THE CORRELATION BETWEEN PAST TENSE MASTERY AND WRITING SKILL IN PERSONAL RECOUNT TEXT

Dewi Agustini[1], Yuyun Hendrety[2], Farnia Sari[3]
Universitas Tridinanti Palembang
(dewi_agustini@gmail.com[1], yuyun_hendrety@ univ-tridinanti.ac.id[2],
farnia_sari@univ-tridinanti.ac.id[3])

ABSTRACT: Past tense mastery supports the students' writing skill in personal recount text. Considering the importance of past tense in the text construction, the investigation concerned on the correlation between past tense mastery and writing skill in personal recount text of the tenth-grade students of SMA Arinda Palembang. The objective of this study was to find out whether there was a significant correlation between past tense mastery and writing skill in personal recount text of the tenth-grade students of SMA Arinda Palembang. The sample of this study was 62 students taken from X1 and X2 of SMA Arinda Palembang by using purposive sampling technique. The method used in this study was a quantitative method with correlational research. The data collected were writing test and past tense mastery test. The result of this study showed that there was no a significant correlation between students' past tense mastery and writing skill in personal recount text in low category. It was proved by correlation coefficient between students' past tense mastery and writing skill was 0.633 (r_{xy}) at the significance level 0.062 was higher than 0.05. On the basis of the finding, the writers concluded that there is no a significant correlation between students' past tense mastery and writing skill. It means that when students have minimum level of past tense mastery, it did not mean that they also get poor achievement in writing.

Keywords: *past tense, writing skill, personal recount text*

HUBUNGAN ANTARA PENGUASAAN PAST TENSE DAN KETERAMPILAN MENULIS TEKS RECOUNT PRIBADI

ABSTRAK: Penguasaan past tense mendukung keterampilan menulis siswa dalam teks penghitungan ulang pribadi. Mengingat pentingnya *past tense* dalam konstruksi teks, Invesitigasi ini focus pada korelasi antara penguasaan *past tense* dan keterampilan menulis dalam teks penghitungan ulang pribadi siswa kelas sepuluh SMA Arinda Palembang. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui apakah ada korelasi yang signifikan antara penguasaan past tense dan keterampilan menulis dalam teks penghitungan ulang pribadi siswa kelas sepuluh SMA Arinda Palembang. Sampel penelitian ini adalah 62 siswa yang diambil dari X1 dan X2 SMA Arinda Palembang dengan menggunakan teknik purposif. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode kuantitatif dengan penelitian korelasi. Data yang dikumpulkan adalah tes menulis dan tes penguasaan *past tense*. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa tidak ada korelasi yang signifikan antara penguasaan tegang masa lalu siswa dan keterampilan menulis dalam teks penghitungan ulang pribadi dalam kategori rendah. Itu dibuktikan dengan koefisien korelasi antara penguasaan tegang masa lalu siswa dan keterampilan menulis adalah 0.633 (rxy) pada tingkat signifikansi 0.062 lebih tinggi dari 0.05. Atas dasar temuan, para penulis menyimpulkan bahwa tidak ada korelasi yang signifikan antara penguasaan *past tense* siswa dan keterampilan menulis. Ini berarti bahwa ketika siswa memiliki tingkat minimum penguasaan *past tense,* tidak berarti bahwa mereka juga mendapatkan prestasi yang buruk secara tertulis.

Kata Kunci: *past tense, keterampilan menulis, teks recount pribadi*

INTRODUCTION

Based on the curriculum 2013, teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) should cover the four language skills. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The four language skills are taught integrated. Writing is also one of language skills that is always taught in school. Writing skill is more complex and difficult than the other skills which not only requires the mastery of linguistic competence such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, punctuation, intonation but also requires the conceptual judgment.

According to Heaton (1988) writing skill is complex and sometimes difficult to teach, requiring not only grammatical mastery and rhetorical devices but also conceptual and judgmental elements. It means that the writing skill in a foreign language seems to be more complicated than being able to speak. That is why to master writing is not easy, it needs practice a lot. Ismayanti (2010) says that learning how to write in a foreign or second language is not an easy thing to do. It could be difficult for everyone, even for professional writer. The most difficult skill for student to learn English is writing, because writing is a process to express students' idea into written form. According to Brown (1994) cited in Purnama (2015), writing is the ability of decoding ideas of interest feeling into written code, there should be a prelude to communicate with the reader, to express ideas without pressure and to explore experience.

