
THE INFLUENCE OF STUDENTS' GRAMMAR PROFICIENCY ON READING ABILITIES: A STUDY AT AN ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL

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Abstract

This study explored the relationship between grammar and reading abilities of third-grade junior high school students of an Islamic boarding school in Indonesia. The total number of students sampled in this study was 60 students, with details consisting of 30 female students and 30 male students. The data collection instruments used in this research were grammar tests and reading comprehension tests. The researchers analyzed the data using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and calculated the data using Microsoft Excel 2019 program to test the hypothesis. The result of calculation using Microsoft Excel 2019 program found that the correlation coefficient of grammar mastery and students' reading ability is 0.93 with a significant level of 0.01. With these results, it can be seen that these variables are positively correlated. And there is a significant relationship between grammar mastery and the student's reading ability.

INTRODUCTION

English is an essential part of learning. As you already know, English has four basic skills: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Learning English also has linguistic elements such as grammar, phonology, semantics, morphology, and pragmatics. Grammar is one of the elements of English language that plays a crucial role in cultivating mastery of the English language skills. Murcia (2001) confirms that both grammar and vocabulary have been viewed as competing elements in language teaching. Likewise, Graham (2007) emphasizes the importance of mastering the language components, such as: phonology grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation to support the four skills of English. Therefore, to understand the meaning of the texts read, grammar mastery are needed.

Based on the early observation at an Islamic junior high school in Indonesia, it was found that the students' lack of interest in reading and the hardest part in reading was understanding the meaning contained therein. That is why some students are not able to interpret reading and lost their interest in reading activities. Guthrie (2008, as cited in Sanford, 2015) notes that reading comprehension issue happens when students lose their interests and disengage from reading. As one of the essential language skills, reading is a way to gain knowledge. Reading comprehension is when the learner knows "what works" in reading (Armbruster et al, 2000). Readers try to interpret word by word, sentence by sentence, based on the author's notes about the context and text. In the process of getting an idea for the text, the reader uses his skills to recognize the language or genre of the text as contained in the 2013 curriculum learning because some texts must be understood, such as narrative, recount, descriptive, and procedure text (Mabruroh, 2021). Lack of understanding in interpreting the meaning is one of the obstacles in the reading process. When a student learns a text, something is taught. Grammar is a text-related language function as students expect to understand the text. The Oxford Dictionary defines grammar as "the structure and system of meaning of language," which is a crucial part of word and sentence formation. Students' mastery of grammar can help them understand the text correctly if they know the usage and the formulas that apply. In addition to enriching vocabulary, students must also understand basic grammar so that they do not experience misunderstandings in the reading process.

The aim of this research is to find out whether students' understanding of grammar is able to influence their reading comprehension. Good grammar mastery will make it easier for students to interpret readings if they understand the grammar contained therein. In understanding an English text, students need to have good knowledge of sentence structure to assist in the process of reading and understanding meaning, seeing relationships between ideas, including the relationship between the main ideas and also the relationship between each part of sentence components to make it better text and sentence analysis, and therefore better understanding of them. If students have tried various ways to improve their English skills, enrich vocabulary, understand grammar well, and increase interest in reading, reading activities will become easy and enjoyable. Therefore, to find out how far the influence of the relationship between grammar mastery and students' reading abilities on this topic needs to be done research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Researchers have various views on grammar and vocabulary mastery toward reading comprehension issues. Taslim et al (2019) investigates the correlation between student's mastery vocabulary and speaking skill. The population of this research was all of the eleventh grade students of science classes at a public senior high school in Indonesia. The sample research subject was thirty-two students. A cluster sampling technique was used to choose the research subject classes. In collecting the data, the researchers used vocabulary test and interview. The researchers analyzed the data using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Linear Regression

with SPSS 21 program to test the hypothesis. The result of calculation using SPSS 21 program found that the r -value 0.532 was also higher than r -table at 5% and 1% significant level or $0.349 < 0.532 > 0.449$. It could be concluded that alternative hypothesis (H1) stating that there is a significant positive correlation between student's mastery vocabulary and speaking skill is accepted and null hypothesis (H0) stating there is no a significant positive correlation between student's mastery vocabulary and speaking skill is rejected. The result of calculation of contribution between student's mastery vocabulary (variable X) gave about 75.33% contribution to the speaking skill (variable Y) of the sample class and 25.66% was influenced by other aspects. Based on the research findings, it is shown that there is a very significant positive correlation between student's mastery vocabulary and speaking skill of the eleventh grade at a public senior high school in Indonesia.

