

CORRELATIONAL STUDY BETWEEN GRAMMATICAL COMPETENCE, STUDENTS' INTEREST IN WRITING, AND WRITING SKILL

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Abstract: This research aims to know the correlation between (1) grammatical competence and writing skill, (2) students' writing interest and writing skill, and (3) grammatical competence, students' writing interest and writing skill. This research was conducted at MTs Negeri 2 Surakarta in the academic year of 2016/2017. The sample is class 8H which consists of 32 students taken by using cluster random sampling. The research instruments used to collect the data are test and questionnaire. The data were analyzed by using single and multiple correlations and multiple linear regressions. The result of the research show that (1) there is a positive correlation between grammatical competence and writing skill; (2) there is a positive correlation between students' writing interest and writing skill; (3) there is a positive correlation between students' grammatical competence and, writing interest and writing skill. The students' grammatical competence gives 24.68% contribution to writing skill and the students' writing interest gives 19.32% contribution to writing skill. The total effective contribution of grammatical competence and students' writing interest to writing skill is 44%. It can be concluded that the increase of students' grammatical competence and students' writing interest simultaneously will be followed by the increase of students' writing skill.

Key words: grammatical competence, writing interest, writing skill

INTRODUCTION

The English language teaching is developed in four skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening and reading are receptive skills or process skill in which learners get the spoken or written language or information without producing anything. While speaking and writing are productive skills in which the learners will produce the information through those skills. The four skills look different, but actually, there is a relationship among them to reach the success of learning the English language. For example, people listen to what someone says before he/she responds directly.

Because reading is very important basic skill, people have to master reading skill in order to make it easier in learning writing and speaking skill.

When the writer was in PPL program, the writer found that students had difficulties in writing skill. It is difficult for them to write especially in English. Some of them duplicated the teacher's example or copied their friends' works. This problem happens because they have no interest in writing. Some of them also have low grammatical competence.

Based on the background of the research above, there are many aspects that affect writing skill. The problems are: (1) How good is the students' writing skill? (2) How good is the students' grammatical competence? (3) How high is students' interest in writing? (4) How high is students' interest in English? (5) What factors that influence the students' writing skill? (6) Does the students' grammatical competence influence their writing skill? (7) Does the students' interest in writing influence their writing skill? (8) Does the students' interest in English influence their writing? (9) Which one is more important in influencing the students' writing skill? (10) Is there any correlation between grammatical competence and students' interest in writing? (11) Is there any correlation between students' interest in writing and writing skill? (12) Is there any correlation between grammatical competence, students' interest in writing, and writing skill?

Based on the problem listed above, the researcher cannot handle the entire problems because the researcher's limited ability and time to study them all. The research only focuses on the correlation between grammatical competence, students' writing interest, and writing skill.

The problems of study are formulated as follow: (1) Is there any correlation between grammatical competence and students' interest in writing? (2) Is there any correlation between students' interest in writing and writing skill? (3) Is there any correlation between grammatical competence, students' interest in writing, and writing skill?

The research is aimed to prove the correlation and contribution of: (1) grammatical competence to writing skill, (2) students' writing interest to writing skill, and (3) grammatical competence and

students' writing interest simultaneously to writing skill.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing skill is not easy to master even in the first language. National Commission on Writing (in Li, 2013:32) states that ability to write well is a fundamental skill for academic or professional success but is a particularly difficult skill to master even in the first language.

According to Bell and Burnaby in Nunan (1989: 36), writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of the number of variables simultaneously.

While Byrne (1997: 1) states that writing is the acts of forming symbols, letter or combination of letters, arranging words and words into sentences according to certain conventions and making marks on a flat surface of some kinds.

Writing is a complex activity which includes some process in order to reach the goal of writing, a good writing. Brown (2000: 337) says that in order to reach the ultimate goal, learners go through the process of prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. It means that the ability to write well is not a naturally acquired skill; writing is indeed a thinking process so writing skill must be practiced and learned through experience.

According to Richards and Schmidt (2010: 532), skill is an acquired ability to perform an activity well, usually one that is made up of a number of co-coordinated processes and actions.

Writing skill can be defined as the acquired ability to put ideas to create a good writing product, form and arrange certain symbols and letters through the process of planning, drafting, writing, revising and rewriting by considering to content,

organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics (spelling and punctuation).

Grammar is one of the aspects of writing that is very crucial. Raimes (1938: 3) states that writing reinforces the grammatical structure, idioms, and vocabulary. Further, Brown (2004: 221) adds grammar, cohesive, and coherence as the aspect of writing.

