

The Relationship Between Mastery of Linguistic Rules and Academic Reading Literacy with The Ability to Write Expository Texts of Engineering Students

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Abstract: The ability to write expository text is an important academic skill because it is related to the ability to convey ideas, data, and arguments logically and objectively. This study aims to analyze the relationship between reading literacy and mastery of language rules with the ability to write expository text. This study used a quantitative approach with a correlational design. The participants were 173 engineering students. Data were collected through a reading literacy questionnaire, a language rule mastery test, and an expository text writing test. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple linear regression. The results showed that students' reading literacy, language rule mastery, and expository text writing ability tended to be high. However, reading literacy did not have a significant relationship with the ability to write expository text. Mastery of language rules also did not have a significant relationship with the ability to write expository text. The regression results showed that both independent variables simultaneously were not significant predictors of the ability to write expository text. This finding suggests that the ability to write expository text needs to be explained through other factors, such as argumentation skills, writing experience, and directed academic writing practices.

Keywords: Expository texts; Reading literacy; Linguistic rules; Writing skills; Engineering students

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INTRODUCTION

The ability to write expository text is an important academic skill for students because this writing is used to explain ideas, concepts, data, procedures, and scientific arguments logically, factually, and objectively. In an academic context, students are not only sufficient to understand scientific concepts but also need to convey this understanding through written language that is clear, coherent, and in accordance with Indonesian language rules. Expository text requires writers to present a thesis, develop arguments, and reaffirm main ideas based on relevant facts or data. Therefore, the ability to write expository text is closely related to mastery of linguistic rules and academic reading literacy.

Mastery of linguistic rules is an important foundation in writing expository texts because language accuracy determines the clarity of ideas. Linguistic rules in academic writing include the use of standard words, spelling, punctuation, effective sentences, logical conjunctions, technical terms, and formal and objective language. Students who master linguistic rules can construct sentences more precisely, avoid double meanings, and connect ideas logically. Mastery of linguistic structure is also related to productive language skills, including speaking and writing (Ilam et al., 2022; Fahuzul et al., 2022). Furthermore, grammatical understanding can be developed through directed learning so that students are better able to use sentence structures and linguistic forms appropriately (Rahmaddian & Fakhurriana, 2023).

In addition to linguistic aspects, academic reading literacy also plays a role in developing the ability to write expository texts. Academic reading literacy encompasses reading habits, understanding reading content, using reading strategies, evaluating sources, and utilizing reading information to support writing. Students with good academic reading literacy tend to be able to find main ideas, understand technical terms, assess the credibility of sources, and use reading information as the basis for argumentation. The reading literacy of students in Indonesia remains a critical issue that needs to be strengthened through appropriate learning strategies (Fuad et al., 2023). Reading literacy achievement is influenced by cognitive abilities, the learning environment, and the reading strategies used by readers (Liu et al., 2022). Reading strategies also help readers understand key information, relationships between ideas, and the meaning of texts more deeply (Yan & Cai, 2022). In the digital context, media and technology can influence

reading activities, but the quality of comprehension still depends on reading strategies and the depth of the reader's interaction with the text (Díaz et al., 2024).

A common problem in students' academic writing is the gap between their mastery of technical concepts and their ability to present those concepts in a systematic expository text. Students may understand technical topics, but they may not be able to explain them in appropriate academic language. Common errors include the use of non-standard words, ineffective sentences, illogical relationships between ideas, inappropriate use of technical terms, and arguments that are not supported by facts or sources. This demonstrates that the ability to write expository texts is not solely determined by the ability to express ideas, but also by the accuracy of language and the ability to utilize academic reading as a basis for developing ideas.

