ISBN: 978-623-7256-25-0





# **PROCEEDING**

# EFL Theory & Practice: Voice of EED UKI

**English Education Department (EED) Collegiate Forum 2015-2018** 

**Editor** 

Parlindungan Pardede

Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FKIP UKI 2019

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Publisher:

**UKI Press** 

Jl. Mayjen Sutoyo No.2 Cawang, Jakarta 13630 Telp.(021)8092425, <a href="mailto:ukipress@uki.ac.id">ukipress@uki.ac.id</a>

Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FKIP UKI Jakarta 2019

#### **PREFACE**

English Education Department Collegiate Forum (EED CF) is an academic forum organized by the English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Kristen Indonesia (EED FKIP UKI). Initiated in 2008 by Mr. Parlin Pardede Dean of FKIP UKI, the event was held bi-monthly in every even moth. It aims at providing a friendly and open opportunity for the faculty, students, alumni, and English teachers to share ideas, research findings, and experiences in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) field. It is expected that the forum can cater the interested parties an innovative and exciting opportunity to share, care, and collaborate for developing their professionalism in EFL learning and teaching.

Following related parties' recommendation, staring from 2015 the papers presented in the forum will be compiled and published in a proceeding in every four years. This proceeding, therefore, includes the 24 articles presented in the forum from 2015 to 2018. Since the presentation in this forum is voluntary, every resource person is free to decide the EFL topic he or she presents. Consequently, the articles in this volume cover a broad theme. Despite the broad theme, the topics covered in the articles do represent current hot issues in EFL, such as learning and teaching methodology and strategies; language skills, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar development; curriculum, evaluation and assessment matters; language research methodology, and the implementation of technology in EFL.

On behalf of EED FKIP UKI, I would like to offer my appreciation all faculties, students, alumni, and fellow English teachers who had contributed in EED CF along 2015-2018. My special thanks should go to Parlindungan Pardede whose hard work in editing the articles in this proceeding has made this publication possible.

Finally, I hope each article in this proceeding can inspire every reader as it had inspired the audiences when it was presented in EED CF.

Jakarta, July 26, 2019
English Education Department Chairperson,

Hendrikus Male

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## The Correlation between Pre-Service EFL Teachers' Grammatical Competence and Writing Performance

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#### **Abstract**

This correlational research was conducted to investigate whether or not there is a correlation between grammatical competence and writing ability. To attain the objective, the data were the available document taken from the Faculty of Education and Teachers Training at Universitas Kristen Indonesia. The data were the 30 regular students' scores of Writing I and II and Grammar I, II and III. The participants were in the fifth semester of 2012 batch of English teaching study program of the Christian University of Indonesia. The data were analyzed by using SPSS version 23. The result showed that there was a positive moderate and significant correlation between grammatical competence and writing ability. This can be seen from the calculation of the hypothesis test. Based on the result, it can be concluded that the higher student grammatical competence, the higher his writing ability is.

**Keywords:** grammatical competence, writing ability, correlation, pre-service English teacher

#### INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of the usage of English can be seen from the increased number of international schools in Indonesia. Those schools teach English as the only medium of instruction. They treated English as a first language.

However, both parties, English teachers and students, found learning and teaching English writing difficult as it was not supported by teaching policy. In Indonesia, English is still a foreign language. Social factor also plays a crucial reason why it happened. The

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>This article was presented in The UKI English Education Department Bimonthly Collegiate Forum held on Friday, June 16, 2017

people of Indonesia who generally have low writing competence, even do not write English at all, make the international school program fail.

There are some factors that make such a failure. Khan and Khan (2016) argued that the major factors of teaching English failure are policy, attitude, the behaviors of parents and teachers, facility, English teacher availability in remote areas, syllabi and examination system, and expertise in language teaching. Linguistically, it was also highlighted the grammatical competence is one of the factors influencing the learners' writing ability.

This is to say that no matter what approach of writing the students apply, both product and process-based approaches, the grammar still holds a central role in English writing skill. Three basic reasons for making grammar crucial in writing. Firstly, it is functional (Saaristo, 2015). The rules of language we have understood are functional to construct our writing. Examiners also make use of grammar to score the writing.

