frac{N\sum XY - (\sum X)(\sum Y)}{\sqrt{(N(\sum x^2)-(\sum X)^2))(N(\sum Y^2)-(\sum Y))^2}}$$

Where:
r = product moment correlation
x = grammar
y = writing
$\sum X$ = the sum of scores in X distribution
$\sum Y$ = the sum of scores in Y distribution
$\sum XY$ = the sum of the product of paired X and Y scores
$\sum X^2$ = the sum of the squared scores in X distribution
$\sum Y^2$ = the sum of the squared scores in Y distribution
N = the number of paired X and Y scores

To interpret the result of the coefficient value of the correlation of two paired variables, the researcher used the crude criterion for evaluating the magnitude of a correlation coefficient by Best and Khan (2006:388), as follows:

Coefficient (*r*)	Relationship
0,00 – 0,199	Negligible
0,20 – 0,399	Low
0,40 – 0,599	Moderate
0,60 – 0,799	substantial
0,80 – 1,000	high to very high

In testing the significance, the researcher used significance of coefficient correlation formula which was determined by Best and Khan (2006:421) as follows:

$$\text{tr} = \frac{r\sqrt{n-2}}{\sqrt{1-r^2}}$$

Where:
r = the coefficient correlation
N = the number of sample
Remark : tr becomes *t*-counted

The criterion of hypothesis is in the following. If the *t*-counted is higher than *t*-table, it means that the hypothesis of the research is accepted. It means that there is a positive correlation between the two variables, but if the *t*-counted is lower than *t*-table, it means that hypothesis of the research is rejected. Definitely, there is a negative correlation.

FINDINGS

The researcher had given questionnaires which consisted of 10 (ten) items to the students. It was used by the researcher to get students' opinions or comments about teaching and learning process which they had done in the class. The results of the questionnaire were used by the researcher as supporting data to support the result of the test.

After the researcher gave the questionnaire, the researcher gave objective test to find out the students' competence in using simple past tense. The objective test consisted of 10 completion tests and 10 multiple choice tests. All of the students could answer those questions although several students answered incorrect.

Furthermore, the researcher gave subjective test to find out the students' competence in writing recount text. In subjective test, the students chose one of five topics which were provided or the students used their own topic to be written down.

In order to find out the significant correlation between students' mastery of simple past tense and the students' ability in writing recount text, the researcher presented both of the results in the table5.

After gathering all of the data of objective and subjective test, the researcher applied Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient formula to find out positive or negative correlation between students' mastery of simple past tense as (X) and the students' ability in writing recount text as (Y). The formula is as follow:

$$\text{rxy} = \frac{N\sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{\{N(\sum x^2) - (\sum x^2\}\{(N(\sum y^2) - (\sum y)^2\}}}$$

$$= \frac{40\,(19207) - (2695)(2770)}{\sqrt{\{40(193925) - (2695)^2\}\{40\,(199700) - (2770)^2\}}}$$

$$= \frac{7757000 - 7465150}{\sqrt{(7757000 - 7263025)(7988000 - 7672900)}}$$

$$= \frac{291850}{\sqrt{(493975)(315100)}}$$

$$= \frac{291850}{\sqrt{155651522500}}$$

$$= \frac{291850}{\sqrt{155651522500}}$$

$$= \frac{291850}{394526.96}$$

$$\text{rxy} = 0.739$$

Table 5: The Score of Objective Test and Subjective Test

No.	Initials	Variables		Squares		Cross Products
		X	Y	X²	Y²	XY
1.	RS	40	65	1600	4225	2600
2.	MG	70	90	4900	8100	6300
3.	SHS	60	60	3600	3600	3600
4.	NEU	60	70	3600	4900	4200
5.	NPNA	65	65	4225	4225	4225
6.	RI	45	60	2025	3600	2700
7.	AAR	70	55	4900	3025	3850
8.	IN	55	65	3025	4225	3575
9.	IPS	55	45	3025	2025	2475
10.	IMA	70	60	4900	3600	4200
11.	NMI	55	65	3025	4225	3575
12.	NH	40	55	1600	3025	2200
13.	JAM	95	95	9025	9025	9025
14.	CA	70	60	4900	3600	4200
15.	NRF	95	70	9025	4900	6650
16.	UR	85	85	7225	7225	7225
17.	WI	65	45	4225	2025	2925
18.	NH	50	75	2500	5625	3750
19.	HI	45	80	2025	6400	3600
20.	SA	75	45	5625	2025	3375
21.	HM	75	75	5625	5625	5625
22.	DJ	75	75	5625	5625	5625
23.	CU	50	60	2500	3600	3000
24.	HMSR	90	55	8100	3025	4950
25.	MFA	85	95	7225	9025	8075
26.	AV	95	90	9025	8100	8550
27.	RI	95	85	9025	7225	8075
28.	SAD	65	70	4225	4900	4550
29.	INT	70	70	4900	4900	4900
30.	SA	45	70	2025	4900	3150
31.	NA	40	45	1600	2025	1800
32.	WA	75	65	5625	4225	4875
33.	NR	40	50	1600	2500	2000
34.	IKS	80	75	6400	5625	6000
35.	MA	90	85	8100	7225	7650
36.	ZA	90	90	8100	8100	8100
37.	MDA	75	85	5625	7225	6375
38.	SW	90	80	8100	6400	7200
39.	BJ	50	75	2500	5625	3750
40.	AAR	55	65	3025	4225	3575
Σ		ΣX 2695	ΣY 2770	ΣX² 193925	ΣY² 199700	ΣXY 19207

The result of the computation above shows that correlation coefficient between students' mastery of simple past tense as (X) and the students' ability in writing recount text as (Y) is 0.739. It means that there is positive correlation between students' mastery of simple past tense and the students' ability in writing recount text because Alternative Hypothesis (Ha):r = 0. When this result is consulted with the crude criterion for evaluating the magnitude of a correlation coefficient (r), this result is categorized substantial.

