

# The Relationship between Students' Vocabulary Mastery and Recount Writing Skill

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The study is conducted to show the relationship between vocabulary mastery and recount writing skill among students. The study uses a survey method with the samples of 42 eleventh grade students that are randomly selected from four different classes at SMKN in Serang. The collection of data is conducted by administering multiple-choice questions and writing tests. The data are then analyzed by using regression and correlation analysis. The result of study shows that vocabulary mastery of students has a significant effect on their recount writing skill, as seen by the score of  $sig\ 0.000 < 0.05$  and  $t_0\ 6.606$ . In conclusion, there is a significant relationship between vocabulary mastery and student's recount writing skill.

*Keywords:* Vocabulary Mastery, Writing Skill, Recount

*Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk menunjukkan adanya hubungan antara penguasaan kosakata dan kemampuan menulis teks recount di kalangan siswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode survei, dengan sampel 42 siswa kelas sebelas yang dipilih secara acak dari empat kelas yang berbeda di SMKN Serang. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui pemberian tes soal pilihan ganda dan tes menulis. Data yang diperoleh kemudian dianalisis dengan menggunakan analisis regresi dan korelasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penguasaan kosakata siswa memiliki hubungan yang signifikan dengan kemampuan menulis teks recount mereka, seperti terlihat pada nilai  $sig\ 0.000 < 0.05$  and  $t_0\ 6.606$ . Kesimpulannya, penguasaan kosakata dan kemampuan menulis teks recount siswa memiliki hubungan yang signifikan.*

## INTRODUCTION

Everyone in all parts of the world needs a system of communication that we usually call as a language. With this medium of communication, our activities of exchanging information, sharing ideas or passing on messages in many different forms such as utterance, picture, sign, writing or behavior can be easily performed. The use of this medium is enormously important to establish communication among people because with a language, we can easily communicate with other people in our day-to-day life. That is why, it is true if we consider a language as the most effective system of communication the society offers to us.

In line with the development of our society, the activity of communicating among people in our society does not only develop in local area, but also spreads throughout the earth. This fact is greatly supported by the globalization era, the era when the role of communication is increasingly prominent in establishing relations with more distant countries for many kinds of reasons. This is the condition that finally encourage people to apply a communication system that many countries decide as an internationally-spoken language. The language is English.

Used internationally by many people, English as one of international languages increasingly becomes a medium of communication that cannot be replaced among the global communities. Besides, English has even been a language mostly spoken and used in international events. It is also used by people to facilitate the dissemination of information in numerous fields, such as scientific research, diplomacy, commerce, communication, society, education and many others. It makes English an international language standard used to deal with many issues. Therefore, it is no wonder to see that people from many different countries through the world want to learn and to have mastery in English, with many of them making this hugely popular language as their second or even their national language.

In order to deal with the increasing use of English, like the other countries, Indonesia, have also carried out some efforts to improve the English skill of its people. One of the Indonesia's efforts is by making English as one of the compulsory subjects that must be taught by the teachers at Indonesian schools and learnt by Indonesian students, requiring the students to have mastery in this very popular language. There are four aspects that have to be mastered by the students, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing mastery. These four aspects are the skills Indonesian students must learn based on their levels, starting from primary until university level. The teaching of these proficiencies is conducted with the aim of having high-quality graduates possessing not only the ability to use English, but also intelligence to compete with other countries' students.

Nevertheless, knowing that the mother tongue of Indonesian students is not English, it always becomes a major headache for them to learn these four components of skills, especially writing. The writing is a kind of productive skill that requires every student to be active in creating texts with precise ideas and language structures. It is then this real condition that makes writing a frustrating issue for students any time they are tasked with making an English written text.

When it comes to writing, there is always a serious difficulty facing by Indonesian students. The difficulty of writing includes many variables. Bell and Burnaby point out that writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity which requires the writer to demonstrate control of several

variables at once. At the sentence level, these include control of content, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling and letter formation. Beyond the sentence, the writer must be able to structure and to integrate information into cohesive and coherent paragraphs and texts (cited in Nunan, 1991:6). This statement shows us a clear explanation that to have good English writing skill, it is very important for students to have ability to use all those variables. One of most effective ways to possess this ability is by enriching students' vocabularies. Vocabulary is one of the language elements that many people consider necessary for achieving language mastery. Students' vocabularies will result in an increase in line with the regularity of their reading habit. Based on the explanations above, the researcher has an interest in conducting a research into the relationship between vocabulary mastery and English recount writing skill.

