



# THE CORRELATION BETWEEN STUDENTS' MASTERY OF GRAMMAR AND THEIR WRITING SKILL IN NARRATIVE TEXT OF THE TENTH GRADE STUDENTS AT VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

<sup>1</sup>Risti Nurlaili, <sup>2</sup>Zuhad Ahmad

<sup>1,2</sup>Universitas Muhammadiyah Prof. DR. Hamka

E-mail: [1ristinurlaili@gmail.com](mailto:ristinurlaili@gmail.com), [2zuhad.ahmad@uhamka.ac.id](mailto:zuhad.ahmad@uhamka.ac.id)

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Corresponding Author:

Risti Nurlaili

Email Corresponding :

[ristinurlaili@gmail.com](mailto:ristinurlaili@gmail.com)

## ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the correlation between students' grammar mastery and their narrative writing skill among tenth-grade students at SMK Adi Luhur. A quantitative correlational research design was employed to examine the relationship between the two variables. The participants of this study were 75 students selected through random sampling from a population of 112 tenth-grade students. Data were collected using two instruments: a grammar test consisting of 30 items and a narrative writing test assessed through a writing rubric covering content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. The validity test indicated that all instrument items were valid, while the reliability test yielded a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.918, indicating very high reliability. The normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method revealed that the data were not normally distributed; therefore, Spearman's Rank Correlation was applied to analyze the relationship between the variables. The findings showed a correlation coefficient of 0.663 with a significance value of 0.006 ( $p < 0.05$ ). These results indicate a strong positive and statistically significant correlation between students' grammar mastery and their narrative writing skill. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. The study concludes that students with higher levels of grammar mastery tend to demonstrate better performance in writing narrative texts. The findings suggest that integrating grammar instruction with narrative writing practice can contribute to improving students' writing proficiency in vocational high school contexts.

**Keywords:** *grammar mastery, narrative writing skill, correlation study, vocational high school students, English language learning*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

English proficiency has become an essential competence in the era of globalization, particularly within vocational education, where students are prepared to enter professional fields that demand effective communication skills (Saptiany & Prabowo, 2024; Revniuk & Bányi, 2023).

Among the four fundamental language skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing writing is considered one of the most important because it enables learners to communicate ideas, opinions, and experiences in a structured and creative manner. One of the text genres commonly taught in secondary education is narrative text, which focuses on storytelling through

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elements such as characters, setting, and plot (Elkot et al., 2024; Ilmonen, 2020; Robin, 2019). Learning to write narrative texts is expected to enhance students' creativity, imagination, and language competence (Erniwati et al., 2022; Wiliana & Djajaneegara, 2020; Vandermeulen et al., 2024). Nevertheless, many tenth-grade vocational school students encounter difficulties in producing well-written narrative texts. One of the primary factors contributing to this problem is insufficient grammar mastery, which serves as the basis for constructing clear, accurate, and meaningful written communication.

Grammar encompasses the rules governing sentence structure, word formation, and punctuation, all of which are fundamental to effective writing (Dhananjaya et al., 2024; Askhatova A, 2020; Arochman et al., 2024). Students who possess strong grammatical knowledge are generally better equipped to express their ideas accurately and coherently in written form. Previous studies have consistently highlighted the significant relationship between grammar mastery and writing ability. For example, a study conducted by Yunita Mesah et al. (2024) revealed a strong correlation between students' grammar mastery and their writing performance among vocational school learners. The findings demonstrated that students with higher levels of grammatical competence tended to produce better-quality written texts. However, the study primarily focused on general writing ability among English education students and did not specifically examine narrative writing skills or vocational high school students. Given the distinct educational characteristics and career-oriented learning objectives of vocational school students, further investigation into the relationship between grammar mastery and narrative writing skills in vocational education remains necessary (Song & Song, 2023; Nejmaoui, 2019; Yusuf & Ali, 2025).

In addition, several other studies have reinforced the importance of grammar in writing development. Murtiningsih et al. (2022) found that students with stronger grammar mastery were more capable of organizing their ideas systematically and producing coherent written compositions.

Likewise, Etfita (2019) reported that grammar mastery significantly influences students' writing achievement, particularly in constructing grammatically accurate sentences. These findings suggest that grammar plays a crucial role in supporting writing proficiency. Despite this evidence, most previous studies have concentrated on general writing skills or have been conducted in higher education settings. Consequently, limited empirical research is available regarding the relationship between grammar mastery and narrative text writing among vocational high school students (Pramilaga et al., 2024; Jaya et al., 2025; Suryani et al., 2024).

