The Correlation Between Vocabulary Mastery and Students' Achievement in Writing Narrative Texts of The Ninth-Grade of SMP Swasta PGRI 1 Medan

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Abstract

This study was conducted to determine whether there was a relationship between vocabulary mastery and writing achievement of ninth grade students at SMP Swasta PGRI 1 Medan, particularly in writing narrative texts with theme "Slice of Life". The research employed a quantitative approach with a correlational design. The sample consisted of 16 ninth grade students, who represented the only ninth grade class in SMP Swasta PGRI 1 Medan, therefore, the sampling technique used was total sampling. The instruments of this study included 20 multiple choice items of vocabulary test and narrative writing test assessed based on five aspects. The findings of this study showed that the majority of ninth grade students were at medium level in both vocabulary mastery (62.5%) and writing achievement (50%). The Pearson correlation test indicated that ther was a positive, moderate relationship between vocabulary mastery and writing achievement (r = 0.496), however the relationship was not statistically significant (sig. = 0.051 > 0.005). Thus, this study concluded that there was no significant correlation between students' vocabulary mastery and their achievement in writing narrative text. These results that students' writing achievement may be influenced by several other factor besides vocabulary mastery.

Keywords: *Vocabulary Mastery, Writing Achievement, Narrative Text, Correlation, Slice of Life.)*

INTRODUCTION

Language has played an important role in several human activities, and English has become one of the most influential languages in the world. (Sevinch, 2025) said that English has transformed from a language spoken in a small region to a dominant global language used by more than 1.5 billion people worldwide. English is a language that plays an important role in various aspects of life today, including education. Currently, Indonesia has made English a foreign language subject that students must learn from elementary school to college. But according to (Isgiarno, 2020) English learning at the junior high school level in Indonesia continues to face struggles in improving students' vocabulary mastery.

English has four main skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. According (Karlena et al., 2023)writing plays a crucial role in academic success and civic engagement, but it is also considered one of the most cognitively challenging language skills Many students consider writing to be the most difficult skill to master. (Isgiarno et al., 2020) stated that improving writing skills in the classroom setting is more challenging than other language skills. This may be because writing not only requires

the ability to express ideas and creativity, but also requires mastery of language components such as grammar, spelling, and, most importantly, vocabulary.

Vocabulary is a vital element in language learning and significantly contributes to the development of the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Soleha, 2025). Writing, vocabulary mastery is one of the many aspects of English that must be understood, because vocabulary has a big impact on writing (Dorifa, 2022). With good vocabulary mastery, students have the basic ability to understand and use English effectively. English has several skills that must be mastered. One of the English language competencies that students need to master is writing, for example, the ability to write narrative texts. Narrative text is English text type designed to tell a story through a sequence of chronologically connected events (Hidayatullah, 2022). This genre includes various forms such as fairy tales, mysteries, science fiction, romance, horror, adventure stories, fables, myths and legends, historical narratives, ballads, slice of life, personal experiences, and others.

Writing skills cannot be separated from vocabulary mastery because the use of appropriate vocabulary can help students express their ideas clearly and effectively in written form (Kurniawan et al., 2021). Vocabulary is the most basic component of language that students must master in language learning. In the current dynamics of learning development, vocabulary mastery is a crucial aspect that supports student success in writing.

Vocabulary plays a vital role in learning a language because vocabulary is needed to learn reading, speaking, writing, and listening. (Yuhariah & Sujarwati, 2023). Students' lack of vocabulary mastery is often the main obstacle they face in expressing their ideas and stories orally or in writing.` In order to communicate effectively with others, language learners need to master English vocabulary along with its grammatical rules (Dewi, 2021). Vocabulary is essential for developing the four language skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It is noted that while grammar alone allows very limited expression, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed, meaning that learning grammar without vocabulary prevents learners from expressing their ideas.