For this study, the researcher chose recount text. The text is one kind of texts that can be used to assess English language skill of students. It is also taught by teachers in Indonesian schools as written in the national curriculum. The result of this research will be then used to find out and to show whether or not there is a relationship between vocabulary mastery and students' recount writing skill.

Feez and Joyce claim that writing is a skill to make written texts (1998). According to Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000), writing is the production of the written word that results in a text but the text must be read and comprehended in order for communication to take place. The writer, in other words, communicates his or her ideas in the form of a written text from which a known reader will eventually extract the ideas and their meanings. From the two above explanations, it can be concluded that writing is a form of communication established by producing written texts. Yet, writing is not as simple as creating written texts since to acquire this skill we must regularly learn and practice. Patel and Jain (2008) state that writing is a skill which must be taught and practiced. In other words, learning to write takes time and a lot of practice. Hence, it means that there will be more problems to deal with in writing than in reading, speaking or listening.

One of the writing genres which is taught to Indonesian students is recount. Derewianka (1990:14) defines "Recount text as a text telling an event or an experience that has already happened in the past". Depdiknas (2004:46) states that "Recount is a piece of text that retells past events, which is usually told in order in which they happened". This definition is further explained by Nafisah and Kurniawan (2007:65), say that "In a recount text, the students must retell the sequence of events or experiences which they have ever got in the past". From the definitions above, we can conclude that recount text is a text which is used by someone to tell others about past events or experiences.

Derewianka (1990:38) states that "Recount is written to retell events with the purpose of either informing or entertaining their audience or both". Then, there are two kinds of purpose of recount as defined by experts. The first is social purpose. According to Hyland (2002:99), the social purpose of recount is "tell what happened". It means that the social function of recount is to retell past experience by retelling events in original sequence. The second one is called

communicative purpose. Hammond et. al (1992:90) says that “Communicative purpose of recount is to record events for the purpose of information”.

Hyland (2004) states there are three generic structures of recount, namely: 1) orientation, this provides the setting and produces participants. It provides information about “who”, “where”, and “when”; 2) record of events: this tells what happened and past event in temporal sequence. It is usually recounted in chronological order. Personal comments and/or evaluative remarks are interspersed throughout the record of events; and 3) re-orientation: this is an optional-closure of events and “rounds off” the sequence of events.

Moreover, Hyland (2004) then describes the common grammatical features of recount text, they are 1) the use of nouns and pronouns to identify people, animals, and things involved; 2) the use of action verbs to refer to events; 3) the use of past tense to locate events in relation to speaker’s or writer’s time; 4) the use of conjunctions and time connectives to sequence of events; 5) the use of adverb and adverbial phrase to indicate place and time; and 6) the use of adjective to describe nouns.

Derewianka (1990) states that there are three types of recount, they are 1) personal recount, 2) factual recount and 3) imaginative recount. First, personal recount is a recount that retells an activity that the writer or speaker has been personally involved in (e.g. oral anecdote, diary entry). There are several language features of personal recount, namely: the use of first pronoun (I, we); personal responses to the events that can be included, particularly at the end; and details that are often chosen to add interest or humor.

Secondly, factual recount, is a recount that records the particulars of an accident (e.g. report of a science experiment, police report, news report, historical recount). Some language features of factual recount are: the use of third person pronouns (he, she, it, they); details that are usually selected to help the reader reconstruct the activity or accident accurately; the ending that describes the outcome of the activity (e.g. in a science experiment); the use of personal feelings in probably not appropriate; details of time, place and manner that may be needed to be precisely stated (e.g. at 2.35 pm, between John st, and Park rd, the man drove at 80 kbp); descriptive details that may also be required to provide precise information (e.g. a man with red shirt, brown shoes and long his, weighing 75 kilos and approximately 189 cm tall); the use of passive voice that may be used (e.g. the breaker was filled with water); and explanations and satisfactions. Moreover, the third type is imaginative recount. It is a recount that takes on an imaginary role and gives details of events (e.g. a day in the life of a Roman Slave; how I invited...).