Several previous studies have discussed the ability to write expository texts from various perspectives. Expository writing skills still face challenges in the organization of ideas, accuracy of argumentation, and the use of academic language (Rachma, 2022). The use of augmented reality can support students' performance and perception in writing expository texts, but their studies emphasize the use of learning media (Koç et al., 2022). Reading interest influences expository writing skills because reading provides information and language models for writers (Pratiwi & Mayrita, 2023). Project-based learning can also improve expository writing skills through more contextual learning experiences (Fitri & Putri, 2025). Reading habits are related to analytical expository writing skills because reading helps develop ideas, expand vocabulary, and strengthen arguments (Rohmah et al., 2025). Critical reading skills and mastery of scientific vocabulary also contribute to expository writing skills (Asriati & Gani, 2022). Understanding expository texts is related to language skills, cognitive skills, and higher-order thinking skills (Vettori et al., 2024).

Based on the above review, the research gap lies in the limited number of studies that place engineering students as research subjects in the context of writing academic exposition texts in Indonesian. Previous research has focused more on high school students, the English context, media use, reading interests, reading habits, or specific learning models. Furthermore, the simultaneous relationship between mastery of linguistic rules and academic reading literacy with the ability to write exposition texts has not been widely explained. Conceptually, mastery of linguistic rules helps students

compose correct, clear, and logical writing, while academic reading literacy helps students obtain information, data, and concepts to strengthen the content of the writing. The novelty of this research lies in testing the relationship between these two variables simultaneously with the ability to write expository texts of engineering students. This study aims to analyze the relationship between mastery of linguistic rules and academic reading literacy with the ability to write expository texts of engineering students. This study uses a quantitative approach with a correlational design through three instruments: a language mastery test, an academic reading literacy questionnaire, and an assessment rubric for writing expository texts.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach with a correlational design. This design was used because the study aimed to analyze the relationship between two independent variables mastery of linguistic rules and academic reading literacy and one dependent variable, the ability to write expository texts among engineering students. Through a correlational design, this study did not provide specific treatment to participants, but rather tested the relationship between variables based on scores obtained from the research instrument.

The research participants were 173 engineering students from six classes, namely TD2A1, TD2A2, TD2A3, TD2A4, TD2A5, and TD2B2. Participants consisted of 148 male students and 25 female students. The research sample was determined based on the availability of student data who had completed the academic reading literacy instrument, the language mastery test, and the expository text writing test. The characteristics of the research participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of research participants

Class	Total Students	Male	Female
TD2A1	32	26	6
TD2A2	30	25	5
TD2A3	31	26	5
TD2A4	31	28	3
TD2A5	29	25	4
TD2B2	20	18	2
Total	173	148	25

Research data was collected through three instruments. The first instrument was a

language mastery test used to measure students' understanding of Indonesian language rules in the context of writing expository texts. This test consisted of 15 multiple-choice items covering aspects of standard words, spelling and punctuation, effective sentences, logical conjunctions, technical terms, and objective language. Each correct answer was given a score of 1, while an incorrect answer was given a score of 0. The total score of this test was used as the variable data for language mastery.

The second instrument is an academic reading literacy questionnaire. This questionnaire consists of 30 statements with a five-choice Likert scale: very appropriate, appropriate, less appropriate, inappropriate, and very inappropriate. The statements in the questionnaire consist of positive and negative items. The aspects measured include academic reading habits, reading comprehension, academic reading strategies, evaluation of reading sources, and use of reading materials for writing expository texts. The total questionnaire score is used as the academic reading literacy variable data.

The third instrument was an expository text writing test. Students were asked to write an expository text within the context of the engineering field. Student writing was assessed using a rubric covering five aspects: the structure of the expository text, the content of the expository text, the argumentation and logic of the ideas, the linguistic rules of the expository text, and the grammar. Each aspect was assessed based on scoring criteria that indicated the level of achievement in writing ability. The total expository text writing score was then used as variable data for the expository text writing ability.

Figure 1 shows the research flow carried out in stages. The first stage is the determination of research participants. The second stage is the preparation of research instruments, which include a language mastery test, an academic reading literacy questionnaire, and an expository text writing test. The third stage is the implementation of data collection, namely completing the academic reading literacy questionnaire, completing the language mastery test, and writing the expository text. The fourth stage is data scoring, which includes the language rule test score, the academic reading literacy questionnaire score, and the expository text writing ability score. The fifth stage is data processing and analysis through descriptive statistics, assumption tests, correlation tests, and multiple linear regression. The final stage is drawing conclusions based on the results of the data analysis.



