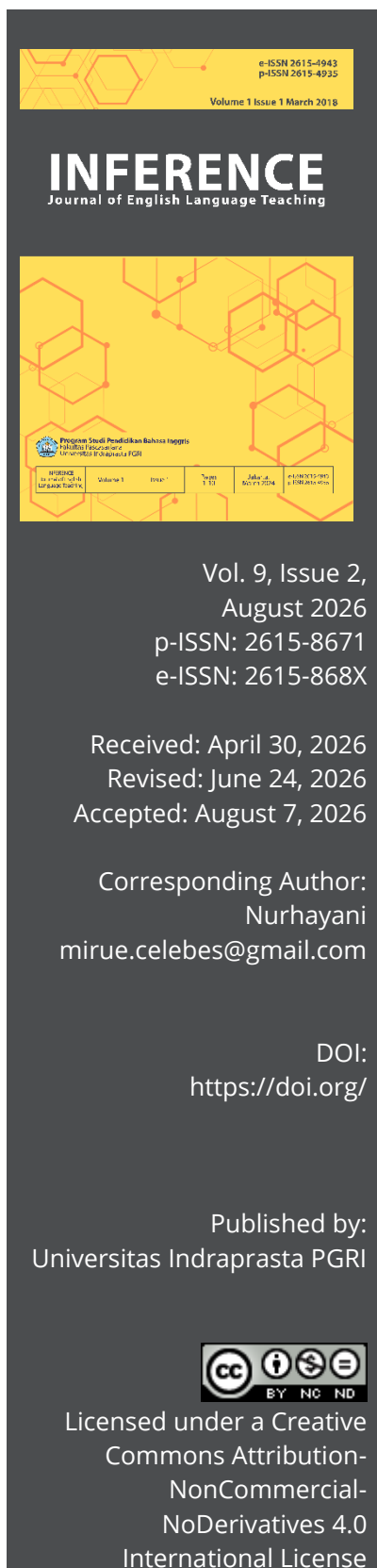




RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE EFFECTS OF VOCABULARY AND GRAMMAR MASTERY TOWARDS STUDENTS' SKILLS IN READING EXPOSITORY TEXTS

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Abstract: This study examines the effects of vocabulary mastery and grammar mastery on students' ability to read expository texts. The research employed a quantitative survey design using multiple regression analysis. The participants consisted of 85 students from two state senior high schools in East Jakarta selected through random sampling. Data were collected through three instruments: a vocabulary mastery test, a grammar mastery test, and a reading comprehension test focusing on expository texts. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis with the help of SPSS version 22. The results indicate that vocabulary mastery and grammar mastery simultaneously have a significant effect on students' reading skills ($\text{Sig} = 0.000 < 0.05$; $F = 33.734$). The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.451$) shows that both variables contribute 45.1% to students' reading skills. Individually, vocabulary mastery contributes 20.66%, while grammar mastery contributes 24.44%. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening students' vocabulary knowledge and grammatical competence in improving reading comprehension.

Keywords: vocabulary mastery; grammar mastery; reading comprehension; expository texts.

Pengaruh Penguasaan Kosakata dan Tata Bahasa terhadap Keterampilan Siswa dalam Membaca Teks Ekspositori

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh penguasaan kosakata dan penguasaan tata bahasa terhadap keterampilan membaca siswa pada teks ekspositori. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode survei kuantitatif dengan analisis regresi berganda. Sampel penelitian terdiri dari 85 siswa dari dua SMA Negeri di Jakarta Timur.

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penguasaan kosakata dan penguasaan tata bahasa secara simultan memiliki pengaruh yang signifikan terhadap keterampilan membaca siswa ($\text{Sig} = 0.000 < 0.05$; $F = 33.734$). Nilai koefisien determinasi ($R^2 = 0.451$) menunjukkan bahwa kedua variabel tersebut memberikan kontribusi sebesar 45.1% terhadap keterampilan membaca siswa. Secara parsial, penguasaan kosakata memberikan kontribusi sebesar 20,66%, sedangkan penguasaan tata bahasa memberikan kontribusi sebesar 24,44%.

Kata kunci: penguasaan kosakata; penguasaan tata bahasa; keterampilan membaca; teks ekspositori

INTRODUCTION

Reading is widely regarded as one of the fundamental skills in English language learning. Through reading activities, students gain access to information, expand their knowledge, and develop an understanding of various types of texts. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), reading plays a crucial role because it enables students to obtain knowledge from written materials, including textbooks, academic articles, and digital resources. Consequently, developing students' reading comprehension ability has become one of the primary objectives in English language teaching, as it supports learners in acquiring both linguistic competence and academic knowledge.