Brown (2000: 362) states grammar is the system of rules governing the conventional arrangement and relationship of words in a sentence. He says that grammar refers to sentence-level rules only, and not to rules governing relationship among sentences. Similarly, Manser (2006: 97) defines the rules of grammar as the framework that shows how the words of a language are put together and used.

The ability to use grammar well is called grammatical competence. Canale and Swain explain more about grammatical competence as cited in Bagarić and Djigunović (2007: 97):

Grammatical competence is concerned with mastery of the linguistic code (verbal or non-verbal) which includes vocabulary knowledge as well as knowledge of morphological, syntactic, semantic, phonetic and orthographic rule. This competence enables the speaker to use knowledge and skill needed for understanding and expressing the literal meaning of utterances.

Students who have grammatical competence are capable to write the grammatically correct form and make less grammatical errors. Due to the role of grammar in writing, grammatical competence is one of the important things which have to be owned by the students.

Besides the grammatical competence, the positive psychological aspects also affect students' writing skill.

One of the positive psychological aspects is interest. According to Slameto (2010: 180), interest is preferences and awareness to something or activity without any force. Basically, interest is the reception of a relationship between oneself with something outside of us. The stronger the relationship, the greater the interest appears. In line with Slameto, Hurlock (1981: 420) defines interest as sources of motivation which drives people to do what they want to do when they are free to choose.

Interest is an intrinsic factor that motivates individual to do his preferences. The higher the students' interest in writing, the higher the students' writing skill will be. Chen, 2001; Chen & Ennis, 2004; Chen & Shen, 2004; Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000 in Subramaniam (2009) stated that interest and goals have been identified as two important motivation construct that influence students' engagement and achievement in learning.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used is a correlational method. The correlational method is a method which the goal is to describe the correlation between two or more events or characteristics (Hallonen and Sandtrock, 1999: 20). The reason for choosing the correlation method is the writer wants to know how is the correlation between three variables based on quantitative statistics in the correlation coefficient.

There are two kinds of variables in this research, the independent variable (grammatical competence and students' writing interest) and the dependent variable (writing skill). The researcher examined the correlation between grammatical competence and writing skill. Then, the researcher examined the correlation between students' writing interest and writing skill. The last, the researcher examined the

correlation between grammatical competence, students' writing interest, and writing skill.

The research was conducted on the eighth-grade students at MTs Negeri 2 Surakarta in June 2017. The sample of the research is 32 students. The sample is taken by using cluster random sampling technique.

The data are collected by using test and questionnaire. The test is used to collect the data of grammatical competence and writing skill. To measure the grammatical competence, the researcher uses multiple choices test which consists of 40 items. The research uses essay test in the form of paragraph writing test to measure writing skill. The questionnaire is used to collect the data of students' writing interest. The questionnaire of students' writing interest is multiple choice forms of four alternatives based on Likert Scale Type.

In analyzing the data, the researcher used Single Correlation to test the first and

second hypothesis which says that there is a positive correlation between grammatical competence and writing skill, and there is a positive correlation between students' writing interest and writing skill. The researcher used Multiple Correlation and Multiple Linear Regression to test the third hypothesis which state that there is a positive correlation between grammatical competence and students' writing interest simultaneously, and writing skill.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The result of grammatical competence shows that the highest score is 100 and the lowest score is 7. Based on the highest and the lowest score, the range of the score is 93. The mean and the standard deviation are 80.5 and 21.01. The mode of the data is 102.5 and the median is 87.45.

Table 1. The Frequency Distribution of Grammatical Competence (X_1)

Class Limits	Frequency	Class Boundaries	Midpoint	Percentage
7.0 - 22	1	6.5 - 22.5	14.5	3.13
23 - 38	0	22.5 - 38.5	30.5	0.00
39 - 54	4	38.5 - 54.5	46.5	12.50
55 - 70	3	54.5 - 70.5	62.5	9.38
71 - 86	5	70.5 - 86.5	78.5	15.63
87 - 102	19	86.5 - 102.5	94.5	59.38
Σ	32			100.00

The result of writing interest questionnaire shows that the highest score is 137 and the lowest score is 82. Based on the highest and the lowest score, the range of

the score 93. The mean and the standard deviation are 110.3 and 13.9. The mode of the data is 120.5 and the median is 111.

Table 2. The Frequency Distribution of Writing Interest (X_2)

Class Limits	Frequency	Class boundaries	Midpoint	Percentage
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82 - 92	3	81.5 - 92.5	87	9.375
93 - 106	10	92.5 - 106.5	98	31.25
107 - 116	6	106.5 - 116.5	112	18.75
117 - 127	10	116.5 - 127.5	122	31.25
128 - 139	3	127.5 - 139.5	133	9.375
Σ	32			100

The data of writing skill were collected by using test. The highest score is 95 and the lowest score is 66. Based on the

highest and the lowest score, the range of the score is 29. The mode is 83 and the median is 82. The standard deviation is 7.47.