One type of text taught in schools, especially in ninth grade, is narrative text. Narrative text is a story or tale and is intended to entertain, inspire, or inform the reader as cited in (Rofi, 2022) states that writing narrative texts is a learning activity that requires feeling, ideas, imagination, and emotion in the writing process. Even to write narrative texts, students need to practice expressing themselves through writing. Narrative text is text that aims to entertain readers by telling stories or events chronologically. The ability of vocabulary mastery and reading skill are the factors that influence students' success in learning to write narrative text (Maryamah, 2021) To write good narrative text, students need to have a wide vocabulary so that they can describe characters, settings, and events clearly.

This study was conducted to examine whether there is a significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and student achievement in writing narrative texts, and whether it is true that vocabulary and writing are closely related. Thus, this study was conducted to determine the correlation between the two. Therefore, this study is expected to provide a clearer picture of the importance of vocabulary mastery in writing skills and serve as a basis for developing more effective and efficient learning strategies.

Based on the background of the study, this research focuses on the relationship between vocabulary mastery and students' achievement in writing narrative texts at the ninth-grade level. This study seeks to describe students' achievement in writing narrative texts and to examine the extent to which vocabulary mastery influences their writing performance. In addition, this research aims to investigate whether there is a significant relationship between vocabulary mastery and students' achievement in writing narrative texts.

This study is conducted to determine the level of vocabulary mastery of ninth-grade students and to describe their achievement in writing narrative texts. Furthermore, it examines how vocabulary mastery affects students' writing skills, particularly in terms of idea development, clarity of plot, and appropriate word choice. By analyzing the relationship between vocabulary mastery and students' writing achievement, this study is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of vocabulary in supporting students' ability to produce well-structured and meaningful narrative texts. The findings of this study are also expected to serve as a reference for English teachers in designing more effective instructional strategies to improve students' writing competence, especially in narrative text writing.

To ensure that the findings are focused and relevant, this study is conducted within a specific scope. The participants of this research are ninth-grade students of PGRI 1 Private Junior High School in Medan during the 2025/2026 academic year. This study involves two main variables, namely vocabulary mastery as the independent variable and students' achievement in writing narrative texts as the dependent variable. Vocabulary mastery is measured through a vocabulary test that assesses students' understanding of word meaning, word usage in context, and mastery of word forms. Meanwhile, students' ability to write narrative texts is measured through a writing test that evaluates aspects of content, organization, grammar, vocabulary use, and writing style. This study does not examine other language skills such as listening, speaking, or reading, nor does it investigate other factors that may influence writing skills, including learning strategies, motivation, or students' background. Therefore, this study is limited to identifying the relationship between vocabulary mastery and students' ability to write narrative texts within the specified research context.

This study is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to the field of English education. From a theoretical perspective, the findings are expected to enrich existing research related to vocabulary mastery and narrative writing skills. From a practical perspective, the results of this study are expected to assist English teachers in designing more effective learning strategies that emphasize vocabulary development to enhance students' writing performance. In addition, this study is expected to raise students' awareness of the importance of expanding their vocabulary as a fundamental component in developing writing competence. Furthermore, the findings of this study may serve as a reference for future researchers who are interested in examining the relationship between other language aspects and writing skills.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative research method with a correlational design. According Lodico et al, as cited in (Kurniawan et al., 2021), this design is to investigate the relationship between two or more variables. This study used two variables, there are students' vocabulary mastery (independent variable) and their achievement in

writing narrative texts (dependent variable). According to (Creswell, 2014) , a correlational design is appropriate when the purpose of the study is to determine the relationship or degree of association between two or more quantitative variables. The data will be collected through a vocabulary test and a writing test, and will be analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

The population in this study is all ninth-grade students at SMP PGRI 1 Medan in the 2025/2026 academic year. There is only one ninth-grade class at this school with a total of 16 students. Therefore, using Saturated Sampling technique, the entire population is used as the research sample, a technique in which all members of the population are involved as samples because the number of students is relatively small and manageable for data collection (Sugiyono, 2013).