Prasatyo, Gustari, and Santosa (2021) explored the effects of grammar mastery and critical thinking on students' speaking skill. The purpose of the research is to obtain empirical data and analyze about whether or not there are the effects of grammar mastery and critical thinking on students' speaking skill. The research was conducted at the state senior high school in Indonesia. The research method was survey with multiple-correlation technique. 80 students out of the state senior high school, grade X were chosen to be samples. Data collections include 1 questionnaire and 2 multiple-choice tests. The scale used for questionnaire was Likert Scale. The validity was calculated by using Person-Product Moment, and reliability obtained from Cronbach Alpha is 0.713. Research findings show three points. Firstly, there are significant effects of grammar mastery and critical thinking towards students' speaking skill where multiple-correlation coefficient (R) is 0.696 in significance grade 5% ($\alpha = 0,05$) further Fobserved is higher than Ftable ($36.202 > 2.735$). Secondly, there was a significant effect of grammar mastery and students' speaking skill even though the effect is slightly weak where r_{y1} is 0.365, $t_{observed}=3.725 > t_{table}=1.994$ with Sig score is lower than significance grade ($0.000 < 0.05$). Thirdly, there is a significant effect of critical thinking and students' speaking skill where r_{y2} is 0.626, $t_{observed}=7.242 > t_{table}=1.994$ with Sig score lower than the significance value ($0.000 < 0.05$).

Kamal et al (2021) studied the relationship between listening and writing skills of second-grade junior high school students of an Islamic boarding school in Indonesia. This research aimed at: (1) how is the performance of males and females' listening and writing skills? (2) how is the portrayal of students' listening skills compared to students' writing skills in Islamic boarding schools? and (3) whether there is a correlation between students' listening skills and students' writing skills in Islamic boarding schools? The data was obtained from listening and writing scores. Results showed that $r\text{-count} > r\text{-table}$ ($r\text{-count}= 0.8699$; $r\text{-table}= 0.3291$). It can be concluded that the student's performance in the listening and writing scores was statistically significantly correlated. However, the significant correlation of listening and writing skills in this study is feasibly valid for the context.

Forsia, Sari, and Purnawati (2022) analyzed the correlation of students' reading interest, vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension at tenth grade of a private senior high school in Indonesia. The method of the research used quantitative research. The population was 175 students and 40 students as a sample. The result showed that (1) There is no positive significant correlation between students' reading interest and their reading comprehension at SMA Paradigma Kabupaten Tangerang in Academic Year 2020/2021. With the value $t\text{-count} < t\text{-table}$ ($1,238 < 1,687$). (2) There is positive significant correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension at tenth grade of SMA Paradigma Kabupaten Tangerang in academic year 2020/2021. The result of the variable students' vocabulary mastery is 2,473 which means $t\text{-count} > t\text{-table}$ ($2,473 > 1,687$). (3) There is a positive simultaneous correlation of students' reading interest, vocabulary mastery and their reading comprehension at tenth grade of SMA Paradigma Kabupaten Tangerang in academic year 2020/2021. The result of students'

reading interest and vocabulary mastery on their reading comprehension with a significance value of $0,005 < 0,05$ it can be concluded that the greater the interest in reading, the greater their vocabulary mastery, and automatically students will have a good reading comprehension.

However, in the latest studies on students' grammar mastery toward reading abilities in the context of English learning in Islamic boarding schools have not been widely reported. Therefore, the researchers chose to investigate whether there is a correlation between students' grammar proficiency and reading abilities in Islamic boarding schools.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, the researchers use quantitative research through correlational design. Correlational research is used to decide whether there is an impact between one variable with another variable. The correlational plan is additionally a strategy in quantitative inquiry in which the researcher measures the relationship between two or more factors utilizing relationship examination. This research has two variables; they are one independent variable which is grammar ability and one dependent variable reading ability. Participants of this research were a third-grade junior high school at an Islamic boarding school in Indonesia. The population was 60 students with 30 students in the female class and 30 students in the male class. This research only took 30 samples of the female class. Meanwhile, tests instrument were used as a data collection tool in this study namely an English grammar and a reading ability test. Reliability data tests were analyzed with Pearson product-moment correlation and calculated using Microsoft Excel 2019 application to find the correlation, coefficient between students' grammar and reading skills. To interpret the result of coefficient correlation of this research data, the researchers used the split-half coefficient and the alpha coefficient adapted from Cohen, Manion, Marison (2007, p. 506) as follows:

Table 1. The Interpretation Coefficient Correlation r
(Cohen, Manion, Marison, 2007, p. 506)

Interval Coefficient	Level of Correlation
>0.90	very highly reliable
0.80–0.90	highly reliable
0.70–0.79	reliable
0.60–0.69	marginally/minimally reliable
<0.60	unacceptably low reliability

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The Portrait of Grammar and Reading Scores

The research data that was obtained in the field were analyzed by descriptive means by knowing the amount of maximum value, minimum value and standard deviation for each variable study. Two sets of data are shown in figures 1 to 2. from a total of 30 students who tested in one of the Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. The chart below (figure.1) describes a summary of students' grammar ability variable (X). The students have an average of 7,0 maximum value was 9 and a minimum value of 5. This test consisted of 3 items of questions: (a) 3 items to answer the question, and 2 items to make a sentence of tenses; (b) 15 items to give plural forms of word orders; (c) 15 items to write the right number of the noun orders.