Tarigan (Ibid:23) explains that an effort to improve the quantity and quality of student’s vocabulary means: (a) improve their students live, (b) improve the students mental abilities, (c) improve the student’s conceptual development, (d) sharpen the students critical thinking, and (e) expand the horizons of the students outlook on life, then the teacher should make use of different words the development of techniques in teaching and learning vocabulary.

It should be noted also in learning this vocabulary, the vocabulary development not merely teach new vocabulary or words that are known, but the exact placement and matching word in the sentence is very important.

Tarigan (1985) further said the proposed 13 categories of development which have been categorized into: (1) test as an instruction, (2) context, (3) synonyms, antonyms, homonyms, (4) the origin of the word, (5) prefixes, (6) suffixes, (7) the root of the word, (8) speech and spelling, (9) semantics, (10) figure of speech, (11) literature and vocabulary development, (12) use of the dictionary, and (13) play on words. The same opinion was expressed by Keraf (1984: 67), suggesting that the way to expand someone's vocabulary is among others through learning process, context, dictionary, synonym dictionary and thesaurus and word analysis.

The quality of one's language skills clearly depends on the quantity and quality of its vocabulary (Tarigan, 1985: 2).

Vocabularies that someone has greatly affect his vocabulary mastery. Keraf (1984: 80) states that someone's vocabulary is the whole words kept in his memory, which will soon bring a reaction when they are heard or read. This statement indicates that possessing vocabulary mastery is very helpful for people to communicate, especially those studying a foreign language.

Further, mastery of the vocabulary can be distinguished by two angles, namely quantitative and qualitative angles. The use of vocabulary is quantitatively meaningful coverage of the vocabulary in a qualitative means of understanding the meaning of which is controlled by one's vocabulary of a language (Akhadiyah, et al., 1986: 95). Tarigan (1985: 2) states that the quality of a person's ability to speak clearly depends on the quality and quantity of its vocabulary. The richer vocabulary a person has, the greater speaking skill he will have. Thus, a person who has the quantity and quality of good vocabulary may have good language skill as well.

## **METHOD(S)**

The study uses a method of survey, in which the data collected from the survey is analyzed by using multiple linear regression model. The data are then analyzed and used to interpret the study result.

The population of the study is the eleventh grade students at SMKN 3 in Serang, Banten, West Java. The sample of the research is 42 eleventh grade students chosen from four different classes by using a simple-random-sampling.

The data of the study are collected by distributing an instrument to students. In order to obtain the factual data, the researcher also gives students a test. To assess the independent variable, which is the students' vocabulary mastery, the researcher gives students the instrument in the form of 30 multiple-choice questions. They have to answer the questions by crossing a, b, c, or d. Each correct answer has one score, while the incorrect answer is zero. The blueprint of vocabulary mastery is presented in the table below.

*Table 1: The Blueprint of Vocabulary Mastery Instrument*

Variable	Dimension	Indicator	Number of Item	Total
Vocabulary Mastery	a. Synonym	Words: Expressing anger Expressing feel Expressing sadness Expressing pleasure	1,2,3,4,5,6,7	7
	b. Antonym	Expressing opinion Expressing feel Expressing appearance	8,9,10	3
	c. Completion and Paraphrase	Find the word to complete the meaning of sentence Find the word which has the same meaning	11,12,13,14,15, 16,17,18,19,20	10
	d. Definition	Define the meaning of the words	21,22,23,24,25, 26,27,28,29,30	10
Total				30

For the dependent variable, namely students' recount writing skill, the researcher provides a test to students. They are asked to write a recount text with one of the available themes. The test is conducted to find out the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variable. The blueprint of recount writing skill is presented in the following table.