The existing literature indicates that inadequate grammar mastery may negatively affect students' ability to write narrative texts effectively. Although numerous studies have explored the association between grammar mastery and writing ability, the majority have focused on senior high school or university students. Research conducted in vocational high schools remains relatively scarce, despite the fact that vocational students often have different educational needs, learning experiences, and objectives in learning English. Furthermore, earlier studies frequently examined grammar mastery in general or concentrated on specific grammatical aspects, such as the simple past tense, rather than investigating grammar mastery as a comprehensive construct in relation to narrative writing skills. Therefore, this study seeks to address this research gap by examining the correlation between students' grammar mastery and their narrative writing skills among tenth-grade students at a vocational high school.

The findings of this study are expected to provide empirical evidence regarding the extent to which grammar mastery contributes to students' performance in writing narrative texts. Moreover, the results may offer valuable insights for English teachers, particularly those working in vocational high schools in Indonesia, in designing more effective instructional strategies that emphasize both grammatical accuracy and meaningful text production. Accordingly, this study is guided by the following research question: **Is there a significant correlation between students' grammar mastery and**

**their narrative text writing skills among tenth-grade students at a vocational high school?**

Ultimately, this research is expected to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on English language learning by providing a deeper understanding of the relationship between grammatical competence and narrative writing performance. The findings may also serve as a practical reference for educators in developing writing instruction that supports students in achieving greater proficiency in written English communication.

**2. METHODS****2.1 Research Design**

This study employed a quantitative correlational research design to investigate the relationship between students' grammar mastery and their narrative writing skill. The study focused on identifying the correlation between the two variables without applying any experimental treatment.

**2.2 Research Setting and Time**

The research was conducted at SMK Adi Luhur involving tenth-grade students. The study took place during the second semester of the 2025/2026 academic year and was carried out over approximately three months, including instrument preparation, validation, testing, and data collection.

**2.3 Population and Sample**

The population consisted of 112 tenth-grade students from four classes (TKJ 1, TKJ 2, DKV, and PH). The sample was determined using Slovin's formula with a 15% margin of error, resulting in 75 students selected through probability random sampling.

**2.4 Variables of the Study**

- Independent Variable (X): Grammar Mastery, measured through a grammar test covering tenses, subject-verb agreement, pronouns, and prepositions.
- Dependent Variable (Y): Narrative Writing Skill, measured through a narrative writing test assessed in

terms of content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics.

**2.5 Research Instruments**

Two instruments were used:

1. Grammar Test – A multiple-choice test consisting of 30 items assessing grammar components such as tenses, modal verbs, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, and question forms.
2. Writing Test – A narrative writing task evaluated using a rubric covering content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics.

**2.6 Data Collection Technique**

Data were collected by administering a grammar test followed by a narrative writing test. Students' scores from both tests were recorded and tabulated for statistical analysis.

**2.7 Data Analysis Technique**

The collected data were analyzed quantitatively using statistical software. Descriptive statistics were calculated, followed by a normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. If the data were normally distributed, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used. If the data were not normally distributed, Spearman Rank Correlation was applied to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables.

**2.8 Validity and Reliability**

The instruments were developed based on the vocational high school English curriculum and validated by experts. The reliability of the grammar test was measured through internal consistency analysis, while the writing test reliability was ensured through a standardized scoring rubric.

**2.9 Hypothesis Testing**

The hypotheses were tested at a significance level of 0.05:

- H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant correlation between students' grammar mastery and their narrative writing skill.

- $H_1$ : There is a significant correlation between students' grammar mastery and their narrative writing skill.

$H_0$  was rejected if the significance value was less than 0.05 and accepted if it was greater than 0.05.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Results

##### 1) Description of the Data

This study investigated the correlation between students' grammar mastery (X) and narrative writing skill (Y) among 75 tenth-grade students at SMK Adi Luhur. Data were collected through a grammar test and a narrative writing test. The scores obtained were analyzed using SPSS software to determine the relationship between the two variables.

##### 2) Validity Test

The validity test was conducted using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation with SPSS. The instrument consisted of 30 items administered to 75 respondents. The results showed that all

items had correlation coefficients higher than the r-table value (0.227) and significance values below 0.05. Therefore, all 30 items were declared valid and suitable for measuring the research variables.

##### 3) Reliability Test

Reliability testing was performed using Cronbach's Alpha. The analysis produced a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.918, which exceeded the minimum criterion of 0.70. This result indicates that the instrument has very high reliability and is capable of providing consistent and dependable measurements. Consequently, the instrument was considered reliable for data collection and further analysis.

##### 4) Normality Test

Before proceeding with the correlation analysis, the researcher first conducted a normality test to determine whether the data followed a normal distribution. This normality test was performed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test via SPSS. The results of the normality test are presented in the table below.

