

THE CORRELATION BETWEEN PRESENT TENSE MASTERY AND THE WRITING ABILITY OF DESCRIPTIVE TEXT OF NINTH GRADE STUDENTS AT SMPN 19 PALEMBANG

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ABSTRACT: The aim of this study was to find out whether there was significant correlation or not between present tense mastery and writing ability descriptive text. The population was the ninth grade students with the total 253 students from 9 classes at SMPN 19 Palembang. To select the sample of this study, purposive sampling technique was implemented. There were 111 students as sample. The data were selected from students' present tense score and their writing descriptive text score. In analyzing the data, correlation analysis was used. Based on the statistical analysis, it was found that the correlation coefficient or the *r-value* (0.609) was higher than *r-table* (0.186). Then, the level of probability (*p*) significance (sig.2-tailed) was 0.000. It means that *p-value* (0.000) was lower than 0.05. It can be concluded that there was high significant correlation between the students' present tense mastery and writing ability of descriptive text.

Keywords: correlation, present tense, writing descriptive text.

HUBUNGAN ANTARA PENGUASAAN PRESENT TENSE DAN KEMAMPUAN MENULIS TEKS DESKRIPTIF BAGI SISWA KELAS IX DI SMPN 19 PALEMBANG

ABSTRACT: Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui apakah ada hubungan yang signifikan atau tidak antara penguasaan present tense dan kemampuan menulis paragraf deskripsi. Populasi dari penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas sembilan dengan total 253 siswa dari 9 kelas di SMPN 19 Palembang. Untuk memilih sample dari penelitian ini, penulis menggunakan teknik purposive sampling, dengan jumlah siswa 111 siswa sebagai sampel. Dalam pengumpulan data, penulis menggunakan tes untuk mengetahui penguasaan tenses dan tes menulis untuk mengukur kemampuan siswa menulis paragraf deskripsi. Dalam menganalisis data, penulis menggunakan korelasi pearson product moment. Berdasarkan analisis statistik, ditemukan bahwa analisis korelasi mengungkapkan bahwa koefisien korelasi atau *r-value* (0.609) lebih tinggi dari *r-tabel* (0.186). Kemudian, tingkat probabilitas (*p*) signifikansi (sig.2-tailed) adalah 0.000. Ini berarti *p-value* (0.000) lebih rendah dari 0.05. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa ada hubungan yang signifikan tinggi antara penguasaan tenses siswa dan kemampuan menulis paragraf deskripsi.

Kata Kunci: hubungan, present tense, menulis paragraf deskripsi.

INTRODUCTION

English is an international language. In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language. It is used as guidance for any instruction or any communication in the world involving relationship, business, networking etc. Basically, there are four skills required in English teaching learning program, namely, listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Writing is one of language skills which should be maximally taught and practiced by the teacher in learning process. According to Petel and Jain (2008, p. 125), writing is a skill which should be taught and practiced. It means that if the students have good writing skill, so they would be able to write easily. In addition, Nordquist (2013, p. 1) declares that good writing simply means writing that contains no bad mistakes that is, no errors of grammar, punctuation, or spelling. In fact, good writing is much more than just correct writing. It is also added that “writing is the combination of process and product” (Linse & Nunan, 2006, p. 98). It means that writing is a process of putting thought or ideas, information in words which is combined into sentences in the paragraphs.

Based on Barkaoui (2007, p. 35), “writing is one of the most difficult skills that second language (L2) learners are expected to acquire, and to require the mastery of a variety of linguistics, cognitive, and sociocultural competencies”.

According to Yan (2015, p. 18), writing instructors (teachers) must deal with many issues, such as how to determine the importance of correct spelling and punctuation in early draft, how to treat the different steps in the composition process, and how analyze a text for its context and purpose.

Based on comparison to many theoretical concepts from various researchers, it shows that most of Indonesian students still struggle to figure out their problems of grammatical area. Therefore, writing is difficult activity for students.

Furthermore, writing has been learnt at junior high school with other language skills. In writing, students are introduced to several types of text through the model of writing text. They are clearly taught about the social function, the generic structure and language features. So that they know and can distinguish the differences among the texts (Oktarina, 2014, p. 2).