Figure 1. Research flows on the relationship between mastery of linguistic rules and academic reading literacy with the ability to write expository texts of engineering students.

RESULTS

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for three research variables: reading literacy, mastery of language rules, and the ability to write expository texts. The data analyzed were 173 respondents. The reading literacy variable had a minimum score of 30, a maximum score of 150, a mean score of 101.47, and a standard deviation of 17.61. These results indicate that students' reading literacy scores were close to the high category. The language rule mastery variable had a minimum score of 2, a maximum score of 15, a mean score of 13.70, and a standard deviation of 2.88. These mean scores indicate that students' mastery of language rules tended to be high. Meanwhile, the expository text writing variable had a minimum score of 0, a maximum score of 54, a mean score of 45.20, and a standard deviation of 8.90. These mean scores indicate that students' ability to write expository texts also tended to be high.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Reading Literacy	173	30.00	150.00	101.47	17.61
Linguistic Rules	173	2.00	15.00	13.70	2.88
Expository Text Writing	173	0.00	54.00	45.20	8.90
Valid N (listwise)	173				

Table 3 shows the students' reading literacy levels. Based on the categorization results, 88 students were in the high reading literacy category, 72 students were in the moderate category, and 13 students were in the low category. Thus, the majority of students had a high level of reading literacy, namely 50.87% of the total respondents. Students in the

moderate category numbered 41.62%, while students in the low category numbered 7.51%. These results indicate that the majority of students have good to high reading literacy skills.

Table 3. The level of reading literacy of students.

No	Categories	Number of Students
1	Students with high reading literacy	88
2	Students with medium reading literacy	72
3	Students with low reading literacy	13
Total		173

Table 4 shows the students' level of linguistic mastery. A total of 153 students were in the high category, 11 students were in the medium category, and 9 students were in the low category. The percentage of students in the high category reached 88.44% of the total respondents. Meanwhile, the medium category covered 6.36% and the low category covered 5.20%. These results indicate that the majority of students have a high level of linguistic mastery in the context of writing expository texts.

Table 4. The level of linguistic rules mastery of students.

No	Categories	Number of Students
1	Students with high linguistic rules mastery	153
2	Students with medium linguistic rules mastery	11
3	Students with low linguistic rules mastery	9
Total		173

Table 5 presents the students' expository writing ability. The categorization results show that 130 students were in the high category, 34 students were in the medium category, and 9 students were in the low category. Students in the high category comprised 75.14% of the total respondents. Students in the medium category comprised 19.65%, while students in the low category comprised 5.20%. These data indicate that most students have high expository writing ability based on the rubric assessment results.

Table 5. The level of expository text writing ability of students.

No	Categories	Number of Students
1	Students with high expository text writing ability	130
2	Students with medium expository text writing ability	34
3	Students with low expository text writing ability	9
Total		173

Table 6 presents the results of the Pearson correlation test between reading literacy, mastery of language rules, and the ability to write expository texts. The analysis results

show that reading literacy has a very weak positive correlation with mastery of language rules, namely $r = 0.157$ with a significance value of 0.039. This significance value is smaller than 0.05, so the relationship between reading literacy and mastery of language rules is declared significant. However, reading literacy does not have a significant relationship with the ability to write expository texts because the correlation value is $r = -0.010$ with a significance of 0.894. Similarly, mastery of language rules does not have a significant relationship with the ability to write expository texts because the correlation value is $r = 0.026$ with a significance of 0.735. Thus, a significant relationship was only found between reading literacy and mastery of language rules, while the relationship between the two variables with the ability to write expository texts was not significant.

Table 6. Correlation between reading literacy, linguistic rules mastery, and expository text writing ability.