This study was conducted using two instruments to collect data, namely a multiple-choice test consisting of 20 questions. This test is designed to measure the extent of students' vocabulary mastery, especially vocabulary that is often used in narrative writing. Each correct answer will be given a score of 5, while incorrect answers will be given a score of 0. The next test is a task-based test where students write a short narrative text based on the theme, "Slice Of Life" The results of the students' writing will be assessed based on an assessment rubric adapted from Jacobs (1981). It is an analytics scoring rubric, and there are five elements in the rubric, each with points. The first is content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics Jacob et al, 1981, as cited (Phuong et al., 2023)

Table 2.1 The Rubric of Scoring in Writing Achievement

No.	Aspects of Writing	Score Total
1.	Content	25
2.	Organization	25
3.	Language Use	25
4.	Vocabulary	25
5.	Mechanics	25

This rubric is used to assess students' achievement in writing narrative texts. Each criterion is scored from 1 (Very Poor) to 5 (Excellent). To find out the results, the students' score will be calculated using the formula:

(Students' score ÷ Score total) × 100

Score Interpretation:

86–100 = Excellent

71–85 = Good

56–70 = Fair

41–55 = Poor

≤40 = Very Poor

The scores from both tests was used as the main data to analyze whether there is a correlation between vocabulary mastery and student achievement in writing narrative texts.

The data in this study was collected using two main instruments, namely a vocabulary test and a writing test. Data collection will be carried out after preliminary preparations. Before the test begins, the researcher will prepare the research instruments, namely the vocabulary test and the writing test. Then conducting validity tests on the research instruments that will be used, validity concerns how accurately a test measures the aspects it is intended to evaluate, which includes content, construct, and criterion validity (Khan et al., 2025). After the research instruments have been validated by expert judgment, the researcher can administer the vocabulary test to the students first to measure their vocabulary mastery.

After that, students were given a writing test to assess their ability to write narrative texts. After the tests are completed, the vocabulary test answer sheets were assessed based on the number of correct answers, and the writing test results were assessed using an assessment rubric covering five aspects, namely content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. Then, the scores from both tests are tabulated and used as quantitative data to be analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation to determine the relationship between vocabulary mastery and student writing achievement.

Once all the data have been obtained, it was analyzed using quantitative methods. Quantitative research typicaly reports its findings in the form of numerical summaries. Ladico 2006, as cited in (Yuhariah & Sujarwati, 2023).The first step was calculated the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values of the vocabulary and writing test results to describe the overall performance of the students. Next, a normality test will be conducted to determine whether the data is normally distributed or not, and a linearity test was used to ensure that the relationship between vocabulary mastery and writing achievement is linear. Finally, the data was then be analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation to determine the relationship between students' vocabulary mastery and their achievement in narrative writing.

FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter explained the results of the study, including the data and the discussion. The data in this research included the findings obtained from the study that had been conducted. This chapter was prepared to present all data derived from the vocabulary and writing achievement tests administered to the ninth-grade students of SMP Swasta PGRI 1 Medan.

This section was written to present the results of this study. To determine whether vocabulary mastery had a correlation with the students' writing achievement in the ninth grade, two types of instruments were administered to collect data, namely a vocabulary test and a narrative writing test. The vocabulary test was administered on October 30, 2025. Initially, the vocabulary test consisted of 35 items; however, after conducting the validity test, only 20 items were eligible to be used as research instruments. Meanwhile, the narrative writing test was administered on October 6 and 13, 2025 and assessed using five aspects of narrative writing evaluation.

This section was written to present the results of this study. This part begins with the result of Variabel X (Vocabulary) and Variabel Y (Writing). In this section, the researcher shows the results obtained from variable X, namely the vocabulary test. This study consisted of 20 multiple choice questions, where each correct answer was worth 5 point. After calculating the final results, it was found that the highest score that ninth grade students could achieve was 80 and the lowest score was 50. From this data, it

was found that the average vocabulary test of students was 69.375, with the median of 72.5. So, the specific data was described in the table below.