According to Grabe and Stoller (2011), reading is a complex cognitive process that involves recognizing written symbols, constructing meaning, and integrating information from the text with the reader's background knowledge. Successful comprehension occurs when readers are able to process linguistic information while simultaneously activating prior knowledge to interpret the message conveyed in the text. Therefore, reading comprehension requires not only decoding skills but also higher-level cognitive and linguistic abilities that enable readers to analyze and interpret textual information effectively.

In academic settings, students are exposed to various types of texts that serve different communicative purposes. One common type is the expository text, which aims to explain ideas, describe processes, present arguments, or provide factual information in a logical and structured manner. Expository texts are frequently used in educational contexts because they help students develop critical thinking and analytical skills. However, many students still experience difficulties when reading expository texts due to unfamiliar vocabulary, complex sentence structures, and dense information. These difficulties often hinder students from fully understanding the main ideas and supporting details presented in a text.

One of the key factors influencing students' reading comprehension is vocabulary mastery. Vocabulary knowledge enables learners to recognize words and interpret their meanings within a specific context. Nation (2013) states that vocabulary mastery plays a crucial role in language comprehension because understanding the meaning of words is fundamental to interpreting messages conveyed in a text. Students with a larger vocabulary repertoire tend to comprehend texts more effectively, whereas those with limited vocabulary knowledge often struggle to understand the overall meaning of a passage. Recent studies have also emphasized the importance of vocabulary knowledge in reading comprehension. Vocabulary size has been found to significantly predict learners' ability to understand written texts, particularly in EFL contexts where exposure to English vocabulary is limited (Schmitt et al., 2020).

In addition to vocabulary mastery, grammar mastery also plays an important role in reading comprehension. Grammar helps students understand how words are organized into meaningful sentences and how ideas are connected within a text. Harmer (2007) explains that grammar provides the structural framework that enables learners to interpret sentences and understand relationships between clauses and phrases. Without sufficient grammatical knowledge, students may find it difficult to interpret complex sentence structures commonly found in academic texts. Furthermore, grammatical knowledge has been identified as an important factor supporting reading comprehension, as learners with stronger grammatical competence are generally more capable of interpreting sentence structures and identifying relationships between ideas within a text (Jeon & Yamashita, 2021).

Reading comprehension therefore requires the integration of several linguistic components, including vocabulary knowledge, grammatical competence, and background knowledge. These components work together to help readers construct meaning from a text. Students who possess

adequate linguistic knowledge are more capable of identifying main ideas, recognizing supporting details, and understanding relationships between concepts presented in a passage.

Another important aspect in reading comprehension is the interaction between vocabulary knowledge and grammatical competence. Vocabulary knowledge allows students to recognize the meaning of individual words, while grammatical knowledge enables them to understand how those words are combined to form meaningful sentences. When students lack either vocabulary mastery or grammar mastery, they may experience difficulties in processing information and interpreting the meaning of a text effectively.

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of linguistic competence in supporting students' reading comprehension. Research findings indicate that vocabulary knowledge and grammar mastery contribute significantly to students' ability to understand written texts, particularly academic texts that contain complex structures and specialized vocabulary. Despite the growing body of research on vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension, studies examining the combined effects of vocabulary mastery and grammar mastery on students' comprehension of expository texts in EFL contexts remain relatively limited.

Therefore, investigating the effects of vocabulary mastery and grammar mastery on students' ability to read expository texts is important for improving English language teaching practices. The findings of this study are expected to provide insights for teachers in designing effective learning strategies that can enhance students' linguistic competence and ultimately improve their reading comprehension ability.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research design using a survey method with multiple regression analysis. The research was conducted at two state senior high schools in East Jakarta during the 2024/2025 academic year. The participants of this study consisted of 85 students who were selected as research respondents. The sampling technique used in this research was random sampling, which allowed each member of the population to have an equal chance of being selected as a participant.

Data were collected through three research instruments, namely a vocabulary mastery test, a grammar mastery test, and a reading comprehension test focusing on expository texts. The vocabulary and grammar tests were designed to measure students' linguistic competence, while the reading comprehension test was used to assess students' ability to understand expository texts. All instruments were administered to the participants under similar testing conditions to ensure the consistency of the collected data. The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. The statistical procedures included descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis to examine the influence of vocabulary mastery and grammar mastery on students' reading comprehension skills.