There are many types of text learnt by junior high school students. They are narrative, recount, and descriptive. One of them is descriptive text. According to Nugroho (2012, p. 1), descriptive text is a kind of texts that describes the figure of someone based on their characteristic or acts, we can also describe something and some places based on their own characteristics. In writing descriptive text, students are able to describe things, animals, places, a person in particular to get.

Brown (2001, p. 269) argues that grammar competence as a major component of communication has an important position and tenses which are considered as the most difficult skill to learn for Indonesian students. In tenses, learners or writers should combine some parts of grammar, like subject, verbs, auxiliary verbs, articles, objects, adjectives, adverbs, and so on. Thus, with a good grammatical structure, the content of the writing will be easily understood and the messages, ideas, or information will be delivered properly and more meaningful. Without good or correct structure, there will be misunderstanding as a result. Thus, learners' difficulty in writing may lead the EFL learners tend to make errors,

especially for them who still lack competence.

Based on the background, the writer conducted a research entitled "The Correlation Between Present Tense Mastery and Writing Ability of Descriptive Text of The Ninth Grade Students at SMPN 19 Palembang".

The Concept of Present Tense Mastery

Tense is a systematic structure to describe different forms of verbs that show the time of action. In other word, tenses refer to grammatical expression of the time of the situation described in the proposition, relative to some other time (Klein, 1995, p. 141). Tense is expressed by inflections, particles, or auxiliaries in construction with the verb.

Definition of Present Tense

The present tense discusses about habits or routines, schedule and facts. Azar (2005, p. 60) clarifies that present tense is generally used to express event or situations that exist, always, usually, habitually. It means that if people want to express situation that exist, always, usually, habitually the people should using the simple present tense. The simple present tense is one of tenses

which is people should master if people want to make a descriptive paragraph.

According to Hewings (2001, p. 2), people use present simple to describe things that are always true, or situation that exist now and, as far the people know, will go on indefinitely. The people use the present simple to talk about habits or things that happen on a regular basis. The people often use the present simple with verb that performs the action they describe.

Definition of Writing Ability

Writing is thinking process because writing is a process of putting ideas down on paper to transform thought into words and give them structure and coherent organization. Furthermore, Tarigan (2013, p. 1) who defines that writing is productive skill for writing an indirect communication and the nature of the character is very different from that expressed by speaking directly, therefore writing is included an ability. In addition, Harmer (2001, p. 79) states that writing is a form of communication to deliver thought or to express feeling through written form.

Aspects of Writing

In writing, there are several aspects which should be considered by students in order to write well. Brown (2001, p. 357) proposes six major aspects of writing that have to be required by a writer in producing a written text namely ;

1. Content
Deals with thesis statement, related ideas, development ideas, and the use of description.
2. Organization
Covers the effectiveness of introduction, logical sequences of ideas, conclusion, and appropriate length.
3. Discourses
Include topic sentence, paragraph unity, transition, discourse maker, cohesion, rhetorical convention, reference, fluency, economy, and variation.
4. Syntax
Proper use of word forms, word order.
5. Vocabulary
Choice and range of words.
6. Mechanics
Include the use of spelling, punctuation, citation of reference, and appearance.

Definition of Descriptive Text

A descriptive text is a text which is used to describe a particular thing/object, place, or person. According to Nugroho (2012, p. 1), descriptive text is a kind of texts that describes the figure of someone based on their characteristic or acts, we can also describe something and some places based on their characteristics.

In addition, descriptive text is description about sensory experience how something looks, sounds, tastes. Mostly it is about visual experience, but description also deals with other kinds of perception (Kane, 2000, p. 352). The purpose of descriptive text is to describe and reveal a particular person, place, or thing in details or specific to make the reader be able to visualize the description. It can be concluded that descriptive text is used to describe. visual things and feelings

Schematic Structure and Linguistic Features of Descriptive Text

According to Emilia (2014, p. 86), there are two elements as requirement for a text to be identified as descriptive text; identification or general statement and description element. The elaboration of schematic

structure of descriptive text is discussed below.

- a) Identification: identification element aims at introducing and identifying specific participant (a person, thing, place, animal or event) to be described in the descriptive text.
- b) Description: the description aims at describing the specific participant in text. It contains descriptive details or information of the specific participant by providing the description; of its characteristics, appearances, personality, habits or qualities.