Table 3. The Data of Students' Writing Interest

Class Limits	Frequency	Class Boundaries	Midpoint	Percentage
66 - 70	3	65.5 - 70.5	68	9.38
71 - 75	5	70.5 - 75.5	73	15.63
76 - 80	5	75.5 - 80.5	78	15.63
81 - 85	10	80.5 - 85.5	83	31.25
86 - 90	5	85.5 - 90.5	88	15.63
91 - 95	4	90.5 - 95.5	93	12.50
Σ	32			100.00

From the testing of the first hypothesis, it is known that there is a positive correlation between students' grammatical competence and students' writing skill because the alternative H_a is accepted. The result of the computation shows that the correlation coefficient (r_{x_1y}) between students' grammatical competence (X_1) and students' writing skill (Y) is 0.368221 and after being consulted to the r-table, r_o (0.368221) $>$ r_t (0.349). Then, the computation of t_o and t-table which indicates the result of the significance of coefficient of correlation between students' grammatical competence (X_1) and students' writing skill (Y). The value of t_o (2.169) is consulted into t-table at significance level $\alpha = 0.05$ for $n = 32$ (2.04), the result is t_o (2.169) $>$ t_t (2.04). It means that there is a significant, positive correlation between

students' grammatical competence and students' writing skill of the eighth-grade students of MTs Negeri 2 Surakarta in the academic year 2016/2017.

Grammar is one important aspect that can influence in writing. Widodo (2006) in his journal "Approaches and Procedures in Teaching Grammar" states that the ultimate goal of teaching grammar is to provide the students with knowledge of the way language is constructed so far so that when they are listen, speak, read and write, they have no trouble applying the language they are learning. If the students have high grammatical competence, they will be able to make a sentence in grammatically correct form by applying appropriate knowledge of grammar. Therefore, they can write well and elaborate ideas into the written form with grammatically correct sentences.

The relative contribution of students' grammatical competence towards students' writing skill is 56.10% while the effective contribution is 24.68%. It can be concluded that 24.68% of students' writing skill is determined by students' grammatical competence and the rest is determined by other factors.

From the testing of the second hypothesis, it is known that the second hypothesis, saying that there is a positive correlation between students' writing interest and students' writing skill is accepted. Because the result of the computation shows that the correlation coefficient (r_{x_2y}) between students' writing interest (X_2) and writing skill (Y) is 0.4303643 and after being consulted to the r -table, r_o (0.4303643) $>$ r_t (0.349). Then, the computation of t_o and t -table which indicates the result of the significance of coefficient of correlation between students' writing interest (X_2) and students' writing skill (Y). The value of t_o (2.611) is consulted into t -table at significance level $\alpha = 0.05$ for $n = 32$ (2.04), the result is t_o (2.611) $>$ t_t (2.04). It means that there is a significant, positive correlation between students' writing interest and students' writing skill of the eight grade students of MTs Negeri 2 Surakarta in the academic year of 2016/2017.

One of the factors that influence someone to engage in writing activity is interest. Interest is an intrinsic factor that motivates individual to do his preferences. The higher the students' interest in writing, the higher the students' writing skill will be. Chen, 2001; Chen & Ennis, 2004; Chen & Shen, 2004; Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000 in Subramaniam stated that interest and goals have been identified as two important motivation construct that influence students' engagement and achievement in learning. From the theory above it can be concluded

that the students' writing interest influences writing skill, the students can choose their activity based on his interest.

The relative contribution of students' writing interest toward students' skill is 43.90% while the effective contribution is 19.32%. Therefore it can be concluded that 19.32% of students' writing skill is determined by students' writing interest and the rest is determined by other factors.

From the testing of the third hypothesis, it is known that there is a positive correlation between students' grammatical competence and students' writing interest, and students' writing skill because the alternative H_a is accepted. The result of the computation shows that the correlation coefficient (R_o) between students' grammatical competence (X_1) and students' writing interest (X_2) simultaneously and students' writing skill (Y) is 0.663 and after being consulted to the F -table, F_o (11.399) $>$ $F_{t(2,29)}$ for $\alpha = 0.01$ is 5, 42 and for $\alpha = 0.05$ is 3,33. It means that there is a significant, positive correlation between students' grammatical competence and students' writing interest simultaneously and students' writing skill of the eight grade of MTs Negeri 2 Surakarta in the academic year of 2016/2017.

