



## Students' Part of Speech Mastery and Descriptive Writing Ability: Are they correlated?

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### Abstract

This study aims to find out if there is a correlation between students' part of speech mastery and their descriptive writing ability. There were 44 students of a public senior high school in West Sumatera, Indonesia as the sample for this study. Part of speech mastery and writing ability tests were used to collect the data and analysed then by using statistically correlational formula. In assessing students' writing ability, an analytical scoring was used, with the help of two raters. Additionally, to examine students' part of speech mastery, five multiple choices questions for each part of speech were used. The findings show a strong positive correlation between students' part of speech mastery and their descriptive writing ability, seen by the data where the  $r$  value between variables is 0.779, falling within the coefficient interval of 0.60–0.799, indicating a significant positive relationship between students' part of speech mastery and their descriptive writing ability. This suggests that prioritizing part of speech mastery in education can improve students' writing ability. To further investigate this variable, longitudinal, qualitative, and cross-cultural studies can be conducted and the impact of students' understanding of part of speech on their writing performance can be examined. Additionally, specific populations, the development of educational curriculum and assessments can be investigated to explore the relationship in these groups.

### Keywords:

*Correlational Research, Part of Speech Mastery, Descriptive Writing Ability.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Words, the basic elements of language are categorized into different groups based on their function, usage, and grammatical characteristics. Napitulu *et. al.*, (2019, p.1) state that these categories are known as part of speech. Part of speech is divided into eight types: nouns, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, prepositions,

conjunctions, and interjections. These eight categories are also divided into two main groups. The first group includes the major part of speech: adjectives, adverbs, nouns, and verbs. The second group includes the minor part of speech: conjunctions, interjections, prepositions, and pronouns (Leech & Sartvik, 1973).

Even though part of speech is a basic part of language, most of the students often face challenges in identifying them. Maili et al., (2022) also find out that sometimes it is difficult for students to learn about part of speech. These difficulties can be because they have not been exposed and practiced to enough different ways to use language or a lack of understanding of grammatical rules. Hersalina (2021) finds that students have more challenges in identifying prepositions, verbs, pronouns, adverbs, and adjectives. They are often confused to classify which one is a verb, adverb, or adjective. Furthermore, Shofiyuddin (2017) claims that students' ability to master part of speech is still far from satisfactory.

A strong foundation in part of speech is crucial for effective writing. Even though part of speech is only a small part of grammar, they significantly impact English language learning, particularly writing (Jimenez, 2023). According to Jimenez (2023), there are three main reasons why part of speech plays an important role in students' writing. First, part of speech helps students choose the correct word to arrange a sentence. A sentence consists of a few words that have different uses and functions. Knowing the different part of speech helps students construct sentences. Second, it helps students understand more about what they are trying to say in writing. Students' understanding of part of speech helps them maintain their writing on the topic. The last one, part of speech gives a framework for the construction of efficient sentences and paragraphs. By learning about the different part of speech, students can have a better understanding of how words and phrases work together to convey meaning.

Moreover, writing is still one of the most challenging skills for students to master. Nunan (1999) states that writing fluently and expressively in English is difficult for all students, whether English is taught as the first, second, or foreign language. One of the main reasons is the lack of practice in English. This is related to the study conducted by Choemue and Brams (2020), where more than 90% of foreign language students still struggle with grammatical issues, one of which is identifying parts of speech, both spoken and written. To sum up, writing English fluently is difficult for students due to grammatical issues and language problems.

Writing remains a challenging skill for many students due to various factors. According to Irawati (2015), writing is the skill that students find the most challenging because it requires a thorough understanding of multiple elements, including word choice, grammar, sentence structure, etc. Furthermore, Rizal (2018) states that students still struggle with writing skills, especially in choosing and adapting appropriate words to their writing. Students may have a good grasp of vocabulary, but their capability might be poor to adapt it into writing, and it is difficult for them to express their ideas fluently and naturally.

Because of the problems stated above, the researcher wants to know whether there is any correlation between students' parts of speech mastery and their writing ability, especially at SMA Negeri 3 Lubuk Basung. This research filled the gap by conducting a test to find out students' writing ability. By conducting a writing ability test, this research provided a clear overview of the correlation between students' parts

