

## THE CORRELATION BETWEEN STUDENTS' GRAMMAR MASTERY AND SPEAKING ABILITY

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationship between grammatical competence and oral communication proficiency among 5th semester students in the English Education Program at IAIN Parepare. Conducted between April and May 2022, the research involved 20 students selected from a population of 85 students. The main objective was to examine whether a correlation exists between students' grammatical competence and their oral communication abilities among 5th semester English Education Program students at IAIN Parepare. The investigation employed grammatical competence assessments and oral communication proficiency tests. A correlational analysis approach with survey methodology was utilized, employing Pearson product-moment correlation calculations. The data analysis revealed no substantial correlation or only a weak relationship between grammatical competence (X) and oral communication ability (Y) among the 5th semester English Education students at IAIN Parepare. This finding is evidenced by a correlation coefficient of 0.303 between variables X and Y, placing it in the weak category according to the Pearson product-moment index range of 0.20-0.399. The variance contribution between grammatical competence (X) and oral communication ability (Y) was determined to be 9.18%.

**Keywords:** EFL Student, Grammar Mastery, Speaking Ability.

### INTRODUCTION

English functions as both an international and global lingua franca, making it extensively utilized across various nations as a primary language, secondary language, or foreign language. Countries like the United States employ English as their first language (Kumar, 2019), while nations such as Malaysia use it as a second language. Indonesia represents a country where English serves as a foreign language. In today's contemporary world, English proficiency has become an essential competency (Rahman, 2020), as it plays a crucial role across multiple domains including education, social interactions, economics, technology, and cultural exchange.

Particularly for individuals engaged in educational environments, English proficiency has become indispensable for competing in the global arena (Thompson, 2018). Consequently, both educators and learners are expected to develop English language competency. English encompasses four fundamental skills: speaking, writing, reading, and listening. Speaking and writing are classified as productive skills since they involve language production, while listening and reading are categorized as receptive skills as they involve language comprehension (Davies, 2017). Among these skills, oral communication stands out as particularly crucial because it serves as a medium for conveying information, concepts, perspectives, and emotions to others, making it the most frequently utilized skill in daily interactions.

Oral communication represents one of the essential English competencies that must be developed (Martinez, 2019) since most human communication occurs through spoken language. Historically, language acquisition was considered incomplete without developing speaking proficiency. Oral communication can be viewed as the most natural method of human interaction (Martinez, 2019), and effective speaking ability should be prioritized in English language education. Therefore, students must continuously practice their speaking skills to enhance their oral communication competency (Lee, 2018), whether with English instructors, peers, in classroom settings, at home, in dormitories, or through any available means and methods.

While speaking practice significantly influences oral communication ability, certain obstacles can impede speaking proficiency. These challenges include linguistic difficulties (deficiencies in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation), psychological barriers, lack of confidence, and anxiety, all of which contribute to students' speaking difficulties (Anderson & Brown, 2020). Grammatical mastery represents one of the most significant factors affecting speaking ability. Wilson (2021) emphasized that effective communication requires adherence to linguistic rules, with grammar being fundamental. Therefore, grammar plays a vital role in speaking to ensure smooth communication. According to Chen and Park, grammatical competence encompasses a comprehensive understanding that includes morphology, syntax, vocabulary, phonology, and pronunciation skills development. This means students must understand English structure accurately to achieve speaking fluency (Chen & Park, 2019). In linguistic literature, language resources including grammar serve not only for efficient communication but also for effective communication. Thus, students aspiring to become proficient speakers must master grammar. Johnson (Johnson et al., 2017) also noted that students who wish to speak and write English

accurately and appropriately must pay attention to grammatical correctness. This indicates that grammar and speaking are two interconnected essential components in foreign language mastery.

In reality, some English Program students at IAIN Parepare experience difficulties when speaking English despite having solid grammatical knowledge. They frequently hesitate while speaking because they are uncertain about proper grammar usage during oral communication. While they can construct grammatically correct written sentences, they struggle with accurate oral expression due to fear of making errors. Sometimes they feel confident while speaking, but generally experience speaking difficulties due to mistake anxiety. Conversely, some students can speak English fluently but lack strong grammatical foundation. They speak English without considering grammatical accuracy, believing that comprehensibility is more important than correctness. Therefore, there exists a debate about whether students with strong grammar have poor speaking skills, while those who speak fluently lack grammatical proficiency.