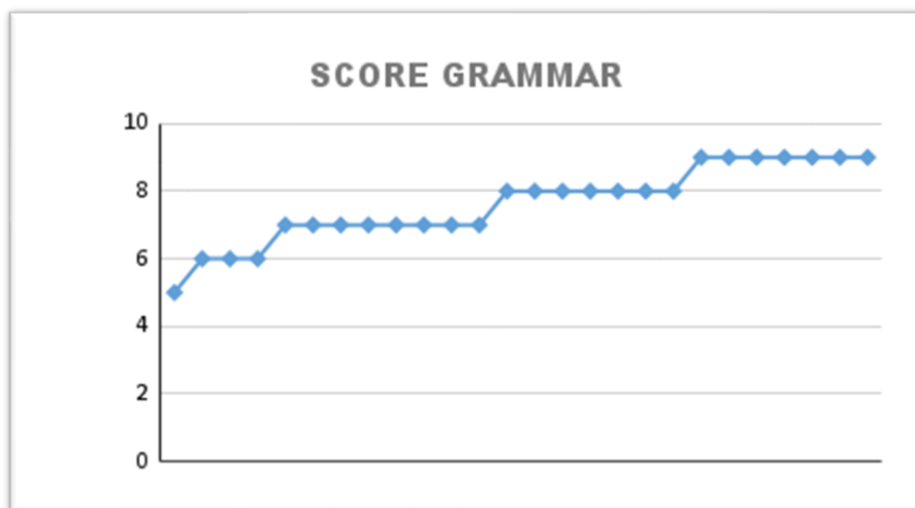


Figure 1. Students' Grammar score

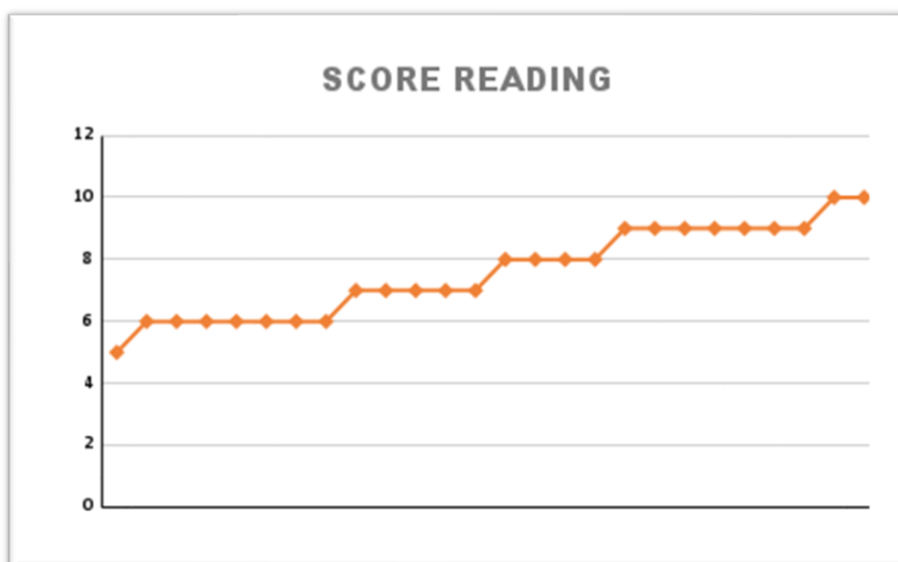


Figure 2. Students' Reading Score

The chart above (Figure 2) summarizes students' reading ability score, variable (Y). The students have an average of 7,2 maximum value was 10 and a minimum value of 5. A reading section involves 10 questions based on the text orders; 5 questions based on the advertisement text that has been read; 5 items to translate the vocabulary orders.

The data shows that students have good scores both in grammar and reading tests in average. This finding then guides the way in which grammar proficiency affects students' reading abilities in junior high school context.