		Reading Literacy	Linguistic Rules	Expository Text Writing
Reading Literacy	Pearson	1	0.157*	-0.010
	Correlation			
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.039	0.894
Linguistic Rules	N	173	173	173
	Pearson	0.157*	1	0.026
	Correlation			
Expository Text Writing	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.039		0.735
	N	173	173	173
	Pearson	-0.010	0.026	1
	Correlation			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.894	0.735	
	N	173	173	173

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 7 shows a summary of the multiple linear regression model. The R value of 0.030 indicates that the simultaneous relationship between reading literacy and mastery of language rules with the ability to write expository text is at a very low level. The R Square value of 0.001 indicates that reading literacy and mastery of language rules together are only able to explain 0.1% of the variation in the ability to write expository text. Meanwhile, the Adjusted R Square value of -0.011 indicates that the regression model does not provide a strong predictive contribution to the ability to write expository text. Based on the results of the ANOVA test, the regression model is not significant because the significance value of 0.928 is greater than 0.05. Thus, reading literacy and mastery of

language rules simultaneously do not have a significant relationship with the ability to write expository text.

Table 7. Model summary and ANOVA of multiple linear regression.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.030 ^a	0.001	-0.011	8.95299

a. Predictors: (Constant), Linguistic rules, Reading literacy

Table 8 shows the multiple linear regression coefficients. The constant value of 44.764 indicates that when the reading literacy and mastery of language rules scores are zero, the score for the ability to write expository texts is predicted to be 44.764. The reading literacy variable has a B coefficient value of -0.007, a Beta value of -0.015, a t value of -0.188, and a significance value of 0.851. This significance value is greater than 0.05, so reading literacy is not a significant predictor of the ability to write expository texts. The variable for mastery of language rules has a B coefficient value of 0.087, a Beta value of 0.028, a t value of 0.363, and a significance value of 0.717. This significance value is also greater than 0.05, so mastery of language rules is not a significant predictor of the ability to write expository texts. The regression equation formed is $Y = 44.764 - 0.007X_1 + 0.087X_2$, with Y as the ability to write expository text, X₁ as reading literacy, and X₂ as mastery of linguistic rules.

Table 8. Coefficients of multiple linear regression.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	44.764	4.794		9.337	0.000
	Reading literacy	- 0.007	0.039	-0.015	-0.188	0.851
	Linguistic rules	0.087	0.239	0.028	0.363	0.717

a. Dependent Variable: Expository Text Writing

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that the reading literacy, mastery of language rules, and the ability to write expository texts of engineering students tend to be in the high category. The average reading literacy score is 101.47 out of a maximum score of 150, the average score of mastery of language rules is 13.70 out of a maximum score of 15, and the average score of the ability to write expository texts is 45.20 out of a maximum score of 54. The

categorization results also show that most students are in the high category in these three variables. These findings indicate that in general the engineering students who are the subjects of the study have had sufficient provisions in understanding academic reading, recognizing language rules, and producing expository texts.

However, the results of correlation and regression analyses indicate that high descriptive scores are not always accompanied by statistically significant relationships between variables. This study found three main findings:

1. Reading literacy has no significant relationship with the ability to write expository texts.
2. Mastery of linguistic rules also has no significant relationship with the ability to write expository texts.
3. A significant relationship was found only between reading literacy and mastery of linguistic rules, although the strength of the relationship was in the very weak category.

This finding is important to discuss because it shows that the ability to write expository texts cannot be understood only as a direct result of reading ability or mastery of language rules separately, but rather as a complex skill that involves the integration of understanding, reasoning, organizing ideas, and writing production practices.

The first finding shows that reading literacy is not significantly related to the ability to write expository texts. The correlation value between reading literacy and the ability to write expository texts is $r = -0.010$ with a significance of 0.894. This value indicates that the relationship between the two variables is very weak and insignificant. Thus, in the data of this study, students' reading literacy skills have not been proven to be directly related to their ability to write expository texts. This result differs from several previous studies that show that reading interest or reading habits can support students' writing skills (Pratiwi & Mayrita, 2023; Nisa et al., 2023; Rohmah et al., 2025). This difference may occur because reading and writing skills, although interrelated, are not two skills that automatically move parallel. Grabe and Zhang (2016) explain that the relationship between reading and writing in academic literacy is complex because both involve interconnected cognitive, linguistic, and rhetorical processes, but still have different skill demands.