Furthermore, the researcher determined the degree of freedom (df) as follows:

df $\quad$ = N − 2

$\quad\quad$ = 40 − 2

df = 38

After obtaining 38 the degree of freedom (df) value, the researcher would find out the significance of coefficient correlation by using the formula as follows:

$$tr = \frac{r\sqrt{n-2}}{\sqrt{1-r^2}}$$

$$= \frac{0.739\sqrt{40-2}}{\sqrt{1-0.739^2}}$$

$$= \frac{(0.739)(6.164)}{0.675}$$

$$= \frac{4.555}{0.675}$$

$$tr = 6.748$$

Remark: *tr* become *t*-counted = 6.748

The value of the *t*-table at significant level of 5% (0.05) and the degree of freedom (df) = 38 is 2.712 while the value of the *t*-counted is 6.748. It means that the *t*-counted is higher than the *t*-table. The researcher concludes that there is a significant correlation between students' mastery of simple past tense and the students' ability in writing recount text.

DISCUSSION

In this section, the researcher is going to explain the result of research finding which has been analyzed by using statistical data analysis to answer the research problem and to test the hypotheses. The researcher used questionnaire and test in gathering the data of the research.

Based on the result of the objective and subjective test, the researcher used the Percentage of Student's Achievement in both tests. In the objective test, the researcher

found that there were 10 % of the students who got excellent, 15% of the students who got very good, 15% of the students who got good, 20% of the students who got fair, 15% of the students who got poor, and then 25% of the students who got very poor. Therefore, the result of the objective test is classified very poor while in the subjective test, the researcher found that there were 5 % of the students who got excellent, 17.5% of the students who got very good, 17.5% of the students who got good, 5% of the students who got fair, 20% of the students who got poor, and then 12.5% of the students who got very poor. Therefore, the result of the subjective test is classified fair. Thomson and Ward (2009:19) state, "Don't annoy me with your moans of exasperation or your cries that you don't understand grammar, you never did understand grammar, you flunked the whole semester in Sophomore English, Writing is fun but grammar sucks the big one". The statement shows that we cannot write anything without understanding the grammar because grammar is the first requirement in writing.

Furthermore, the result of the questionnaire is used as supporting data to support the result of the tests. The researcher concludes that the result of the questionnaire is very useful to support the data of the test because most of the students said that learning simple past tense would help them to write down a recount text.

After the researcher gathered both of objective test and subjective test results, the researcher carried on to find out the significant of coefficient correlation between the variable X and variable Y. By using the formula of significant of coefficient correlation, the researcher found that the *t*-counted was 6.748 which would become *t*-counted. The researcher used 5% (0.05) significant level in critical value of Student's Distribution (t) with 38 degree of freedom to obtain *t*-table. Then the value of the *t*-table is 2.712 while the value of *t*-counted is 6.748. It means that the *t*-counted is higher than the *t*-table. The researcher concludes that there is a significant correlation between students' mastery of simple past tense and the students' ability in writing recount text. It is supported by Williams (2003:173) who states, "Teachers, parents, administrators, politicians—all are convinced that students must know grammar to improve their writing, yet few have examined the underlying assumption or have reflected on their own experiences." The statement explains that the students who want to improve their writing ability they have to master grammar as the absolute requirement of writing.

Concerning on the result above, the researcher applied Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) formula, the researcher found that the coefficient correlation

between student's mastery of simple past tense and the students' ability in writing recount text was 0.739. It means there is a positive correlation between variable X and variable Y. When the result of correlation coefficient is consulted with the crude criterion for evaluating the magnitude of a correlation coefficient (r), this result is categorized substantial. Best and Khan (2006:379) state, "A perfect positive correlation is +1.00. A perfect negative correlation is -1.00. A complete lack of relationship is zero (0)". It means that the result of a correlation research can be positive or negative depending on the result of correlation coefficient.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Concerning on the result of the research, the researcher concludes that there is a correlation between students' mastery of grammar and writing ability of the tenth grade of SMA Negeri 1 Pasangkayu. Then the correlation between students' mastery of grammar and writing ability of the tenth grade of SMA Negeri 1 Pasangkayu is positive. It is proved that the result of correlation coefficient between variable (X) and variable (Y) is 0.739 and Alternative Hypothesis (Ha):r = 0. After consulting the result of correlation coefficient with the crude criterion for evaluating the magnitude of a correlation coefficient (r), this result is categorized substantial. Furthermore, the correlation between students' mastery of grammar and writing ability of the tenth grade of SMA Negeri 1 Pasangkayu is significant. It is proved that the result of *t*-counted is 6.748 while the value of *r*-table at significant level of 5% (0.05) with 38 degree of freedom (df) is 2.712. It means that *t*-counted is higher than *t*-table.

Concerning on the research finding, the researcher suggests the students, they must study harder how to use grammar in order to be able to improve their writing ability. Even though, most of them have gotten good score in their test result. For the teachers, they should apply various strategies and techniques in teaching grammar and writing. They also should motivate, stimulate, and give more chances to the students in teaching learning process in order to make the students get significant improvement in mastering grammar and writing.

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