*Table 2: The Blueprint of Recount Writing Skill*

Variable	Indicator	Score
Recount Writing Skill	Conformity with content title	13-30
	Organization	7-20
	Vocabulary	7-20
	Tenses mastery	5-25
	Spelling	2-5

Having been collected, all the data are tabulated and analyzed to answer the question of this research. The tabulation and analysis are conducted using program *SPSS 20.0*.

This descriptive analysis will then employ the data presentation technique in the form of frequency distribution table, polygon graphs and histogram for each variable. All variables will be tabulated and analyzed to measure the center of tendency and the position of mean, median and mode as well as the range of variance, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis. To get the accurate results, the calculation of descriptive statistic in this research uses *SPSS 20.0*.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data are described to specifically provide statistical descriptions of variables the study measures. The existing variables are classified into two kinds of variable, namely an independent variable and a dependent variable. The independent variable is Vocabulary Mastery, while the dependent variable is Recount Writing Skill. The obtained data are then processed by using *SPSS 20.0*. To generate the accurate statistical descriptions of existing variables. The following are the statistical descriptions of each measured variable.

*Table 3: Statistical Description of Vocabulary Mastery Variable*

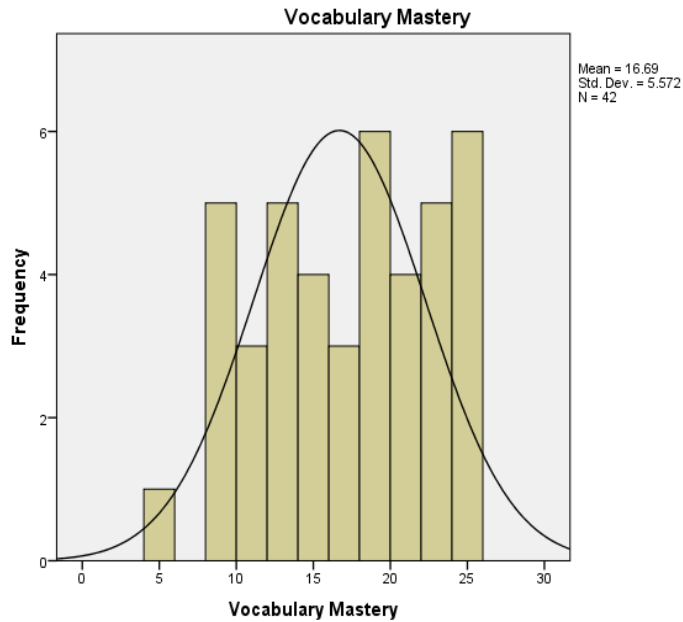
Statistics		Vocabulary Mastery
N	Valid	42
	Missing	0
Mean		16.69
Median		17.50
Mode		19 <sup>a</sup>
Std. Deviation		5.572
Skewness		-.264
Std. Error of Skewness		.365
Kurtosis		-1.130
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.717
Range		20
Minimum		5
Maximum		25

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

As shown in the table above, the mean of Vocabulary Mastery is 16.69, while its median is 17.50. The median score shows that the score of 50 percent of respondents is lower than 17.50. However, the slight difference between mean (16.69) and median (17.50) proves the data of Vocabulary Mastery variable is reasonably representative. Then, based on the score of mode, it can be known that the majority of respondents has score of Vocabulary Mastery of 19. As to the data dispersion level, it can be known by seeing the value of standard deviation. Besides, the table also indicates the standard deviation of Vocabulary Mastery is 5.572 or 33.4 % of mean.

Next, the table 3 also shows score of Vocabulary Mastery, with the maximum one is 25, while the minimum one is 5. These score mean that maximum and minimum difference value (range) for Vocabulary Mastery is 20. Then, further details of description of the Vocabulary Mastery score data can be also seen in the following histogram.

Figure 1: Histogram of Vocabulary Mastery Score Data



From the histogram and polygon of frequency above, it can be concluded that the data of Vocabulary Mastery in this research have a normal distribution.