In the context of writing expository text, students are not only required to understand the content of the reading but also to be able to process the information into written ideas that are logical, coherent, and argumentative. This means that high reading skills do not necessarily immediately produce good expository writing if students do not yet have the ability to construct a thesis, develop arguments, select evidence, and connect ideas coherently. This is in line with the view that understanding expository text involves language skills, cognitive abilities, and higher-order thinking skills (Vettori et al., 2024). These findings can also be understood from the characteristics of engineering students as learners in a discipline that has a strong orientation towards problem-solving, data, procedures, and the application of concepts. In the context of engineering education, literacy skills are not only related to general text reading, but also to the ability to understand technical information, interpret data, connect scientific concepts, and communicate solutions systematically. Cencelj et al. (2019) emphasized that scientific, technological, and engineering literacy plays a crucial role in problem-based learning because students are required to understand information, process it functionally, and apply it in a problem-solving context. Therefore, if the reading literacy measured emphasizes general academic reading comprehension, while expository writing skills require the ability to construct explanations and arguments based on scientific contexts, the relationship between the two may be weak.

The second finding shows that mastery of linguistic rules does not have a significant relationship with the ability to write expository texts. The correlation value between mastery of linguistic rules and the ability to write expository texts is $r = 0.026$ with a significance of 0.735. This result indicates that a high mastery of linguistic rules is not directly related to students' ability to produce expository texts. This finding differs from research that shows a relationship between grammar mastery and writing ability (Fahuzul et al., 2022). This difference can be explained by the different forms of ability measured. In this study, mastery of linguistic rules was measured through a multiple-choice test, while the ability to write expository texts was measured through written production. Multiple-choice tests emphasize the ability to recognize correct language forms, while writing requires the ability to actively use language rules in the context of developing ideas.

Thus, students may understand linguistic rules theoretically, but they may not necessarily be able to apply them productively in a complete piece of writing. Writing expository texts requires broader skills, such as constructing an outline, developing paragraphs, maintaining coherence, using conjunctions, establishing cause-and-effect relationships, and conveying arguments objectively. Therefore, mastery of grammar can support language skills, but its application in writing still requires directed and continuous language production practice (Ilam et al., 2022; Rahmaddian & Fakhurriana, 2023). In this context, Muhyidin (2020) also showed that the ability to write expository texts can be correlated with reading habits and mastery of discourse markers. Therefore, writing ability is influenced not only by grammar but also by the ability to connect ideas through cohesive and coherent devices.

Linguistic rules in academic writing serve not only as formal rules but also as tools for constructing meaning, clarifying relationships between ideas, and strengthening arguments. Phillips Galloway et al. (2020) explain that cross-disciplinary academic language skills play a role in source-based writing, particularly when students must summarize, integrate, and communicate scientific information. This view is relevant to the context of engineering students because they need to master academic language that is not only grammatically correct but also appropriate in terms of function, context, and communication purpose. Thus, the weak relationship between mastery of linguistic rules and the ability to write expository texts in this study may indicate that mastery of language rules alone is not sufficient to produce good expository writing if it is not integrated with discipline-based academic writing exercises.

The third finding indicates a significant relationship between reading literacy and mastery of language rules. The correlation value between the two variables is $r = 0.157$ with a significance level of 0.039. This relationship is positive, but falls within the very weak category. This means that students with better reading literacy tend to have better mastery of language rules, although the relationship is not strong. This finding is understandable because academic reading activities provide exposure to standard vocabulary, sentence structure, technical terms, academic discourse patterns, and language forms appropriate to scientific contexts. Through reading activities, students can obtain examples of correct and contextual language use, thereby indirectly strengthening their mastery of language rules.