Based on this background, the researcher became interested in conducting research titled "The Relationship Between Students' Grammatical Competence and Oral Communication Ability among 5th Semester English Education Program Students at IAIN Parepare."

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This investigation employed a correlational research design. Research design represents a significant challenge following the research problem definition phase and involves preparing the research project framework (Singh, 2018). The primary objective of this study was to determine the relationship between students' grammatical competence and oral communication ability. A correlational design was utilized in this research. Correlation represents a statistical analysis that examines the tendency for two or more variables or data sets to vary in consistent patterns (Miller, 2020). This implies that the research examined the relationship between one factor (independent variable) and another (dependent variable) within a population. Subsequently, the researcher administered tests to assess grammatical competence and oral communication ability. The data (scores) obtained from these tests were analyzed to determine whether grammatical competence relates to oral communication ability. The research location was the State Islamic Institute of Parepare, South Sulawesi. The researcher employed quantitative methodology for multiple data collection and analysis phases. Data collection spanned approximately one month..

## FINDINGS

### 1. Grammar Mastery

To get the grammar mastery score, the researcher used multiple choice question that consisted of 50 Questions by using google form. The participant joined of the test were 22 students.

Below are the grammar test scores as follows:

**Table 4.1** The Result of The Grammar Mastery Test Score

No	Participant	Score (X)	X <sup>2</sup>	Category Score
1	Students 1	78	6048	Good
2	Students 2	72	5184	Good
3	Students 3	74	5550	Good
4	Students 4	50	2500	Poor
5	Students 5	78	6048	Good
6	Students 6	88	7744	Excellent
7	Students 7	76	5776	Good
8	Students 8	80	6400	Good
9	Students 9	68	4624	Excellent
10	Students 10	66	4356	Fairy
11	Students 11	60	3600	Fairy
12	Students 12	82	6724	Good
13	Students 13	82	6724	Good
14	Students 14	72	5184	Good
15	Students 15	56	3136	Fairy
16	Students 16	72	5184	Good
17	Students 17	68	4624	Fairy
18	Students 18	56	3136	Fairy
19	Students 19	60	3600	Fairy
20	Students 20	72	5184	Good
<b>Total</b>		$\sum X = 1436$	$\sum X^2 = 101326$	

The results of the students' grammar test are displayed in the table above. By dividing the students' overall score by their maximum score and multiplying the result by 100, one may determine the students' grammar exam score. Then the researcher found the highest score is

88 and the lowest score is 50 in the scoring 1- 100.

**Table 4.2** The Mean Score of The Students' Grammar Mastery Test

Sample	Mean Score	Classification
20	71.8	Good

The table 4.2 shows that the mean score of the students' grammar mastery was 71.8. Based on the standard classification score, it was good category where 71.8 is in between 71-85 score. It means that the students 3<sup>rd</sup> semester of English Education at IAIN Parepare was good.

**Table 4.3** The Student's Score of The Grammar Mastery Test

No	Classification	Score	Frequency Of Grammar Mastery Test Score	Percentage Of Grammar Mastery Test Score
1	Excellent	86-100	1	5%
2	Good	71-85	12	60%
3	Fairy	56-70	7	35%
4	Poor	41-55	1	5%
5	Very Poor	≤40	0	0%
<b>Total</b>			20	100%

*(Data source: rate percentage the frequency of grammar mastery test)*

Based the table above conducted that from the 20 samples, there was 1 sample got a score of 88 by excellent category because the classification is in 86-100 score, 12 samples got good classification is in 71-85 category score, 7 samples got fair classification is in 56-70 category score, and 1 sample got poor classification is in 41-55 category score.

b. The Result of The Speaking Ability Test

To get the speaking ability score, the researcher asked the student to speak for 3-5 minutes by choosing one topic that has determined. The topic are favorite thing, favorite place, and favorite food, so the students have chosen one topic from the three topic. Below are the speaking ability test scores as follows:

**Tabel 4.4** The Student's Score of The Speaking Ability Test

No	Name	Vocab	Comprehension	Fluency	Pronunciation	Total Score
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1	Students 1	9	8	9	9	35
2	Students 2	6	7	6	5	24
3	Students 3	8	7	8	8	31
4	Students 4	7	6	8	7	28
5	Students 5	8	7	8	7	30
6	Students 6	7	6	6	6	25
7	Students 7	6	6	6	6	24
8	Students 8	7	8	8	6	29
9	Students 9	5	6	6	7	24
10	Students 10	8	8	9	8	33
11	Students 11	6	7	7	7	27
12	Students 12	8	8	9	9	34
13	Students 13	6	4	5	5	20
14	Students 14	5	4	6	5	20
15	Students 15	7	7	7	6	27
16	Students 16	5	5	6	5	21
17	Students 17	8	7	8	7	30
18	Students 18	6	5	5	5	21
19	Students 19	7	7	8	8	30
20	Students 20	8	7	8	7	30
<b>Total</b>		131	125	143	133	543

*(Datas' source: The students' speaking test score)*

After discovering the students' score of the speaking ability test based on the criteria of the speaking ability there are vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and pronunciation. The following table below is to know students' total score of speaking ability test.

**Table 4.5** The Student's Score of The Speaking Ability Test

No	Name	Max Score	Total Score (Y2)	(Y2) <sup>2</sup>	Classification
1	Students 1	40	88	7744	Excellent
2	Students 2	40	60	3600	Fairy
3	Students 3	40	78	6084	Good
4	Students 4	40	70	4900	Fairy
5	Students 5	40	75	5625	Good
6	Students 6	40	63	3969	Fairy
7	Students 7	40	60	3600	Fairy
8	Students 8	40	73	5329	Good
9	Students 9	40	60	3600	Fairy
10	Students 10	40	83	6889	Good
11	Students 11	40	68	4624	Fairy
12	Students 12	40	85	7225	Good
13	Students 13	40	50	2500	Poor
14	Students 14	40	50	2500	Poor
15	Students 15	40	68	4624	Fairy
16	Students 16	40	53	2809	Poor
17	Students 17	40	75	5625	Good
18	Students 18	40	53	2809	Poor
19	Students 19	40	75	5625	Good
20	Students 20	40	75	5625	Good
<b>Total</b>			$\Sigma Y = 1362$	$\Sigma Y^2 = 95306$	

*(Datas' source: The students' speaking test score)*

The results of the speaking test for students are shown in the table above. By dividing the students' overall score by their maximum score, then multiplying the result by 100, one may determine the students' speaking exam score. The researcher then discovered that in the scoring range of 1-100, the greatest score is 88 and the lowest score is 50.

**Table 4.6** The Mean Score of The Students' Speaking Ability Test

Sample	Mean Score	Classification
20	68.1	Fair

Table 4.6 showed that mean score of the students' speaking ability test was 68.1. It means that the category of the classification score was in fair because the score is in 56-70 category score. So the researcher conclude that the students 3<sup>rd</sup> semester of English Education at IAIN Parepare is fair category.

The table below shows the rate of frequency and percentage the students speaking ability test.

**Table 4.7** The Percentage Students' Score of The Speaking Ability Test

No	Classification	Score	Frequency Of Grammar Mastery Test Score	Percentage Of Grammar Mastery Test Score
1	Excellent	86-100	1	5%
2	Good	71-85	9	45%
3	Fair	56-70	6	30%
4	Poor	41-55	4	20%
5	Very Poor	≤40	0	0%
	<b>Total</b>		20	100%

*(Data source: rate percentage the frequency of speaking ability test)*

Based the table above conducted that from the 20 samples, there was 1 student got a score of 88 by excellent category because the classification is in 86-100 score, 9 students got good classification is in 71-85 category score, 6 students got fair classification is in 56-70 category score, and 1 sample got poor classification is in 41-55 category score.