Related to its linguistic features, a descriptive text employs the following linguistic features:

 - a) focusing on specific participants as the main character;
 - b) using present tense as dominant tenses;
 - c) using linking verbs or relational process frequently (is, are, has, have, belongs to) in order to classify and

- describe appearance or qualities and parts or functions of phenomena);
- d) using action verbs or material process and behavioural process in giving additional description regarding action and behaviour done by the participants in text;
- e) using mental verb or mental process when describing feelings; f. Use nominal group frequently to describe;
- f) using adjective and adverbs to add information to nouns and add information to verbs to provide more detailed description about the topic; h. Use adverbial phrases to add more information about manner, place, or time and sometimes realized in embedded clause which functions as circumstances.

METHODOLOGY

The method of this study was correlational research. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2012), correlational research is also sometimes refers to form of descriptive research because it describes an existing

relationship two variables. In this study, the writer tried to find out the relationship between students' present tense mastery and their writing ability of descriptive text.

In this study, the population was all the ninth grade students of SMPN 19 Palembang in the academic year 2018/2019. There are 9 classes for the ninth grade. The total population in this study were 253 students.

In choosing the sample for this study, purposive sampling technique was used to choose the sample class. The writer chose purposive sampling to adjust the condition of the population and sample of the study. The writer took five classes which were taken based on the discussion with the English school teacher by considering the capability of students' writing skill, it showed that students' tenses mastery and writing ability were better than other classes. In addition, the writer considered the students' writing ability in choosing the samples. The samples were class IX.1, IX.2, IX.3 & IX.4 as test class with the total 111 students and IX.5 as the tryout test class.

Technique for Collecting the Data

To obtained the information of students present tense mastery, before

the writer gave try out test that consist of 30 items of questions in the form of multiple choice. The questions were decided into two aspects, nominal sentences and verbal sentences. The questions of nominal sentence consist of 15 items, while the verbal sentences consist of 15 items and after try out test the instrument consist 25 items of question. The questions of nominal sentence consist of 10 items, while the verbal sentences consist of 15 items in terms of positive, negative and interrogative form.

Writing Descriptive Text Test

Writing test was given to measure the students' writing ability of descriptive text in the theme of animal and person and time allocation was 40 minutes.

Validity of the Test

The validity of writing test used was content validity. Validity as the degree to which test measured what is supposed to be measured or can be used successfully for purpose for which was intended. In order to get the valid items for present tense, the result of TO were analyzed by using SPSS (*Statistical Package for Social*) corrected item total correlatation, if the value of $r\text{-table} < r\text{-counts}$ the items is valid. On the other

hand, if the value of $r\text{-table} > r\text{-counts}$ the items not valid. The writer found the $r\text{-table}$ was 0.3610 (df=28). The result of validity test from 30 items question given in tryout test revealed that there were 5 invalid items (6, 8, 16, 17 and 21). Hence, there were 25 valid items used as the instrument which were distributed to the sample of this study. The 25 valid items in the test must represent the material have been taught

Reliability of the Test

According to Brown (2004, p. 20), "A reliable test is consistent and dependable. The reliability of the test materials is evaluated through the internal consistency reliability. Measurement result must be reliable and consistent. This study used inter-rater reliability because there were two raters who rated students' writing descriptive text there were the English teacher of SMPN 19 Palembang and English teacher of SMKN 1 Palembang. Then, the raw score was analyzed by using Pearson Product Moment..

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Analysis of Present Tense Mastery

It was found that the results of present tense test of ninth grade students

of SMPN 19 Palembang. From the data, the minimum score was 52, while the maximum score was 100. The mean score of present tense was 74 with standard deviation 12.884.

Table 1. The Score Distribution Students' Present Tense Mastery

Category	Score	Present tense test	
		Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	86-100	22	20%
Good	76-85	31	28%
Average	60-75	43	39%
Poor	50-59	15	13%
Very Poor	0-49	-	-
Total		111	100%

The result of the data shown were that 15 students were in poor category (13%), 43 students were in average category (39%), 31 students were in good category (28%) and 22 students were in excellent category (20%).

Descriptive Analysis of Writing Ability Descriptive Text

The results of students' writing ability in descriptive text shown that the minimum score of students' writing descriptive text was 47, whereas their maximum score was 92. Furthermore, the mean score was 70 with standard deviation 8.727.