According to the CEF (Council of Europe, 2001) in Cuellar (2013), grammatical competence is defined as knowledge of, and ability to use, the grammatical resources of a language. Therefore, teaching grammar is important, alternative procedures, such as sentence combining, are more effective than traditional approaches for improving the quality of students' writing (Graham and Perin, 2007).

Dewey in Harackiewicz and Hulleman (2009) described interest as "being engaged, engrossed, or entirely taken up with" an activity, object, or topic. Interest

affects in learning because if the material of the lessons which are learned by the students is not in accordance with the interests of the students, they will not learn as well as possible. Hidi in Harackiewicz and Hulleman (2009) says that being interested in a topic is a mental resource that enhances learning, which then leads to better performance and achievement. It can be concluded that the increase of students' grammatical competence and students' writing interest will be followed by the

increase of student' writing skill. The total effective contribution of two independent variables to the dependent variable is 44.00%. Therefore, it can be concluded that 56.00% of students' writing skill is contributed by other factors.

The contribution of the independent variables –grammatical competence (X_1) and students' writing interest (X_2) – toward the dependent variable, writing skill (Y), can be seen in the table below.

Table 4. The Contribution Analysis of the Variables

Variants	Relative Contribution	Effective Contribution
X_1 toward Y	43.90%	19.32%
X_2 toward Y	56.10%	24.68%
Total	100.00%	44.00%

From the table above, it can be concluded that the effective contributions: (1) grammatical competence (X_1) to writing skill (Y) is 19.32%; (2) students' writing interest (X_2) to writing skill (Y) is 24.68%; (3) grammatical competence (X_1), students' writing interest (X_2) simultaneously and writing skill (Y) is 44%.

IMPLICATION

The result of the research shows that students' grammatical competence has a contribution to increase students' writing skill. It means that improving students' grammatical competence will improve students' writing skill as well. Students who have high grammatical competence are capable to write grammatically correct form and make less grammatical errors.

The result also shows that students' writing interest also enhance students' writing skill. The contribution of writing interest is higher than grammatical competence. Interest affects in learning

because if the material of the lessons which are learned by the students is not in accordance with the interests of the students, they will not learn as well as possible. The student who has an interest will feel happy to learn the subject or to do the activity. They can like writing and start to write and create a good writing.

The result of the research implies that the high grammatical competence and writing interest a student has, the more writing skill that student will have. The teacher should aware that students' grammatical competence and students' writing interest give contribution in improving students' writing skill. Then, the students should practice the activity related to grammatical competence and increase their writing interest in daily life.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

From the result of the study, the researcher describes conclusion as follows:

There is a positive correlation between students' grammatical competence and students' writing skill of the eight-grade students of MTs Negeri 2 Surakarta in the academic year 2016/2017. The contribution of students' grammatical competence to students' writing skill is 19.32%. It means that the increase of students' grammatical competence will be followed by the increase of students' writing skill.

There is a positive correlation between students' writing interest and students' writing skill of the eighth-grade students of MTs Negeri 2 Surakarta in the academic year of 2016/2017. The contribution of students' writing interest to students' writing skill is 24.68%. It means that the increase of students' writing interest will be followed by the increase of students' writing skill.

There is a positive correlation between students' grammatical competence, students' writing interest simultaneously and students' writing skill of the eighth-grade students of MTs Negeri 2 Surakarta in the academic year 2016/2017. The total effective contribution of students' grammatical competence, students' writing interest to writing skill is 44.00%. It means that the increase of students' grammatical competence and students' writing interest simultaneously will be followed by the increase of students' writing skill.

From the explanation above, the conclusion shows that grammatical competence and students' writing interest are correlated and contribute to writing skill.

Suggestion

Based on the result of the research findings and conclusion, the researcher provides suggestions to improve students' writing skill.

For the teacher, the suggestion to improve students' writing skill are: (1) the teacher should aware of the contribution of

students' grammatical competence and students' writing interest as factors which influence in students' writing skill; (2) the teacher should help the students to improve students' grammatical competence; (3) the teacher should help the students to increase their writing interest by making the writing section in the class more creative so the students can enjoy the writing class; (4) the teacher should give more practice in writing.

For the students, the suggestions to improve the students' writing skill are: (1) students should improve their grammatical competence to support their writing skill. They can do some exercise and read English book; (2) students should develop their writing interest; (3) students should be creative to improve their own writing skill.

For the researcher, there are many factors which can influence students in writing skill. In this study, the writer only investigates a few parts of factors which can influence the students' writing skill. There are still many factors besides grammatical competence and writing interest which have a contribution to increasing students' writing skill. Therefore, the writer suggests to the other researcher to investigate the other factors. The writer hopes that this research can be used as a reference for other researchers to do the related research.

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