Table 3.1 The Result of Variable Score of Vocabulary Test

NO	Statistics	Variable X
1.	The Highest Scores	80
2.	The Lowest Score	50
3.	Range	30
4.	Interval	5
5.	Mean	69,375
6.	Median	72,5
7.	Standart Deviation	9,81

The result of the narrative text variable of the ninth grade students at SMP Swasta PGRI 1 Medan were obtained as follow:

Table 3.2 The Result of Variable Score of Writing

| NO	Statistics	Variable Y
1.	The Highest Scores	68
2.	The Lowest Score	44
3.	Range	24
4.	Interval	5
5.	Mean	59,25
6.	Median	64
7.	Standart Deviation	8,66

This section presents the descriptive stastics of the vocabulary variable:

Table 3.3 Descriptive Statistic of Vocabulary Test

Criteria	Category	Frequency	%
X > 79.18	High	4	25%
59.56 ≤ X ≤ 79.18	Medium	10	62.5%
X < 59.56	Low	2	12.5%
Total		16	100%

The table above presented the distribution of participants based on the results of the vocabulary test. The results indicated that 4 students (25%) of the sample scored in the high category, 10 students (62.5%) scored in the medium category, and 2 students (12.5%) scored in the low category. The diagram below is the result of the vocabulary categorization:

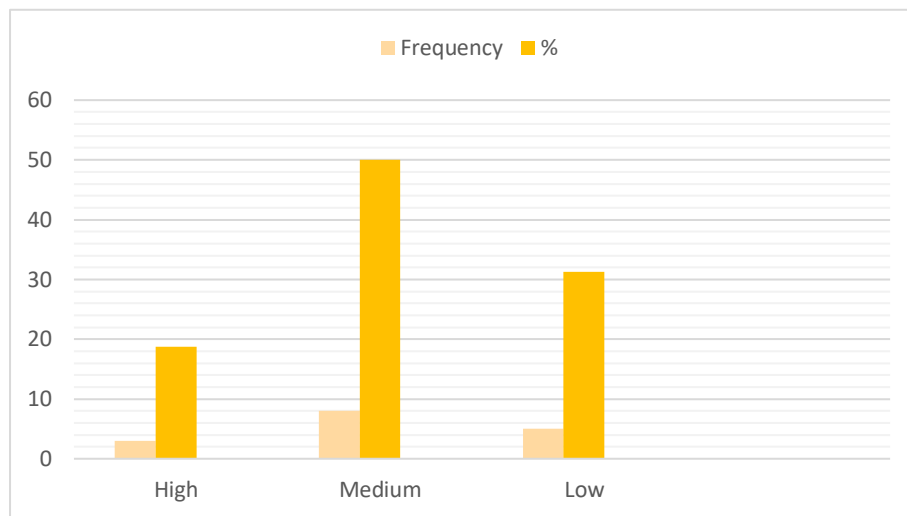*Diagram 3.1 Descriptive Statistic of Vocabulary*
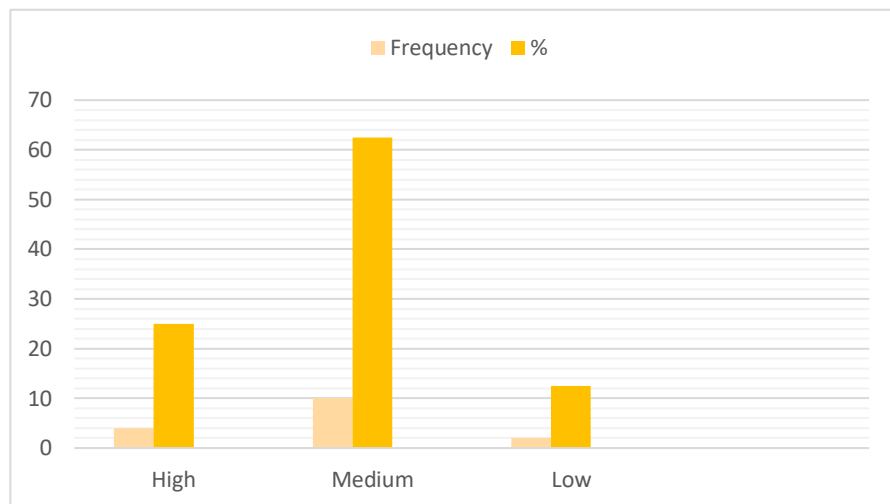
Based on the diagram above, can be concluded that most the students of ninth grade at SMP Swasta PGRI 1 Medan in the medium category for vocabulary, with 62.5% percentage of 16 students. below presents the descriptive statistics of the writing variable:

Tabel 3.4 Descriptive Statistic of Writing Achievement

Criteria	Category	Frequency	%
X > 67.92	High	3	18.75%
50.58≤ X ≤ 67.92	Medium	8	50%
X < 50.58	Low	5	31.25%
Total		16	100%

The table above presented the distribution of participants based on the results of the writing achievement. The results indicated that 3 students (18.75%) of the sample scored in the high category, 8 students (50%) scored in the medium category, and 5 students (31.25%) scored in the low category. The diagram below is the result of the Writing achievement categorization:

Diagram 3.2 Descriptive Statistic of Writing

Based on the diagram above, can be concluded that most the students of ninth grade at SMP Swasta PGRI 1 Medan in the medium category for writing, with 50% percentage of 16 students.

In this study the normality test was conducted using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Unstandardized Residual
N		16
Normal Parameters[a,b]	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	7.52730479
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.207
	Positive	.125
	Negative	-.207
Test Statistic		.207
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)[c]		.066
Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed)[d]	Sig.	.066
99% Confidence Interval	Lower Bound	.060
	Upper Bound	.073

a. Test distribution is Normal.
b. Calculated from data.
c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.
d. Lilliefors' method based on 10000 Monte Carlo samples with starting seed 926214481.

Smirnov Test.

Picture 3.1 Normality Test

Based on the SPSS output, the Asymp. Sig.(2-tailed) value obtained was 0.066, Since the value is greater than the significance level of 0.05, it can be concluded that the data are normally distributed.

The linearity test between the vocabulary variable and the writing variable was conducted to determine whether there is a linear relationship between the two variables.

Picture 3.2 Linearity Test

ANOVA Table

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
writing * vocabulary	Between Groups	(Combined)	556.333	6	92.722	1.462	.292
		Linearity	277.095	1	277.095	4.370	.066
		Deviation from Linearity	279.238	5	55.848	.881	.531
	Within Groups		570.667	9	63.407		
	Total		1127.000	15			

Component was 0.066, which was higher than the significance level of 0.05. Furthermore, the significance value for Deviation from Linearity was 0.531, which was more than 0.05. Based on these findings, it indicated that the two variables had a linear relationship.

The hypothesis was analysis using the Pearson Correlation Method.

Picture 3.3 Hypothesis Test

Correlations

		vocabulary	writing
vocabulary	Pearson Correlation	1	.496
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.051
	N	16	16
writing	Pearson Correlation	.496	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.051	
	N	16	16

It showed that the correlation between vocabulary and writing had a positive correlation (r = 0.496). However, the relationship was not significant, as the p-value (p = 0.051) was slightly above the 0.05 significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) was not rejected and H_a was rejected.

However, the correlation coefficient of 0.496 indicate that the two variables tended to have a positive, moderate relationship, even though this relationship was not strong enough to be considered statistically significant. Therefore, the findings concluded that vocabulary did necessarily correspond to improvements in writing ability.

Discussion

This study was conducted to find the correlation between vocabulary mastery and students' achievement in writing narrative texts of ninth-grade students at SMP Swasta PGRI 1 Medan. The study used two variables as research instruments. The first variable was a vocabulary test designed to measure students' vocabulary mastery. The vocabulary test consisted of 20 multiple-choice questions, with each correct answer scoring 5 points. The second variable was a narrative text writing test with the theme "Slice of Life," which had been assessed using a research rubric covering five aspects: content, organization, language use, vocabulary, and mechanics.