Table 4: Statistical Description of Recount Writing Skill Variable

Statistics		Recount Writing Skill
N	Valid	42
	Missing	0
Mean		70.88
Median		70.50
Mode		70
Std. Deviation		10.572
Skewness		-.017
Std. Error of Skewness		.365
Kurtosis		-.122
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.717
Range		42
Minimum		50
Maximum		92

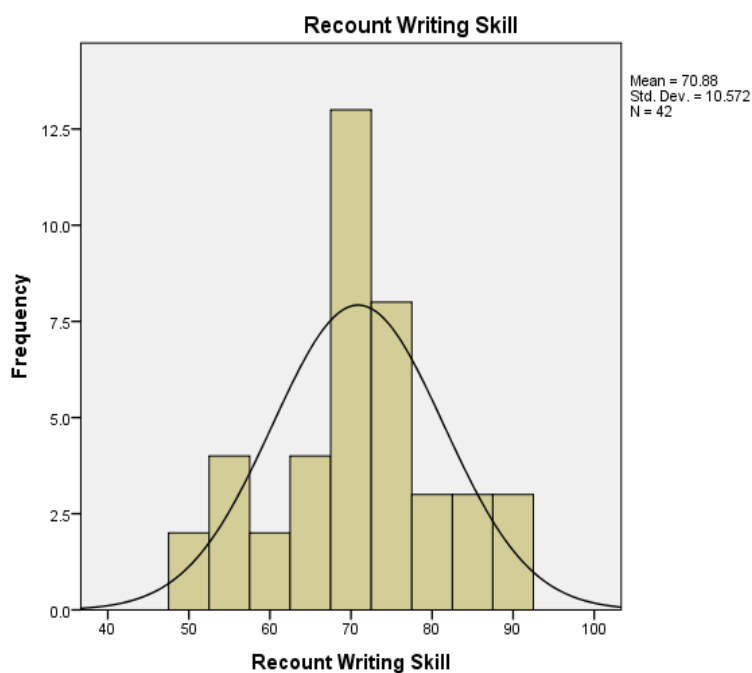
a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown



Table 4 above shows the mean of Recount Writing Skill of 70.88, with the median of 70.50. The median shows that the score of 50 percent of respondents is lower than 70.50. It can be also seen from the table that there is a small difference between mean (70.88) and median (70.50). It indicates that Recount Writing Skill data variable is reasonably representative. Further, the score of mode indicates that the Recount Writing Skill score of majority respondents is 70. The data dispersion level can be seen from the value of standard deviation. From the table, it can be known that the standard deviation of Recount Writing Skill is 10.572 or 14.9 % of mean.

Besides, the table also gives information that Recount Writing Skill has the maximum score of 92 and the minimum one of 50. It means that the difference between the maximum and minimum score (range) of Recount Writing Skill is 42. Then, further details of description of the Recount Writing Skill score data can be also seen in the following histogram.

Figure 2: Histogram of Recount Writing Skill Score Data



From the histogram and polygon of frequency above, it can be concluded that the data of Recount Writing Skill in this research have a normal distribution.

Further, the relationship between vocabulary mastery and student's recount writing skill can be tested by seeing  $t_{\text{observed}}$  and its significance coefficient (*sig*) of vocabulary mastery row in Coefficients table. If  $t_{\text{observed}} > t_{\text{table}}$  or if  $\text{sig} < 0.05$ ,  $H_0$  is rejected, meaning that the regression coefficient is significant. In other words, there is a significant relationship between independent variable and dependent variable. The value of  $t_{\text{observed}}/t_0$  is the number written in t column of vocabulary mastery row in ANOVA table and the value of  $t_{\text{table}}/t_T$  is the value of distribution t table for level of significance ( $\alpha$ ) = 5% with reliability ( $df = n-2$ ) = 40, in which n means the number of

respondent. While the value of *sig* is the number written in *sig* column of vocabulary mastery row in Coefficients table.

Statistics show that  $t_0 = 6.606$ , while  $t_T = 1.68$  and  $sig = 0.000$ . Because  $t_0 > t_T$  and  $sig < 0.05$ ,  $H_0$  is rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between vocabulary mastery and students' recount writing skill.

From the regression analysis result, it can be seen the score of students' recount writing skill of 1.307, showing that there is positive relationship between variable X and Y. This means that every one-point increase of vocabulary mastery will lead to an increase in students' recount writing skill of 1.307 or 130.7 percent.