However, the low correlation value indicates that reading literacy is not the only factor related to mastery of language rules. Reading literacy achievement can also be influenced by reading strategies, the learning environment, background knowledge, motivation, and how readers interact with texts (Liu et al., 2022; Yan & Cai, 2022; Díaz et al., 2024). Furthermore, in a discipline-based academic context, text comprehension is determined not only by general language skills but also by the reader's field knowledge. Usó-Juan (2006) explains that disciplinary knowledge can play a compensatory role in language ability when reading English academic texts. This means that students with a strong understanding of engineering can more easily comprehend academic texts in their field, even if their language skills are not yet fully dominant. This reinforces the view that the relationship between reading, language, and writing in the context of engineering students needs to be understood multidimensionally.

The results of multiple linear regression strengthen the correlation findings. Reading literacy and mastery of language rules simultaneously do not have a significant relationship with the ability to write expository texts. The R value of 0.030 indicates a very low simultaneous relationship. The R Square value of 0.001 indicates that reading literacy and mastery of language rules are only able to explain 0.1% of the variation in the ability to write expository texts. In addition, the model significance value of 0.928 is greater than 0.05. Partially, reading literacy has a significance value of 0.851, while mastery of language rules has a significance value of 0.717. Thus, these two variables are not significant predictors of the ability to write expository texts of engineering students in this study.

The regression findings indicate that the engineering students' expository writing skills in this study are more likely influenced by factors other than reading literacy and mastery of language rules. These factors may include academic writing experience, critical thinking skills, understanding of expository text structure, mastery of academic and technical vocabulary, the ability to use data as evidence, and students' experience in communicating scientific ideas. Devira (2017) emphasized the importance of integrating English for Specific Purposes and Systemic Functional Linguistics in developing engineering students' academic literacy because academic writing in engineering has unique language characteristics, structures, and communication purposes. Thus, writing learning for engineering students needs to be directed at mastering academic genres and

discipline-based communication practices, not just reading comprehension and mastery of general language rules.

Based on these results, the expository writing ability of engineering students in this study cannot be explained solely through reading literacy and mastery of linguistic rules. Writing expository text is a complex skill that requires the ability to formulate a thesis, develop arguments, use evidence, maintain coherence between ideas, and draw logical conclusions. Critical reading skills and mastery of scientific vocabulary can support expository writing, but both need to be linked to directed writing exercises based on academic contexts (Asriati & Gani, 2022). Therefore, the results of this study indicate that learning to write expository text for students is not enough to emphasize reading literacy and linguistic rules, but also needs to develop writing practices, argumentation, data use, the use of discourse markers, and the ability to communicate academic ideas systematically (Fitri & Putri, 2025; Koç et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION

This study analyzes the relationship between reading literacy and mastery of linguistic rules with the ability to write expository texts of engineering students. The results of the study indicate that reading literacy, mastery of linguistic rules, and the ability to write expository texts of students tend to be high. However, the results of correlation and regression indicate that reading literacy and mastery of linguistic rules do not have a significant relationship, either partially or simultaneously, with the ability to write expository texts. The R Square value of 0.001 indicates that the two variables only explain 0.1% of the variation in the ability to write expository texts. Thus, the ability to write expository texts of engineering students in this study cannot be sufficiently explained only through reading literacy and mastery of linguistic rules. This ability needs to be understood as a more complex academic skill because it involves the ability to compose a thesis, develop arguments, use evidence, maintain coherence of ideas, and draw conclusions logically.

The implication of this research is that learning to write expository texts needs to integrate strengthening reading literacy, understanding linguistic rules, writing practice, argumentation, data use, and providing feedback on writing quality. This study has limitations because it only involved engineering students in a specific context, used

questionnaires and multiple-choice tests as the main instruments for the independent variables, and did not examine other factors that may be related to writing ability. Therefore, further research is recommended to involve a wider sample, add variables such as critical thinking skills, technical vocabulary mastery, writing motivation, academic writing experience, or argumentation skills, and use a mixed method design so that quantitative results can be complemented by qualitative analysis of the process and quality of student writing.

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