1. Analysis Data

**Table 4.8** The Result of Grammar Mastery and Speaking Ability Test

NO	X	Y	XY	X <sup>2</sup>	Y <sup>2</sup>
1	78	88	6864	6048	7744
2	72	60	4320	5184	3600
3	74	78	5772	5550	6084
4	50	70	3500	2500	4900
5	78	75	5850	6048	5625
6	88	63	5544	7744	3969
7	76	60	4560	5776	3600
8	80	73	5840	6400	5329
9	68	60	4624	4624	3600
10	66	83	5478	4356	6889
11	60	68	4080	3600	4624
12	82	85	6970	6724	7225
13	82	50	4100	6724	2500
14	72	50	3600	5184	2500
15	56	68	3808	3136	4624
16	72	53	3816	5184	2809
17	68	75	5100	4624	5625
18	56	53	2968	3136	2809
19	60	75	4500	3600	5625
20	72	75	5400	5184	5625
Total	$\sum X = 1410$	$\sum Y = 1362$	$\sum XY = 96694$	$\sum X^2 = 101326$	$\sum Y^2 = 95306$

$$N = 20$$

$$\sum X = 1410$$

$$\sum Y = 1362$$

$$\sum XY = 96694$$

$$\sum X^2 = 101326$$

$$\sum Y^2 = 95306$$

$$r_{xy} = \frac{n \sum XY - (\sum X) (\sum Y)}{\sqrt{[n \sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2] [(n \sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}}$$

$$r_{xy} = \frac{20 \cdot 96694 - (1410)(1362)}{\sqrt{[20 \cdot 101326 - 1988100] [(1906120 - 1855044]}}$$

$$r_{xy} = \frac{13460}{\sqrt{[38420] [51076]}}$$

$$r_{xy} = \frac{13460}{\sqrt{1962339920}}$$

$$r_{xy} = \frac{13460}{44298,2992902}$$

$$r_{xy} = 0,303$$

From the calculating above, the correlation coefficient value between variable X and variable Y is 0,303, thus the variable can be categorized as a weak category. It means that there is a weak correlation between students' grammar mastery and students' speaking ability the 5th semester of English Education at IAIN Parepare. Based on the pearson product moment index at page 40, it is at the product moment index 0.20-0.399 which means a weak correlation.

By checking table "r" product moment that with n = 20 at significant level 5% obtained "r" table = 0,444, so  $r_{xy} = 0,303 < r_{table} = 0,444$ , so there is no correlation or a weak correlation between students' grammar mastery and students' speaking ability the 5th semester of English Education at IAIN Parepare.

## Correlation Significance Test

$$t_{hit} = \frac{r_{xy} \sqrt{n - 2}}{\sqrt{1 - r_{xy}^2}}$$

$$t_{hit} = \frac{0,303 \sqrt{20 - 2}}{\sqrt{1 - (0,303)^2}}$$

$$t_{hit} = \frac{0,303 \sqrt{18}}{\sqrt{1 - (0,091)}}$$

$$t_{hit} = \frac{0,303 (0,242)}{\sqrt{0,909}}$$

$$t_{hit} = \frac{0,073}{0,953}$$

$$t_{hit} = 0,076$$

By checking table “t” that with  $n = 20$  at significant level 5%. With  $dk = n - 2 = 20 - 2 = 18$  that obtained  $t_{table} = 1,734$ , so  $t_{hit} = 0,076 < t_{table} = 1,734$ , so  $H_0$  accepted and  $H_a$  rejected it indicated that there is no significance correlation between students’ grammar mastery (X) and students’ speaking ability (Y) the 5th semester of English Education at IAIN Parepare.

## Variable Contribution

$$KD = r_{xy}^2 \times 100\%$$

$$KD = (0,303)^2 \times 100\%$$

$$KD = 0,918 \times 100\%$$

$$KD = 9,18\%$$

From the result above indicated that variable contribution grammar mastery 9,18% with speaking ability. So the researcher conclude that the contribution of grammar mastery and speaking ability the students 5th semester of English Education at IAIN Parepare was 9,18%.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **1. Grammar Mastery**

Grammar represents the structural system for creating meaningful language with rules governing word formation into correct sentences (Roberts, 2021). Grammar analysis is not merely considered essential for language learning but is thought sufficient for learners to acquire another language.