Table 2. The Score Distribution Students' Writing Ability Descriptive Text

Category	Score	Writing descriptive text	
		Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	86-100	3	3%
Good	76-85	26	23%
Average	60-75	69	62%
Poor	50-59	12	11%
Very Poor	0-49	1	1%
Total		111	100%

The result of the data shown 1 student was in poor category (1%), 12 students were in poor category (11%), 69 students were in average category (62%) 26 students were in good category (23%) and 3 students were in excellent category (3%)

Normality Test

In this study, normally test was used to find out whether or not the data of present tense mastery and writing ability of descriptive text were distributed normally or not. The data were distributed normality, if present mastery and the probability *p-value* was higher than *alpha-value* (0.05). It is indicated that the data is normal. While, if the *p value* was lower that *alpha-value* ($p < 0.05$) the data was not normal. The

statistical output is presented in the following table

Table 3. Normality Test

Variables	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Present Tense Test	0.081	111	0.072
Writing Descriptive Text Test	0.057	111	0.200

Based on the result of normality test, the data was normal. It can be seen that the data of present test was that *p-value* (0.072) is higher than *alpha-value* (0.05), it could be assumed that the data of present tense test was normally distributed. Related to the result of normality test, the data of writing descriptive text is found that *p-value* (0.200) is higher than *alpha-value* (0.05), or $p > 0.05$. It could be assumed that both data were normally distributed.

Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis is implemented to find out whether there was a significant correlation between students' present tense and students' writing ability of descriptive text or not. Based on the statistical analysis, it could

be seen that there was a significant correlation between the students' present tense and their writing ability in descriptive text. It is presented in the table as follows

Table 4. Correlation Analysis

Variables	Person Correlation Coefficient	Sig.(2-tailed)
Present Tense	0.609	0.000
Writing Descriptive Text		

The result of correlation analysis revealed that the correlation coefficient or the *r-value* (0.609) was higher than *r-table* (0.186). Then the level of probability (*p*) significance with sig-2-tailed was 0.000. It means that significant value (2-tailed) was lower than alpha value ($0.000 < 0.05$). It is indicated that there was significant correlation between the students' present tense mastery and writing ability descriptive text. From the hypothesis testing, it was found that there is high correlation between students' present tense mastery (X) and writing ability descriptive text (Y) It means that the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted.

Interpretation

Based on the result of descriptive analysis of present tense and writing descriptive text test in SMPN 19 Palembang, the data showed that there were some students who got excellent and good score. Some of those who got excellent and good score in present tense and also in writing test. In contrast, some students who got poor in present tense and writing test. Almost all of students, who had average category in present tense and writing ability descriptive text. It means that the improvement of students' present tense mastery would be followed by improvement of students' writing ability descriptive text.

From the hypothesis testing, it was found that there is high correlation between students' present tense mastery (X) and writing ability descriptive text (Y). It means that the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted and the null hypothesis (H_0) was Rejected. Based on the result of Pearson product moment correlation analysis, the correlation coefficient between present tense mastery (X) and writing ability descriptive text (Y) is there was positive and significant correlation between present tense mastery and writing

ability descriptive text of the ninth grade students at SMPN 19 Palembang.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and interpretation of the study, it could be summarized both of the problem of the study were answered. The researcher drew some conclusions as follows:

- 1) The Mean score of students' present tense test was 73.81, minimum score was 52, maximum score was 100 and the standard deviation was 12.81. It means that the ninth grade students at SMPN 19 Palembang had average category of present tense mastery.
- 2) The Mean score of writing ability descriptive text was 70.42, minimum score was 46.87, maximum score was 91.87 and the standard deviation 8.727. It means that the ninth grade students at SMPN 19 Palembang had average category of writing ability of descriptive text.
- 3) Based on the result of Pearson product moment correlation analysis, the result of correlation analysis revealed that the correlation coefficient or the r (0.609) was higher than r -table (0.186). Then the level of probability (p) significance

(sig.2-tailed was 0.000. It means that p (0.000) was lower than 0.05. thus, there was high significant correlation between the students' present tense mastery and writing ability descriptive text of the ninth grade students at SMPN 19 Palembang.

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