The second reason is that the grammar is structural. Such reason views grammar as a descriptive tool required to meet. It is a set of rules about language based on how it is actually used. Finally, grammar is normative. The normativeness of grammar suggests that without it one cannot write or speak correctly. Such an argument is supported by Murcia (2001, p. 234), who stated that in the second or foreign language classroom, grammar is a source to make effective communication.

Empirical evidence of the relationship between grammatical competence writing ability has been made by many scholars. A strong relationship has been reported by Fatemi (2008). It was stated that the statistical correlation is 0.721 at 0.01 level of significance. Wood, Kemp, and Waldron (2014) proved that the tendency of using ungrammatical word writing in text messaging was found to be associated with the written grammar performance; and grammatical violations were related to the growth in spelling (writing). More interestingly, Andrews *et al* (2006) noticed that there was little evidence to indicate the usefulness of teaching formal grammar in writing competence. They confirmed that sentence-combining had a more positive effect.

Based on the mentioned findings it can be stated that both grammar and writing are mutually influential. Writing can affect grammar performance and vice versa. Secondly, the relationship varies. There is a report that it was a low association, and other is highly related. Thirdly, the evidence of their influence not just occurs in the traditional mode of communication, but also happens in text messaging context.

Understanding the background, the present study is to discuss the correlation between grammatical competence and writing ability of pre-service students of English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Kristen Indonesia. The study was designed to scientifically test the hypotheses:

Ho: There is no significant correlation between grammatical competence and writing skill.

Ha: There is a significant correlation between grammatical competence and writing skill.

It is hoped that the present study will be beneficial to both English lecturers and pre-service students. The English lecturers may take some advantages from the study,

like the confirmation of the strong relationship between grammar and writing, and a reflection on their methods of teaching grammar and writing. Finally, the current study can be a basis for building a positive students' attitude toward learning both writing and grammar.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

An account for grammatical competence seems to be crucial to describe. Though Mafisa and van der Walt (2002) define grammatical competence as the knowledge of the grammar, in fact, basically grammatical competence is different from grammatical knowledge. The grammatical competence is practical. It is concerned with an understanding of language rules and an ability to perform it based on the context they are used. On the contrary, the grammatical knowledge is merely related to the cognitive competence understanding theoretically the systems and concepts how words (morphological) and sentences (structural) are formed to convey the message. Dakhi (2016) stated that language is not biologically inherited, but it is mastered through some efforts. This means the language has to be learned as it is not biologically transferred by parents to children. The study of language which needs some efforts is concerned with the study of its words, rules, and meaning.

Such a concept makes us think and raise a question about how language in general and grammar, in particular, are studied. Is grammatical knowledge acquisition prior to grammatical competence? Acquiring language as a first language may lead us to a decision that grammar competence is prior to grammar knowledge. This is because the people acquire the L1 effortlessly. In this case, they acquire words, rules, and meanings of their mother tongue automatically. The human innate capability helps the people do it naturally (Cowie, 2008).

On the other hand, learning a second or third language seems to be difficult. Thus, mastering it has to be started from a 'below' as the basis for communication and learning. A 'below' learning is meant as a process where people learn the language by understanding its basic systems and rules. The basis for communication includes words and rules. In this regards, grammatical knowledge is prior to grammatical competence.

In relation to the aforementioned notions, learning grammar and students' grammatical knowledge at schools are obliged to be the teacher's responsibility, therefore, as language teachers play a substantial role conditioning the process of learning to be met by teachers and acquired by students. Thus, this requires an EFL/ESL teacher to master English grammar. To simplify, it is expected that the EFL/ESL teachers have no problem with English grammar (Mafisa & van der Walt, 2002).

Nevertheless, teaching grammar explicitly or implicitly is still debatable. Explicit grammar teaching refers to the teaching of form-making as a center, and implicit grammar teaching refers to the teaching of grammar through a naturally situational scene integrated into materials. Male (2011) argued that fifth semester TEFL students of Faculty of Teacher Training, Universitas Kristen Indonesia seemed to prefer explicit grammar teaching.

In contrast, teaching grammar integrated with the teaching of writing, implicit teaching, is much more advantageous. One of the techniques to integrate grammar into

writing teaching is combining-sentence technique. It is proved by Andrews *et al*, 2006) that it will be more useful to teach grammar implicitly with combining-sentence technique rather than teaching it independently.