**Table 1. Test of Normality**

		Tests of Normality					
		Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Kode	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Data	Writing	.109	75	.029	.973	75	.116
	Questionnaire	.130	73	.006	.936	73	.001

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Based on the results shown in the table, the significance value for the Writing variable is 0.029, while that for the Questionnaire variable is 0.006. Since both values are lower than the 0.05 threshold, it can be concluded that the data are not normally distributed. Based on this, the researcher decided to apply Spearman's Rank Correlation as a parametric statistical method to analyze the relationship between students' ability to understand grammar and their ability to write narrative texts.

##### 5) Spearman Rank Correlation Test

Since the data were found to be non-normally distributed, the researcher applied Spearman's rank correlation test to explore the relationship between students' ability to understand grammar and their ability to compose narrative texts. The results of the Spearman's rank correlation test are presented below.

**Table 2. Spearman Rank Correlation Test**

**Correlations**

			Writing	Questionnaire
Spearman's rho	Writing	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.663
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.006
		N	75	73
	Questionnaire	Correlation Coefficient	.663	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.
		N	73	73

Based on the table presented earlier, the correlation coefficient between the grammar proficiency variable and the narrative writing skill variable is 0.663. According to the evaluation criteria used in interpreting correlation coefficients, a value in the range of 0.60 to 0.79 indicates a strong relationship between the two variables. Additionally, a significance value of 0.006 was obtained, which is lower than the predetermined significance threshold of 0.05 ( $0.006 < 0.05$ ). Thus, it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant relationship between students' proficiency in grammar and their skills in writing narrative texts. Based on these analysis results, the researcher's decision is to reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accept the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) as the valid hypothesis in this study.

**6) Hypothesis Testing**

The hypothesis testing was conducted to determine whether there was a significant correlation between students' grammar mastery and their writing skill in narrative text. The hypotheses were formulated as follows:

- Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): There is no significant correlation between students' grammar mastery and their writing skill in narrative text of the tenth-grade students at vocational school.
- Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_1$ ): There is a significant correlation between students' grammar mastery and their writing skill in narrative text of the tenth-grade students at vocational school.

The results obtained from the analysis using Spearman's rank correlation yielded a significance value of 0.006. It should be noted that this significance value of 0.006 is lower than the previously established

significance threshold of 0.05. Based on the hypothesis testing criteria applicable in statistics, the researcher's decision is to reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accept the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) as a valid conclusion. Therefore, a research conclusion can be drawn that there is a statistically significant relationship between the variable of students' grammar proficiency and the variable of 10th-grade students' narrative writing ability in a vocational high school setting. This relationship indicates that the higher a student's level of grammar proficiency, the greater the likelihood that their ability to write narrative texts will also increase, and the opposite is also true.

**Discussion**

The results of the study revealed that there is a statistically significant relationship between students' proficiency in grammar and their ability to write narrative texts. The analysis, conducted using Spearman's rank correlation technique, yielded a correlation coefficient of 0.663. This correlation coefficient value of 0.663 indicates a positive and strong relationship between the two variables under study. Given this positive and strong relationship, it can be interpreted that students who have a better command and understanding of grammar tend to have better writing skills in composing narrative texts as well. In this context, understanding and mastery of grammar play a very important and crucial role in helping students produce written work that is clear, well-structured, coherent, and easily understood by readers. Students who have a good understanding of grammatical rules generally have superior abilities in constructing sentences that are correct and conform to language norms, organizing ideas systematically and well-planned, and are able to effectively convey and express their thoughts or opinions through writing, especially in the context of narrative writing. The findings of this study

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are consistent with the results of a previous study conducted by Sandy et al. (n.d.) titled "EFL Students' Grammar Proficiency and Writing Skills: A Correlational Study." Aqsani's study found that grammar proficiency has a positive and significant relationship with students' writing skills. Students with higher and better levels of grammar proficiency tend to demonstrate better performance in writing activities because they have the ability to construct correct sentences in accordance with grammatical rules as well as the ability to organize ideas effectively and in a structured manner. The similarity of these findings reinforces the evidence that grammar proficiency does indeed play an important role in improving students' writing skills, particularly in the context of textual writing. Furthermore, these findings are supported by a study by Sandy et al. (n.d.) titled "The Influence of Vocabulary and Grammar Proficiency on English Narrative Writing Skills." Their findings indicate that grammar proficiency significantly contributes to students' narrative writing skills. Strong grammar proficiency helps students organize their ideas logically and reduces grammatical errors in their writing. In the process of writing narrative texts, students are expected and required to apply and use appropriate and correct grammatical structures, particularly in the use of the simple past tense, appropriate sentence patterns, pronouns, conjunctions, and proper punctuation. Students with insufficient or poor command of grammar generally face difficulties in developing and narrating a story in a coherent, structured, and accurate manner. Consequently, grammatical errors can diminish the quality and readability of the resulting narrative text. The results and findings of this study align with and are consistent with research previously conducted by Falihah et al. (2022), who reported that students generally face difficulties and challenges in using appropriate sentence structures, constructing correct sentences, and organizing ideas during the narrative writing process. The study conducted by Falihah et al. emphasized and concluded that mastery and understanding of grammar remain one of the key and determining factors influencing students' performance and outcomes in writing activities. In addition, Secilia (2026)