The Influence of Students' Grammar Proficiency on Reading Abilities

To find the influence between students' grammar and reading skills the researchers used Microsoft Excel 2019 to analyze the data. The results of the calculation of the correlation between grammar skill data and the students' reading skills that have been processed can be seen in the following chart:

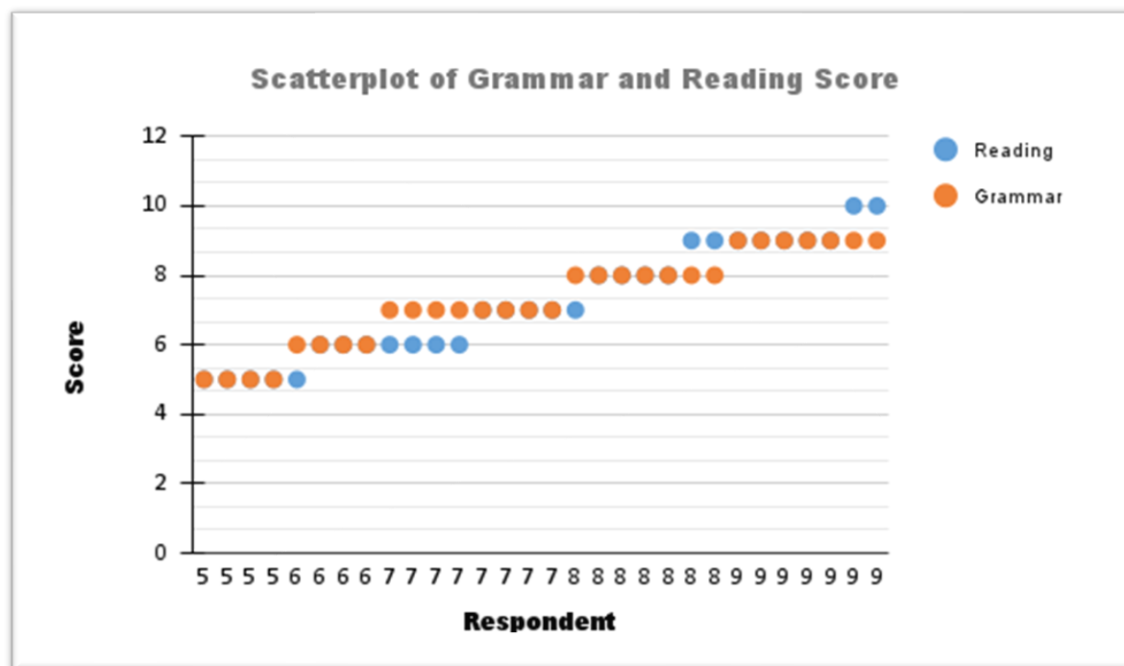


Figure 3. Scatterplot of Grammar and Reading Scores

The chart above, reports that: (1) Class students' reading interest obtained a min score of and maximum, and the maximum score after being calculated using the Pearson correlation scale, the r -count value is 0,9381. The value obtained for the r table is 0.361 by calculating. To test the validity of the instrument, the researcher used an item validity test using Pearson correlation in Microsoft Excel 2019 for the calculated r obtained is 0.9381. With a significance level of 5% and $N = 30-2$ in the distribution of the r table values obtained 0.361. Because of the value of r count $>$ r table, it can be concluded that there is a correlation between the connected variables.

It can be seen that the calculated r falls between 0.931 and, this means that the variable X is related to the variable Y , it can be concluded that grammar proficiency students have a significant/strong relationship. this means that variable X is related to variable Y so it can be supposed that grammar proficiency students have 0,90 and 1 a significant/strong relationship. This study consist an alpha coefficient of 0,93 which is very highly reliable based on the split-half coefficient and the alpha coefficient adapted from Cohen, Manion, Marison (2007, p. 506) in table 1. This, proves that in this context, students' grammar proficiency has a strong impact on their reading skills. The better the learners understand the grammatical structure of the reading texts, the better reading performance they show. Students' reading comprehension is also boosted by the support of students' understanding of grammatical rules in the texts.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research conducted at the third-grade junior high school of an Islamic boarding school in Indonesia, it can be concluded that there were students with large grammar performed comparably with the students with much smaller grammar in reading activities. The result of data analysis showed that there was a significant positive correlation between students' grammar mastery and their reading abilities. It could be seen from the result of r count 0,93 which is very highly reliable. In conclusion, all two subjects' population tested the hypothesis of grammar proficiency and reading ability is strongly sustained. As in the scatterplot (figure 3), the points fall close to the line, which indicates that there is a strong linear relationship between the variables. The relationship is positive because as one variable increases, the other

variable also increases. As the data were collected from limited participants, the generalization of findings was perhaps valid only for this context. Therefore, further research needs to be conducted with a larger size of participants.

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