Sentence combining is based on the concept that all of the sentences are from "deep structure" through a process which is intuitive for native language speakers (Davidson, n.d.). Combining sentence, simply stated, as the strategy of joining short sentences into longer, more complex sentences have been believed as an effective method in integrating the teaching grammar into to writing. One of the factors making it possible is its strong impact in stimulating the critical thinking of the language learners. Such an argument is totally proved by Charters (2003). In her research, it was claimed that that sentence combining allowed students to model most facets of the writing process and requires them to employ higher-level thinking in a constructivist learning situation.

In realizing teaching grammar, five grammatical concepts (Beverly, 2007, p.2; Lin, 2008) that enable students to show progress in sentence revision, style, and editing are: (1) teaching concepts on subject, verb, sentence, clause, phrase, and related concepts for editing, (2) teaching style through sentence combining and sentence generating, (3) teaching sentence sense through the manipulation of syntactic elements, (4) teaching both the power of dialects and the dialects of power and (5) teaching punctuation and mechanics for convention, clarity, and style.

The previous explanation functions to narrate grammatical competence which is correlated with writing competence. Other additional empirical evidence of the relationship between grammatical competence and writing ability have been made by many scholars. A strong relationship has been reported by Fatemi (2008). It was stated that the statistical correlation is 0.721 at 0.01 level of significance. Wood, Kemp, and Waldron (2014) proved that the tendency of using ungrammatical word writing in text messaging was found to be associated with the written grammar performance; and grammatical violations were related to the growth in spelling (writing).

Based on the mentioned findings it can be stated that both grammar and writing are mutually influential. Writing can affect grammar performance and vice versa. Secondly, the relationship varies. There is a report that it was a low association, and other is highly related. Thirdly, the evidence of their influence not just occurs in the traditional mode of communication, but also happens in text messaging context.

#### **METHOD**

The research was a correlational study. Hence, it implemented the quantitative method. It was conducted in the even semester of 2016/2017 Academic Year at the English Education Department, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, Christian University of Indonesia, Jakarta. The variable of this research was grammatical competence; while the criterion was writing ability. The data were collected using the documentary technique by taking the score of the grammar and writing the students of the English education department. The population of this research was all the fifth-semester students of 2012 batch. However, thirty students were the samples of the research taken by applying a purposive random sampling method.

After the data had been collected, the researcher analyzed them using descriptive statistic and parametric analysis technique. However, before coming to the hypothesis test, the researcher conducted a normality and linearity test, as the prerequisite analysis. In order to meet objective and accurate calculation, the researcher used SPSS version 23.

#### **FINDING**

#### Pre-requisite Analysis

#### Normality Test

The normality test was conducted to find out whether data were normally distributed. The result shows that the Sig value (0.20) was greater than the Sig level (0.05) for grammar data. It means that the null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) was not rejected. In other words, the data of grammar were normally distributed. Furthermore, the test of normality data of writing showed that Sig value was 0.118 (greater than the Sig level (0.05)). This means that the data of writing were also normally distributed. The complete test result is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1.

Normality Test Result

	Kolmo	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.	
Grammar	.088	30	.200*	.981	30	.855	
Writing	.143	30	.118	.963	30	.369	

<sup>\*.</sup> This is a lower bound of the true significance.

The Q-Q Plots of the two data as shown in Graph 1 and 2 also strengthened the findings of normality.

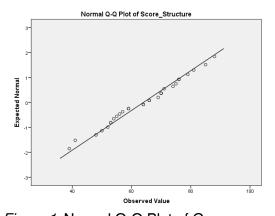


Figure 1. Normal Q-Q Plot of Grammar

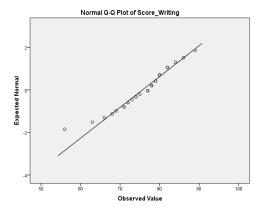


Figure 2. Normal Q-Q Plot of Writing

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

As shown in Figure 1 and 2, most of the dots are closer to the line and some of them are stick on it. Thus, it can be concluded the data of Score of grammar and writing are normally distributed.