found and reported that vocational high school students still face and experience various challenges regarding the accurate use of grammar and the organization of narrative texts. The research conducted by these three authors concluded and suggested that students require more targeted and guided writing practice, as well as more intensive instruction on grammar, to improve the quality of their narrative writing skills. Additionally, another study by Terenovix et al. (2023) analyzed and examined grammatical errors found in students' narrative writing. The study revealed that many students still make mistakes in verb forms, sentence structure and patterns, and punctuation usage. These findings further prove and demonstrate that mastery and understanding of grammar are closely related to students' success in writing narrative texts. The consistency among the findings of these studies reinforces the argument that mastery of grammar is a crucial and determining factor in students' narrative writing skills. In addition, Agustina and Maria & Wayan (2021) explain and point out that vocational high school students need an adequate and sufficient understanding and mastery of grammar to be able to produce narrative texts that are meaningful and valuable. An understanding of grammar helps students connect and link various ideas in a systematic and structured manner, and assists them in articulating and conveying events clearly and coherently during the narrative writing process. The results and findings of this study also reinforce and support the theory proposed by Jeremy Harmer, an expert in the field of language learning. Jeremy Harmer (n.d.) states and argues that grammar is a very important component and element in writing because it allows students to express and articulate their ideas clearly and effectively. Without a good command and understanding of grammar, students may face various difficulties in conveying messages or thoughts through the written texts they produce. Writing is a complex and multidimensional skill that involves various aspects simultaneously, including grammar, vocabulary, the organization of content, and writing techniques. Consequently, students who have a better command and understanding of grammar generally demonstrate and produce better and higher-

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quality writing performance. In addition, it is important to understand and remember that while mastery of grammar has a strong correlation with writing skills, it is not the sole factor that determines or influences students' writing ability. There are various other factors that can and may influence and determine students' writing performance, such as vocabulary mastery, students' level of motivation, creativity and creative ability, reading habits and preferences, as well as the intensity and frequency of writing practice undertaken by students. All of these factors collectively contribute to and play a role in determining the success and quality of students' writing ability. This statement is supported by Puspitasari et al. (2024), who explain that vocabulary mastery and motivation also contribute significantly to students' writing skills. Students with adequate vocabulary knowledge and higher learning motivation tend to produce better written texts. Based on the findings of this study, English teachers are advised to integrate grammar instruction with writing activities, particularly narrative writing exercises. Teachers should provide students with more opportunities to practice writing narrative texts while applying proper grammar rules. Through continuous practice and effective grammar instruction, it is hoped that students can improve their writing performance and produce narrative texts that are more coherent and grammatically accurate.

**4. CONCLUSION**

Based on the research findings and discussion outlined in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between students' mastery of grammar and their ability to write narrative texts among 10th-grade students at vocational high schools. The results of the Spearman's rank correlation analysis indicate a correlation coefficient of 0.663 with a significance level of 0.006. Since the significance level is less than 0.05 ( $0.006 < 0.05$ ), the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) is accepted. In other words, students with better command of grammar tend to have better narrative writing skills as well. This finding indicates

that grammar proficiency plays a crucial role in supporting students' narrative writing performance. Students who understand grammatical aspects such as tense (verb forms), sentence structure, pronouns, and subject-predicate agreement are better able to organize their ideas and produce well-structured, easily understandable narrative texts. This is consistent with research conducted by Yunita Mesah et al. (2024), who found that students with better grammar proficiency tend to achieve higher writing scores. The results of this study also reinforce the findings of Murtiningsih et al. (2022), which indicate that grammar proficiency helps students organize their ideas more clearly and produce well-structured written texts. Grammar proficiency has a significant effect on students' writing performance, particularly in constructing correct sentences based on grammatical rules. These findings also support the theory proposed by Harmer, who states that grammar is a crucial component in creating effective written communication. Grammar helps students construct meaningful sentences and convey ideas clearly in written form. Furthermore, the findings of this study also reinforce the results of a previous study conducted by Saputra (n.d.), who found that students with better command of grammar were able to produce higher-quality narrative writing with fewer grammatical errors and a more organized and structured narrative. Based on this, it can be concluded that grammar proficiency has a positive and significant relationship with students' writing skills in composing narrative texts. Although grammar proficiency is not the only factor influencing students' writing ability, it remains an important foundation in helping students produce narrative texts that are meaningful, structured, and coherent. A good understanding of grammar allows students to convey ideas and stories more clearly and in a way that is easily understood by readers.

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