Before conducting the regression analysis, several prerequisite tests were performed to ensure that the data met the assumptions required for regression analysis. These tests included the normality test, multicollinearity test, heteroscedasticity test, and linearity test. The normality test was conducted to determine whether the data were normally distributed. The multicollinearity test was used to examine whether there was a high correlation between the independent variables. In addition, the heteroscedasticity test was performed to determine whether the residuals were distributed randomly. These prerequisite tests were necessary to ensure that the regression model used in this study produced valid and reliable results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the variables used in this study, including vocabulary mastery, grammar mastery, and students' reading skills.

Table 1.
Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Vocabulary Mastery	78.71	12.723	85
Grammar Mastery	75.45	21.176	85
Reading Skills	93.62	12.658	85

The descriptive statistics show that the mean score of students' vocabulary mastery is **78.71** with a standard deviation of **12.723**, indicating a moderate level of vocabulary knowledge among the participants. Meanwhile, the mean score for grammar mastery is **75.45** with a standard deviation of **21.176**, suggesting that students demonstrate varied levels of grammatical competence. In addition, the mean score of students' reading skills is **93.62** with a standard deviation of **12.658**, which indicates that most students achieved relatively high scores in the reading comprehension test.

Correlation Analysis

Table 2 presents the correlation matrix among vocabulary mastery, grammar mastery, and reading skills.

Table 2
Correlation Matrix

Variable	Vocabulary	Grammar	Reading
Vocabulary	1	0.512	0.603
Grammar	0.512	1	0.624
Reading	0.603	0.624	1

The correlation matrix shows that both vocabulary mastery and grammar mastery have positive correlations with students' reading skills. Vocabulary mastery is moderately correlated with reading skills ($r = 0.603$), while grammar mastery demonstrates a slightly stronger correlation with reading skills ($r = 0.624$). In addition, vocabulary mastery and grammar mastery also show a moderate correlation ($r = 0.512$), indicating that students who have better vocabulary knowledge tend to demonstrate better grammatical competence as well.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 3 presents the summary of the multiple regression analysis used to examine the influence of vocabulary mastery and grammar mastery on students' reading skills.

Table 3

Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
0.672	0.451	0.438

The regression model shows an R value of 0.672, indicating a strong relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The R Square value of 0.451 and the Adjusted R Square value of 0.438 indicate that approximately 45.1% of the variance in students' reading skills can be explained by vocabulary mastery and grammar mastery.

The ANOVA TEST

The ANOVA test was conducted to determine whether the regression model significantly predicts students' reading skills.

ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	F	Sig
Regression	6075.691	2	33.734	0.000

The ANOVA results indicate that the regression model is statistically significant (**F = 33.734, p < 0.05**). This finding demonstrates that vocabulary mastery and grammar mastery simultaneously have a significant effect on students' reading comprehension skills.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that vocabulary mastery has a significant influence on students' reading comprehension of expository texts. Students who possess broader vocabulary knowledge are better able to identify key ideas, interpret contextual meanings, and understand information presented in academic texts more effectively. Vocabulary knowledge enables students to recognize words quickly and connect them with the overall meaning of the text, which facilitates the comprehension process. When learners have a wider vocabulary repertoire, they are more capable of understanding the main ideas and supporting details within a passage without experiencing major difficulties in interpreting unfamiliar expressions. This result supports Nation's (2013) argument that vocabulary knowledge is a crucial component of reading comprehension because readers must recognize a large proportion of words in a text in order to construct meaning successfully. Similarly, Grabe and Stoller (2011) emphasize that vocabulary knowledge plays a fundamental role in reading because comprehension depends heavily on the reader's ability to recognize and