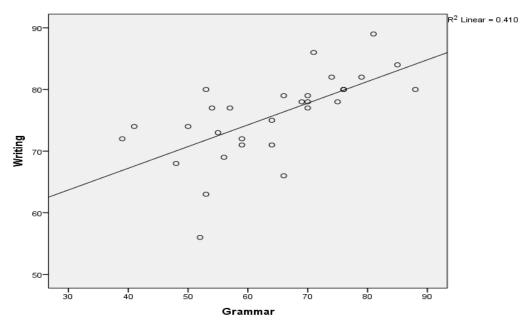


Figure 3. Scatterplot Grammar with Writing

#### Linearity Test

As shown in Figure 3, most of the dots fell on or near a straight-line meaning the pattern is linear. It is a moderate-strong because dots lining up quite well. It takes a broader band to capture all the dots. It is positive because as grammar increases, so does writing. It can be concluded that the relationship between grammatical competence and writing ability is a strong positive linear association.

#### **Hypothesis Test**

Table 2 clearly displays that the Sig. value of the correlation is 0.00 which is less than 0.05. Since the Sig. value < 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected. In other words, there was a significant correlation between grammatical competence and writing ability of the English Education Department students, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training Christian University of Indonesia.

Table 2. Correlations between Grammatical Competence and Writing Ability

Correlations						
		Grammar	Writing			
Grammar	Pearson Correlation	1	.640**			
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000			
	N	30	30			
Writing	Pearson Correlation	.640**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	_			
	N	30	30			

Table 3 shows that the Sig value (r) was 0.64. It suggests the relationship is useful for limited prediction. In other words, the relationship between grammatical competence and writing ability is positive moderate.

#### **Regression Test**

Table 3.

Regression Test Result

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.640a	.410	.389	5.395		

a. Predictors: (Constant), Grammar

Table 3 also shows the sig value of the coefficient of determination (R) = 0.410, suggesting that 41% of the variance can be explained by the variable X. In other words, the students' writing skill was 41% influenced by their grammatical competence. Whereas, the rest (59%) was influenced by other competencies/factors.

#### Regression Equation

Table 4 shows that the scores of grammar (X) with scores of writing (Y) yielded the correlation coefficient, as much as 53.142 and constant of 0.352. Thus, the relationship between grammar (X) and writing (Y) is:

$$\hat{\mathbf{Y}} = 53.142 + 0.352 \, \mathbf{X}$$

Table 4.

Correlation Coefficient Test Result

		C	oefficients <sup>a</sup>			
				Standardized		
Unstandardized Coeffic		efficients	Coefficients			
Model		В	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	53.142	5.204		10.211	.000
	Grammar	.352	.080	.640	4.408	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Writing

#### DISCUSSION

Based on the data that had been analyzed, it can be seen that both variables grammatical competence and writing data were normally distributed. It is proved by the calculation of the Sig value of grammar (0.20) and writing (0.118). It is greater than Sig level (0.05). The Q-Q plots of the two data in which most of the dots were closer or stacked to the line also strengthening the findings. The researcher used ANOVA and Scatterplot to find out whether the relationship between the two variables was linear or non-linear. It was found out that the relationship between the two variables was a strong positive linear relationship. It was linear and strong because most of the dots were lining up closer to the line. It was positive because as grammar increased, so did Writing (see Graph 3).

Based on the results of the analysis the Sig value for regression test or correlation coefficient (r) was 0.64 points; it was greater than the Sig level 0.05. According to Creswell (2008) as the range of association is between 0.35 - 0.65, the relationship was

moderately strong. As the coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) was 0.410, it suggests that 41% of the variance can be explained by the variable X (grammar). In other words, the students' writing skill was influenced by 41% by their grammatical competence. While other undefined factors are 59%. Finally, in the regression equation, the scores of grammar (X) and writing (Y) yielded the correlation coefficient, as much as53.142 and constant of 0.352. It indicates that writing increases in a certain amount by 0.352 Grammar.

The current study seems to strengthen some previous findings. Though Fatemi's (2008) correlation finding is 0.721 at 0.01 level significance, higher than the current result, 0.64 at 0.05 level of significance, they show a similar conclusion that there is a relationship between grammatical competence and writing ability. Some factors are the reasons for making the difference. The context of the study as believed that it is very important because it is influential to the social inquiry creates the gap of the researches. Iranian TEFL university students were the Fatemi's participants, while our samples were Indonesian TEFL students. The total number of her samples was 140, and the instrument of collecting the grammatical competence was a paper-based TOEFL Test. On the contrary, our data were purely secondary from 30 participants. Another equally important factor is the method in collecting the writing ability. Our instrument was the documentary technique, but her tool was 97 essays of a given topic. Not only in writing in traditional and ordinary communication, but the effect of grammar also has been traced on spelling ability on text messaging. Highlighted by Wood, Kemp, and Waldron (2014) it was strengthened that grammatical violations in text messaging, which are short by nature (Hemmer, 2009), was related to the growth in spelling (writing).