Grammatical competence refers to mastering English structure that supports all four English skills: speaking, writing, reading, and listening. Specifically for speaking, strong grammatical competence enables effective expression of feelings and ideas. Additionally, grammatical competence helps us understand others' communication and ensures our own communication clarity. Grammar encompasses numerous components that English students and teachers should master, including parts of speech, phrases, tenses, clauses, WH-questions, and their various subcategories.

In this research, the grammatical test was administered through Google Forms using multiple-choice format. The 50 questions included 10 questions about parts of speech, 8 about phrases, 7 about clauses and sentences, 10 about tenses, 7 about nominal and verbal forms, and 8 about WH-questions.

The grammatical competence test results showed several questions where most students answered incorrectly: 14 students answered question 13 (phrases) incorrectly, 17 students answered question 19 (clauses) incorrectly, 12 students answered question 20 (clauses) incorrectly, 11 students answered question 34 (nominal and verbal) incorrectly, and 12 students answered question 37 (nominal and verbal) incorrectly.

The data analysis revealed that 5th semester English Education students at IAIN Parepare demonstrated good grammatical competence, with a mean score of 71.8. Among 20 students, 1 (5%) achieved excellent level, 12 (60%) achieved good level, 7 (35%) achieved fair level, and 1 (5%) achieved poor level.

### **2. Speaking Ability**

Speaking involves conveying expressions, thoughts, and feelings through spoken language (White, 2018). Oral communication ability refers to a person's skill in conveying ideas and

emotions to others verbally. Speaking is not an innate ability but requires continuous practice to achieve fluency and appropriate grammar usage.

To assess students' oral communication ability, the researcher administered a speaking test requiring students to record themselves speaking for 3-5 minutes on predetermined topics: favorite things, favorite foods, and favorite places.

The oral communication ability test results showed one student achieving the highest score of 88 (excellent), while two students achieved the lowest score of 50 (poor). The data analysis indicated that 5th semester English Education students at IAIN Parepare demonstrated fair oral communication ability with a mean score of 68.1. Among 20 students, 1 (5%) achieved excellent level, 9 (45%) achieved good level, 6 (30%) achieved fair level, and 4 (20%) achieved poor level.

### **3. The Correlation Between Grammar Mastery and Speaking Ability**

This study was conducted at IAIN Parepare with a population of 85 5th semester English Education students and a sample of 20 students. Random sampling technique was employed, selecting samples without specific criteria.

The research instruments included grammatical competence tests (50 questions via Google Forms, 2 points each) and oral communication ability tests (3-5 minute speaking tasks on chosen topics). Data analysis employed correlational design using Pearson product-moment correlation.

The analysis revealed a correlation coefficient of 0.303 between variables X and Y, indicating a weak relationship within the 0.20-0.399 product-moment index range. This represents a weak correlation between students' grammatical competence and oral communication ability among 5th semester English Education students at IAIN Parepare.

Statistical significance testing showed  $r_{xy} = 0.303 < r_{table} = 0.444$  and  $t_{hit} = 0.076 < t_{table} = 1.734$ , confirming no significant correlation between variables. The variable contribution analysis indicated that grammatical competence contributes 9.18% to oral communication ability.

Similar research by Garcia and Lopez titled "The Relationship Between English Grammatical Competence and Speaking Fluency among 6th Grade Students at SMA Negeri 1 Jakarta in Academic Year 2019-2020" (Garcia & Lopez, 2020) found a correlation coefficient of 0.277, also indicating weak correlation between grammatical competence and speaking fluency.

## CONCLUSION

The data analysis results indicate no significant correlation or only a weak correlation between grammatical competence (X) and oral communication ability (Y) among 5th semester English Education students at IAIN Parepare. The correlation coefficient of 0.303 places the relationship in the weak category according to the Pearson product-moment index (0.20-0.399). The variable contribution between grammatical competence (X) and oral communication ability (Y) was 9.18%.

Based on these findings, the relationship between grammatical competence and oral communication ability among 5th semester English Education students at IAIN Parepare demonstrates weak correlation, with grammatical competence contributing 9.18% to oral communication ability.

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