Based on the descriptive statistics of the vocabulary test, it was found that most ninth-grade students were at a medium vocabulary mastery level (62.5%), followed by high category (25%) and low category (12.5%). On the other hand, students' narrative writing ability was mostly at the medium category (50%), followed by low category (31.25%) and high category (18.75%). These data indicated that most ninth-grade

students at SMP Swasta PGRI 1 Medan had medium-level vocabulary mastery and writing ability.The Pearson correlation analysis showed that vocabulary mastery and writing ability had a positive relationship with a moderate strength, with r = 0.496. This indicated that students' writing ability tended to improve as their vocabulary mastery increased. However, the sig. (2-tailed) value of the two variables was 0.051, which was slightly higher than the significance level of 0.05. This showed that the null hypothesis (H_0) was not rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was not accepted. Therefore, the relationship between the two variables was not statistically significant. In conclusion, although there was a positive relationship with moderate strength, this study proved that there was no significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and writing ability.

The results of this study were in line with the research conducted by (Lisa et al., 2023). Their study showed that there was no significant relationship between vocabulary mastery and students' descriptive writing skills, with a correlation significance of 0.744, which was greater than 0.05. This means that H_0 was accepted, while H_a was rejected. This study indicated that students' writing skills could develop not only by focusing on vocabulary mastery.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The final part of this research presents the conclusion of the study that had been conducted, followed by several suggestions for the English teacher, for the students and future researchers who inted to investigate the similar topic.

CONCLUSION

The data collected in this study indicate that majority of the ninth grade students at SMP Swasta PGRI 1 Medan were at the medium level in both vocabulary mastery and writing achievement, particularly in narrative text. This showed that the students still required further development to reach an optimal level of proficiency.

This finding of this research revealed that vocabulary mastery and writing achievement had a positive relationship with a moderate strength. This was supported by the correlation result of 0.496, which indicated that the relationship between the two variables was not statistically significant. Although the variables showed a positive relationship with moderate strength, the study confirmed that there was no significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and writing achievement.

The results indicated that vocabulary mastery was not the only factor that influenced students' ability in writing narrative texts. Other factors such as content, organization, language use and mechanics also played dominant roles in shaping students' narrative writing performance.

Overall, the findings of this research showed that vocabulary mastery had a positive relationship with writing achievement. However, it could not be considered the sole determinant of students' writing performance.

Suggestion

Based on the findings of this study, English teachers are encouraged to design instructional strategies that do not focus solely on vocabulary mastery but also address other aspects that contribute to students' writing achievement. Teachers are expected to implement learning activities that assist students in developing ideas into well-organized and coherent pieces of writing. In addition, exercises that strengthen students' language use, such as grammar practice, should be integrated into the writing instruction.

Furthermore, English teachers are advised to provide students with ample opportunities to read various types of texts or stories. Reading activities can help enrich students' ideas, broaden their knowledge, and improve their awareness of appropriate text structures. Through the integration of reading and writing activities, the teaching of writing is expected to be conducted more effectively and comprehensively.

This study is expected to serve as a valuable learning reference for students in improving their vocabulary mastery and writing achievement, particularly in writing narrative texts. In this way, students can contribute actively to learning process and help enhance the overall quality of the classroom. In addition, through this study, students are encouraged not to focus solely on vocabulary mastery but also to improve their overall writing achievement.

Furthermore, this study is expected to raise students' awarness of the importance of increasing their interest and motivation in learning writing skills by understanding various apects such as idea development, language use and the essential elements of narrative texts. Students are also advised to read stories or texts more frequently as means to enrich their ideas and deepen their understanding of narrative text structure.

The results of this study are expected to serve as a reference and source of information for future researchers and to support further development in this field. Through this study, future researchers may consider using these variables and are encouraged to investigate other variables that might have a stronger influence. In addition, for future research, it is recommended that researchers use a large sample so that findings can be more comprehensive and provide a broader understanding of the various factors that affect students' writing ability in composing narrative text.

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