However, there is also some evidence that writing has a positive effect on both grammatical competence and writing awareness. Still Wood, Kemp, and Waldron (2014) have claimed that the tendency of using ungrammatical word writing in text messaging was found to be associated with the written grammar performance. A similar finding was also confirmed by Bussairi (2006). He said that writing quality was found to be significantly correlated with grammatical competence as well as rhetorical awareness.

Theoretically, the present finding of the positive relationship between grammatical competence and writing ability has been rooted in three basic reasons. Firstly, grammar is functional to construct our sentence. The functionality of grammar makes the writing process possible. It also helps the examiner score the writing product. In any kind of instrument of testing writing, grammar as one of the indicators is assessed.

Secondly, the grammar is treated as a descriptive instrument for writing. The grammar as a descriptive instrument has no judgment of 'right' and 'wrong'. In this case, it is a set of rules about language based on how it is actually used in writing. Lastly, the grammar is normative. The normativeness of grammar suggests that any writer has to master the language systems and rules as it is the only way to be able to construct the sentences. Or even they try, there would be ungrammatically accepted. It is because grammar, according to this view, is a prescribed instrument for students who are learning a particular language.

In addition to those reasons, Munoz, Gaviria, and Palacio's (2006) taxonomy of language knowledge seems to be an impact of grammar. At lowest hierarchy, it is stated

that knowledge of structural patterns, vocabulary and written codes are the parts of linguistic competence. The syntactical knowledge has become a basic phase for language speakers to acquire their discourse and sociolinguistic competence. The discourse competence is meant as the knowledge of the use of cohesive devices and organizational structures, and sociolinguistic competence is characterized as the knowledge of the functional use of language and their registers.

#### **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

To sum up, three important elements, namely conclusion, implication, and suggestion, are provided. It can be concluded that there was a significant relationship between grammatical competence and writing ability of the 5<sup>th</sup> semester of English Education Department students at the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, Universitas Kristen Indonesia. The finding was evidenced by the result of the hypothesis test indicating the Sig. value (0.00), less than the Sig. level (0.05). The contribution of grammatical competence to writing was as much 41%. It means that the students' competence in writing was influenced by 41% of their grammatical competence, whereas, the other 59% was affected by other factors. Furthermore, as an implication, the present study strengthens the previous findings on the mutual relationship between grammar and writing (Fatemi, 2008; Wood, Kemp, & Waldron, 2014).

Based on the conclusion described, the researchers propose some recommendations. Firstly, it is suggested to TEFL lecturers to consider grammar teaching integrated with teaching English writing. The reason is teaching grammar independently, without integrating it with teaching writing, has no impact on writing skills (Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, & Schoer, 1963; Hillocks, 1986). One of the techniques to integrate it is through combining-sentences. During motivation phase of the teaching, it is worthy assuring the positive pre-service students' attitude on the strong relationship between grammar and writing competence. Secondly, therefore, it is expected that students will be more serious to study and build their grammatical competence as well as grammatical knowledge as the basis for functional, structural, and normative writing. Finally, since the study was conducted in a private university in Indonesia, that just consisted of 30 participants, it can not be generalized in the Indonesian context of EFL learning and EFL pre-service teachers. Hence, further investigation of a broader population will be more interesting.

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## PROCEEDING English Education Department Collegiate Forum (EED CF) 2015-2018

(A bimonthly academic forum organized by the English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan) Universitas Kristen Indonesia, Jakarta)

#### "EFL Theory and Practice: Voice of EED UKI"

ISBN: 978-623-7256-25-0

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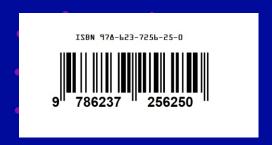
Publisher: UKI Press

Jl. Mayjen Sutoyo No.2 Cawang, Jakarta 13630

Telp.(021)8092425, ukipress@uki.ac.id

First Edition, 2019

Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FKIP UKI Jakarta 2019







### **UKI** Press

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