of speech mastery and their writing ability. In short, this research determined whether students' part of speech mastery affected their ability to write.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research is conducted using a quantitative design in the form of a correlational study. Sani (2017) states that a correlational study is designed to compare two or more variables by measuring the degree of relationship between them. In short, a correlational study is a study where the variables are measured to find out if there is any correlation between one another. This research chose this design because there is a statistical process of correlational analysis to find out the relationship between two variables. There are two variables in this research: the first is students' part of speech mastery as an independent variable (x), and the second is students' writing ability as a dependent variable (y). In this research, the researcher used two instruments: the first is a part of speech mastery test, and the second is a writing ability test. After measuring each variable with the statistical procedure, this research finds out whether students' part of speech mastery affects their writing ability.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The research was conducted at SMA Negeri 3 Lubuk Basung, specifically focusing on students in grade XI. This study assessed students' proficiency in speech as an independent variable (x) and their writing skills as a dependent variable (y). The researcher administered two tests in the classroom: a part of speech mastery test and a writing ability test. To make it easier, the researcher used SPSS (ver. 29.0.1) to find out the data's maximum score, minimum score, standard deviation, and mean. The resulting outcome is presented in the figure below:

**Figure 1. Descriptive Statistic**

| Descriptive Statistics |    |         |         |      |       |                |
|------------------------|----|---------|---------|------|-------|----------------|
|                        | N  | Minimum | Maximum | Sum  | Mean  | Std. Deviation |
| Part_of_Speech_Mastery | 44 | 40      | 100     | 3210 | 72.95 | 14.640         |
| Writing_Ability        | 44 | 42      | 75      | 2519 | 57.25 | 7.610          |
| Valid N (listwise)     | 44 |         |         |      |       |                |

As the figure above shows, the sample of this research was 44 students. The highest score on the students' part of speech mastery test was 100 while the lowest score was 40. At the same moment, the highest score of students' writing ability was 75 while the lowest score was 42. Moreover, the mean of students' part of speech mastery score was 72.95 (can be categorized as 'good') while the mean of students' writing ability score was 57.25 (can be categorized as 'fairly')

The normality of the data was checked using the Saphiro-Wilk test in SPSS (ver. 29.0.1), this is because the sample size of this research was quite small (44 samples < 50 samples). According to Sugiyono (2014), if the sample size is higher than 50, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method can be used to find out the normality of the data but if the sample size less than 50, the researcher must use Shapiro-Wilk to find out the normality of the data. In order to determine if it maintained a normal distribution, the researcher conducted a normality test using SPSS (ver. 29.0.1). The outcome of the normality test is presented in the figure below:

**Figure 2. Normality Test**

|                        | Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup> |    |       | Shapiro-Wilk |    |      |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|----|-------|--------------|----|------|
|                        | Statistic                       | df | Sig.  | Statistic    | df | Sig. |
| Part_of_Speech_Mastery | .102                            | 44 | .200* | .976         | 44 | .496 |
| Writing_Ability        | .141                            | 44 | .028  | .976         | 44 | .473 |

\*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The data is considered normally distributed if the significance value surpasses 0.05. Based on the normality test results, the Shapiro-Wilk test yields significance values higher than 0.05 for both the students' part of speech mastery and writing ability test results. The data output showed that the significance value of students' part of speech mastery is 0.496; the significance value of student's writing ability is 0.473. The significance value of both variables is higher than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that the distribution of the data is normal.

A linearity test was conducted on SPSS (ver. 29.0.1) to examine the relationship between students' part of speech mastery (independent variable x) and their writing ability (dependent variable y). The outcome of the linearity test is presented in the figure below:

**Figure 3. Linearity Test**

| ANOVA Table                                 |                |                          | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F      | Sig.  |
|---|----------------|--------------------------|----------------|----|-------------|--------|-------|
| Writing_Ability *<br>Part_of_Speech_Mastery | Between Groups | (Combined)               | 1890.100       | 12 | 157.508     | 8.136  | <.001 |
|   |                | Linearity                | 1511.686       | 1  | 1511.686    | 78.084 | <.001 |
|   |                | Deviation from Linearity | 378.414        | 11 | 34.401      | 1.777  | .102  |
|   | Within Groups  |                          | 600.150        | 31 | 19.360      |        |       |
|   | Total          |                          | 2490.250       | 43 |             |        |       |

The data is considered linear if the significance value surpasses 0.05. Based on the linearity test results, the deviation from linearity yields a significance value of 0.102, which is higher than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that the dependent and independent variables have a linear relationship.