Writing is one of the important language skills that students should have because writing is a creative process, and a person who can write well would be able to communicate in writing clearly and accurately. Ur (2009) states that grammar is the way of words are put together to make correct sentences. Grammar is one special thing in English. Writing a text must observe the composition group and structure of sentences to make, the structure is very important to make good sentences in the paragraph.

The ability to communicate is the base underlying English language teaching in Indonesia. It means that language learning is directed towards the achievement of communicative competence, so that student can communicate in English either orally or written, thus when they have to write, they can communicate and develop their ideas through their writing.

On the syllabus of English lesson taken from senior high school, there are many kinds of text types, such as descriptive, narrative, analytical exposition, hortatory, recount and etc. Since the genre is too general, in this study the writers choose recount text as material of the study because recount text is a text that tells the reader about one story, action, or activity happened in the past time. According to Syarif (2014) students make many errors in simple past tense, many students still have difficulties in understanding the simple past tense in using the right form of simple past tense like the use of verb II and the use of adverbial time of simple past tense.

The students have to master grammar appropriately, because the mastery of grammar mastery supports the mastery of the four language skills, especially simple past tense for this study. Tense understanding in English is essential. It shows how verbs agree with times. It is evident that when encoding ideas, thought, and feeling in written language, writers work on correct and effective sentences. In constructing good sentences, as a writer is required to have a good mastery of grammar. In short, good ideas, thought and feeling should be written in good sentences by considering one of the elements is tense usage.

Besides that, writing needs some language component such as grammar, spelling, vocabularies and punctuation. In this study of recount text, past tense has an essential role to show the reader when the action take time. To write clearly, the writers have to pay

attention to everything: audience, sentence, structure, transition, choice of example, and other considerations. This theory is related to the research about the correlation between past tense mastery and writing skill in personal recount text, because tenses is a part of the consideration in writing. It is used in sentences to make understand about sentences meaning.

Considering the importance of tense in the text construction, the investigation concerned on the correlation between past tense mastery and writing skill in personal recount text of the tenth-grade students of SMA Arinda Palembang. This research is to find out whether or not there was any significant correlation between past tense mastery and writing skill in personal recount text of the tenth-grade students at SMA Arinda Palembang

Definition of Writing Skill

Writing is primarily a convention for recording speech and reinforcing grammatical and lexical features of language (Brown, 2004). Moreover, writing is a skill that can produce something by a process in content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanic. In order that the reader can easily understand the writer's purpose in writing text.

Writing as a skill by far the most important reason for teaching writing, of course, that is a basic language skill, just as important as speaking, listening, and reading. As a writer, the use of words and information are to help to express viewpoint in a coherent essay. But writing draws on intuition as well as reasoning, on sensation and emotion as well as fast and memory.

According to Heaton (1988), there are five skills necessary for writing. The first is language use: the ability to write correct and appropriate sentences. Second is mechanical skill: the ability to use conventions correctly. Third is treatment of content: the ability to think creatively and develop thought, excluding all irrelevant information. Fourth is stylistic skills: the ability to manipulate sentences and paragraph and use language effectively. Fifth is judgment skills: the ability to write appropriate manner for a particular purpose with a particular audience in mind, together with an ability to select, organize, and order relevant information. It means that the writers are expected to explore the ideas and make them into good paragraph.

According to Brown (2004), there are four criteria for good writing, the first content is the paragraph contains only one main idea, the purpose of writing is clear to the readers and the idea of the writing is well supported. The second is organization, the introduction gets the students' attention and prepare the readers for what is coming, and there is transition from one idea to the next. Each sentence in the paragraph is coherent, all the information develops the topic of the paragraph and the conclusion draws the paragraph to the end, summarize main point, and emphasis the purpose. The third is style, sentences reflect a variety of synthetic and vocabulary reflects a concern for the audience and purpose of the paragraph. The fourth is comprehension, it consists of mechanics accurate punctuation capitalization, spelling, and grammar, accurate and appropriate words, and complete and correct sentences.

In addition, Brown (2004) states there are four steps in the writing process as follow:

1. Planning (pre-writing), the writers plan what the writers are going to write before he starts to write. The writers have to know about three issues namely; the writers has to consider the purpose of their writing, the writers has to know audience, and the writers has to know the content structure.

2. Drafting is as activity in which writers note down idea in rough form. It means that drafting refers to the first version of a piece of writing.
3. Editing (reflecting and revising) is a process of writing which process of editing will be helped by other reader. In the other words, editing is an activity in which writers check, revise and rewrite what they have written
4. Final version is a final process which the writers has edited their draft, making some changes.