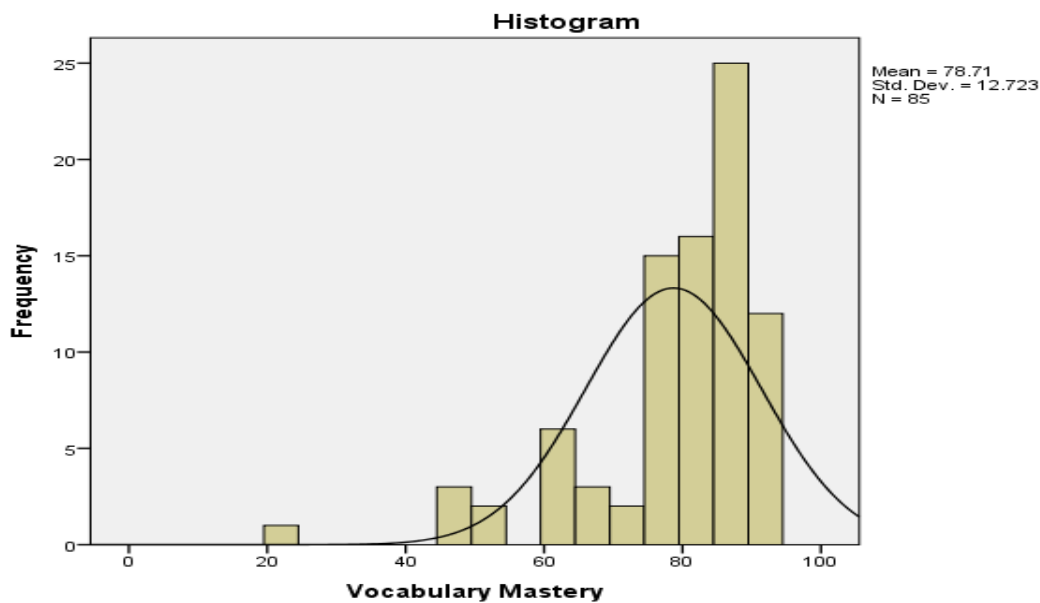
interpret lexical items in a text. Students who lack sufficient vocabulary knowledge often struggle to process textual information, which can hinder their ability to understand the overall meaning of a passage.

In addition to vocabulary mastery, grammar mastery also plays a significant role in reading comprehension. The results of this research indicate that grammar mastery contributes slightly more strongly than vocabulary mastery in influencing students' reading skills. This finding suggests that grammatical knowledge enables students to interpret sentence structures and understand the logical relationships between ideas within expository texts. Expository texts frequently contain complex sentence structures, including subordinate clauses, passive constructions, and various grammatical patterns that require readers to analyze how ideas are connected within a text. When students possess sufficient grammatical competence, they are better able to interpret the relationships between clauses and phrases, which ultimately facilitates deeper comprehension of the text. These findings are consistent with Alderson (2000), who states that grammar knowledge enables readers to interpret complex sentence structures commonly found in academic reading materials. Furthermore, Harmer (2007) explains that grammar provides the structural framework that allows learners to understand how words are arranged to form meaningful sentences. Therefore, both vocabulary mastery and grammar mastery function as essential linguistic components that support students in comprehending expository texts effectively and improving their academic reading performance.

The results of this study also provide important implications for English language teaching, particularly in improving students' reading comprehension of expository texts. Since vocabulary mastery and grammar mastery were found to significantly influence students' reading skills, teachers should place greater emphasis on integrating vocabulary and grammar instruction into reading activities. Explicit vocabulary teaching, contextual vocabulary exercises, and grammar-focused reading tasks can help students better understand complex texts. Teachers may also encourage students to analyze sentence structures, identify key vocabulary items, and explore the relationships between ideas within a text. Through these strategies, students can gradually develop stronger linguistic competence that supports their reading comprehension ability.

However, this study has several limitations that should be considered. First, the number of participants in this research was limited to 85 students from two state senior high schools in East Jakarta, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts. Second, this study only examined two linguistic variables, namely vocabulary mastery and grammar mastery, while other factors such as background knowledge, reading strategies, and students' motivation may also influence reading comprehension. Therefore, future research is recommended to include a larger sample size and examine additional variables that may contribute to students' reading comprehension abilities.