When conducting normality and linearity tests, the data from students' part of speech mastery and their writing ability can be categorized as normally distributed and have a linear relationship, so the researchers conduct correlation tests using Pearson's Product Moment Coefficient Correlation (PPMCC) in SPSS (ver. 29.0.1). The outcome of the correlation test is presented in the figure below:

**Figure 4. Correlation Test**

|                        |                     | Part of Speech Mastery | Writing Ability |
|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| Part of Speech Mastery | Pearson Correlation | 1                      | .779**          |
|                        | Sig. (2-tailed)     |                        | <.001           |
|                        | N                   | 44                     | 44              |
| Writing Ability        | Pearson Correlation | .779**                 | 1               |
|                        | Sig. (2-tailed)     | <.001                  |                 |
|                        | N                   | 44                     | 44              |

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the correlation test results, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between students' part of speech mastery as an independent variable (x) and students' writing ability as a dependent variable (y). The obtained results are 0.779, falling within the coefficient interval of 0.60–0.799, indicating a significant relationship between students' part of speech mastery and their writing ability. In the figure above, it can be seen that the significance value 2-tailed which is  $<0.001$ . The result is lower than 0.05, it can be concluded that the alternative hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected. In other words, there is a strong positive correlation between students' part of speech mastery and their writing ability.

This research aimed to determine students' part of speech mastery and descriptive writing ability and investigate the correlation between these two variables. This part discusses the findings and answers each research question stated at the beginning of this research. The samples of this research were 44 students both from XI IPA 1 and XI IPS I. The results of the test of students' part of speech mastery showed various levels of mastery of the students. Out of the 44 samples, 5 achieved around 50% accuracy, 37 achieved more than 50% accuracy, and 2 achieved a perfect score. After analyzing the total number of correct answers of each student, it can be found that the highest score reached was 100, while the lowest score received was 40. Students at SMA Negeri 3 achieved a mean score of 72.95 (73), indicating a 'good' mastery of part of speech.

The finding of this research has different output from the study conducted by Shofiyuddin (2017). Shofiyuddin in 2017 found that students' ability in mastering part of speech is still far from satisfactory. By comparing the result of this research, students at SMA Negeri 3 Lubuk Basung have a 'good' ability in mastering part of speech which could be caused by different factors one of them is in introducing the part of speech since the beginning of the semester. The learning process at SMA Negeri 3 Lubuk Basung allowed their new students to have basic knowledge of English by adding more hours for English courses and more subjects besides the curriculum which introduced part of speech. So, it can be concluded that the different result is influenced by the varying degrees of familiarity with part of speech among students.

Upon closer examination, after analyzing the graph of students' responses for each question, it becomes clear that the results of this research match with the results that were stated by previous researchers. The data show that students commonly face difficulties when answering questions related to adverbs, adjectives, and prepositions. This result is linear with Setiyorini et al., (2020), Hersalina (2021), and Maili et al., (2022) research. These previous studies claimed that the most common mistake that students made while identifying part of speech they are still confused about which one is adverbs, adjectives, and prepositions.

The results of the students' descriptive writing ability test showed a similar level of variety as the outcomes observed in the parts of speech mastery test results. Among the 44 samples, 20 students were classified as 'poor', another 20 students were classified as 'fair', and only 4 students were classified as 'fairly good' in writing a descriptive paragraph. The highest score was reached 75, while the lowest score received was 42. Students at SMA Negeri 3 achieved a mean score of 57.25 (57), indicating a 'fair' ability in descriptive writing. The 'fair' results show that descriptive

writing is challenging most for the students, especially since English is an international language for students in Indonesia, and most of the students face a lot of difficulties. This is related to the previous theories where Bulqiyah et al. (2021) stated the difficulties that students might face in writing, like choosing the appropriate vocabulary and diction, grammatical features, exploring and generating ideas, etc.

Based on the correlational test result which is shown in the previous part, the researcher found that there is a positive correlation between students' part of speech mastery and their descriptive writing ability. This can be concluded from the result of the significance value 2-tailed which is  $<0.001$ . The result is lower than 0.05, it can be concluded that the alternative hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected. In other words, there is a strong positive correlation between students' part of speech mastery and their descriptive writing ability. Furthermore, the result of this research is supported by the existing data. It follows the theory in the previous chapter by Putra (2019), stating that "the more students master part of speech, the better their writing will be."

## CONCLUSION

The goal of this correlational study was to determine the relationship between students' part of speech mastery and their writing ability. This research was conducted at SMA Negeri 3 Lubuk Basung and the samples were 44 students from XI IPA I and XI IPS I. Based on the data, it can be concluded that there is a strong positive correlation between students' part of speech mastery and their writing ability at SMA Negeri 3 Lubuk Basung which can be proved by the research findings and discussion. The previous part showed that the significance value of 2-tailed was lower than 0.05 which means the null hypothesis in this research was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. In other words, it can be concluded that the better and more proficient students are in mastering part of speech, the better their writing ability will be. However, because the research only focused on analyzing students' ability to write in the context of descriptive writing in the form of a paragraph, especially at SMA Negeri 3 Lubuk Basung, it is not purposed to generalize the results of this research will be the same if it conducted in another school with different types of writing.

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