The relationship between vocabulary mastery and students' recount writing skill is 0.718. This number shows a strong relationship between them. In conclusion, this result reveals that independent variables (X) has a significant relationship with dependent variable (Y).

This result is in line with theories explained before. Students who have good vocabulary mastery may have good language skill, in this case writing. When doing writing activity, students need vocabularies to represent ideas or messages. So, it is important for them to have good vocabulary mastery to make their communication through written form easier. In other words, vocabulary mastery variable can highly influence students' recount writing skill.

With good vocabulary mastery, students can freely express their opinions in writing because they understand vocabularies representing the message they want to express in English language. They can use wider vocabularies they have to express their opinions more freely without worrying over running out of certain vocabularies. So, it can be said that vocabulary mastery is the strong foundation for developing students' English writing skill. This will lead to their good achievement in writing an English text because vocabulary mastery will be invaluable resource for students to write different topics and types of writing. In conclusion, if supported by good vocabulary mastery, students will have bigger opportunity to develop their writing skill.

From the hypothesis test, we can see  $sig = 0.000$  and  $t_0 = 6.606$ , while  $t_T = 1.68$ . Because  $sig < 0.05$  and  $t_0 > t_T$ ,  $H_0$  is rejected, meaning there is a significant relationship between vocabulary mastery and recount writing skill. Further explanation on the effect of vocabulary mastery can be found out by seeing the result of estimation of coefficient of determination. This number indicates that contribution of vocabulary mastery to students' recount writing skill is so clear. This result proves that vocabulary mastery can help students increase their writing skill so that they are encouraged to be more productive in writing English.

This result is in line with one of theories previously mentioned, stating that vocabulary is one of common problems facing by students in writing because vocabulary plays a very important role in constructing a good paragraph. By choosing appropriate words, the writer will be able to smoothly communicate his/her ideas and opinions in any skill of language, especially writing. Considering this fact, if students want to be competent in writing, they have to have rich vocabularies, meaning that it is vital for them to develop vocabulary mastery. Someone's vocabulary itself is the whole words kept in his memory, which will soon bring a reaction when they are heard or read. It can be said that someone who have vocabulary mastery is those having

wide vocabularies, including their skill in understanding the meaning and the use of vocabularies according its context. Good vocabulary mastery will help students improve their skill in writing English since by mastering and understanding extensive vocabularies very well, they can freely express their ideas and opinions in a written form.

On the contrary, students with lack of vocabulary mastery will have difficulty when they want to express what they are thinking of in writing. That is why, it is necessary for students to enhance their vocabulary mastery if they want to be competent to use English language in writing. This can be seen from the data of respondent showing that students who have high vocabulary mastery will also possess good writing skill.

## CONCLUSIONS

Seeing the description and analysis of the data of study, the researcher comes to a conclusion that there is a significant correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and their recount writing skill. It can be proven by seeing the result of hypothesis test, showing  $t_0$  of 6.606 and  $sig$  of 0.000. It indicates that  $t_0$  is more than  $t_r$  ( $> 1.68$ ) and the  $sig$  is less than 0.05 ( $< 0.05$ ). This result reveals a significant effect. So, it can be concluded that the better vocabulary mastery students possess, the better their recount writing skill is.

Then, the positive and significant relationship between students' vocabulary mastery and their recount writing skill must be a good reason for all teachers to develop their students' vocabularies by giving them more activities or assignment. It is also important for the students to regularly practice their vocabularies. Good mastery of vocabulary helps the learners express their ideas precisely. By having many stocks of words, they will be able to comprehend reading materials, catch someone's talk, give a response, speak fluently and write some kinds of topics.

The study also shows that students' vocabulary mastery has a positive and significant effect on their recount writing skill. For this reason, the teachers should be able to provide their students with motivation and encouragement to practice and develop their vocabularies. It is the teachers' provision that will later improve what the students want to achieve.

It is suggested that the result of the study is still in need of further comprehensive evaluation. Many specific studies must be taken into consideration. However, it is expected that this study will be a good reference to be used by other researchers in their future research.

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