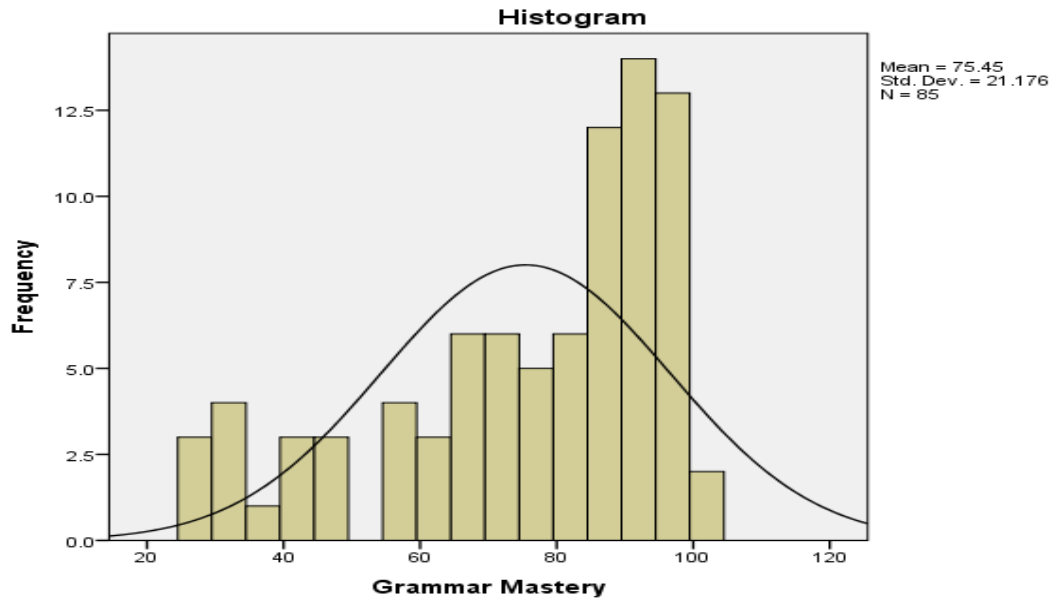
Graph 4.1 Histogram of Vocabulary Mastery



Based on the histogram above, the distribution of students’ vocabulary mastery scores appears to be approximately normal. The normal curve is relatively well centered, and the data do not exhibit a strong skewness to either the right or the left. Although a small number of lower scores are observed, the overall distribution can be considered reasonably symmetrical.

Figure 1. Histogram of Vocabulary Mastery

Graph 4.2 Histogram of Grammar Mastery

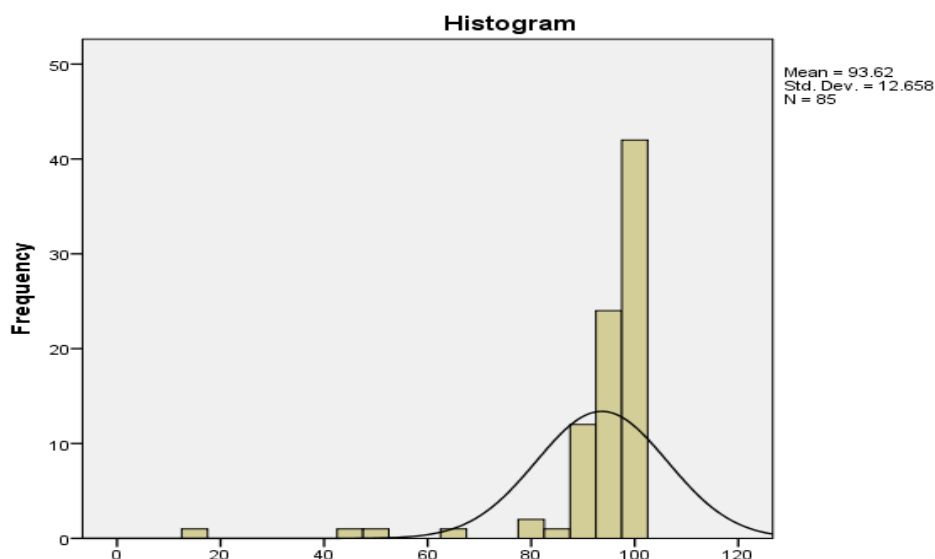


Based on the histogram, the distribution of students' grammar mastery scores appears to be approximately normal; however, a slight negative skewness is observed, as indicated by a longer tail on the lower-score side. This pattern is consistent with the mean score (75.45) being lower than the median (83.00), suggesting that several low scores influenced the overall distribution.

Figure 2. Histogram of Grammar Mastery

Graph 4.3

Histogram of Students' Skills in Reading Expository Texts



Based on the histogram, the distribution of students' ability in reading expository texts does not perfectly follow a normal distribution. Although the overall pattern resembles a bell-shaped curve, the distribution shows a tendency toward negative skewness, as indicated by the concentration of high scores and a small number of lower scores on the left side.

Figure 3. Histogram of Students' Skills in Reading Expository Texts

CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the effects of vocabulary mastery and grammar mastery on students' reading comprehension of expository texts. The findings indicate that both vocabulary mastery and grammar mastery significantly influence students' reading skills. Vocabulary knowledge helps students recognize and interpret the meanings of words within a text, while grammar mastery enables students to understand sentence structures and relationships between ideas. The results of the regression analysis also show that grammar mastery contributes slightly more strongly than vocabulary mastery. These findings suggest that strengthening students' vocabulary knowledge and grammatical competence is essential for improving their ability to comprehend academic texts, particularly expository texts.

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