Recount Text

Based on 2013 curriculum and the syllabus of English lesson taken from tenth grade students at SMA Arinda Palembang, there are many kinds of text types, such as descriptive, narrative, analytical exposition, hortatory, recount and etc. For this study, the writers focused on recount text in second semester.

Recount is an essay whose content type to report events, incidents or events that befall a person's experience. Recount purpose is to inform or entertain their audience or reader, in a simple word the purpose of recount text is to retell past experience. In addition, Mark, Kathy, and Anderson (1997) state that are count is a piece of text that retells past event, usually in the order in which they occurred.

Based on the definition above, recount text is a text that retells some experiences or events that happened in the past, because this text is retelling something that happened in the past, the tense that used in this text is past tense.

As mentioned, definition recount text and based on the purpose of recount text, there are several types of recount text:
1. A personal recount text is retelling an activity that the writers has experienced before by his or herself. This personal recount may be used to communicate or to build the relationship between the writers and reader. The examples of this personal recount are: diary, personal letter, and biography or autobiography.
2. A factual recount records the detail of an incident by reconstructing some factual information. The examples of this factual recount are traffic report, a science experiment, historical recount, and police report of an accident.
3. An imaginative recount is a writing of an imaginary role and creates imaginary detail by applying factual knowledge in order to interpret and recount events the examples of this imaginative recount are *A day in the life of an ant, How I invented.*

For this study, the writers chose a personal recount text to conduct research at the tenth-grade students in order that students could write story easily related their experience. Text organization or the genre of a written recount is evident through stage or a series of event. According to Hyland (2004) states that written recount text consists of generic structure which cover:
(1) Orientation is the step in which the writers present the background information that is needed to understand the text. It is the starting point or the introduction in which the writers introduce the participant in the event whom, where and when it happened etc.
(2) Event is everything happened in the event is presented one after another in chronological sequence. This stage is actually the point of a recount, and Re-orientation or evaluation
(3) Re orientation or evaluation as the closing, usually a personal comment regarding the event is presented and provides the conclusion of the experience.

The language features which usually found in the recount text are as follows: introducing personal participant; *I, my group, etc.* it uses conjunction and chronological

connection*; then, first, etc*. using linking verb; *was, were, saw, heard, etc*. using action verb; *look, go, change, etc*. using simple past tense to retell the event. Description word to give detail about *who, what, when, where, why,* and *how*.

METHODOLOGY

Correlation is a statistical test to determine the tendency or pattern for two (or more) variables or two sets of data to vary consistently (Creswell and Hyun, 2012). To conclude, correlation study is aimed at seeking the association between two or more variables. In this study, the independent variable was students' past tense mastery and the dependent variable was students' writing skill in recount text. The population of the study was all the tenth-grade students of SMA Arinda Palembang in the academic year 2017/2018. It consisted of two classes. The total number of population was 62 students. The sample was 62 students of the tenth grade at SMA Arinda Palembang. In addition, Crossman (2017) defines total sampling as a type of purposive sampling technique where you choose to examine the entire population (i.e., the total population) that have a particular set of characteristics. The writers measured the normality of past tense mastery and writing test by using One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test. The normality result of past tense mastery test was 0.328 and writing test was 0.788. Based on the results, the significance was higher than 0.05, the data obtained were considered normal.

1. Collecting the Data
   1.1 Tense Mastery Test
      Tense mastery test is used to measure student's mastery in past tense. It consisted of 25 items, the writers used cloze test, consisted 10 items of past tense, 9 items of past progressive, 4 items of past perfect, 4 items of past perfect progressive, and then 8 items for that use to be was/were. After getting the score of students' test results, the scores were classified into 5 levels of achievement. Split Half Method to measure the reliability of the instrument by dividing the scoring of the test items into two halves. It was used in order to analyze the odd (x) and even (y) of the test items. From the result of Try Out (TO) consisting of 25 valid items, Split Half Method used to measure the reliability of the test. It was found that the reliability coefficient of past tense test was 0.901. Since the reliability coefficient of test was higher than 0.70 the test was considered reliable. Furthermore, the reliability was categorized very high reliable.

   1.2 Writing Test
      In writing skill test, the participants were asked to write their experience by using simple past tenses. Moreover, to measure writing text inter-rater reliability was used to avoid subjectively measurement by providing the two raters to check students' answer to determine the criteria as follows: very good, good, fair and poor. Inter-rater reliability was used to compare the raw score between two rates in order to find out the internal consistency between them. Both results showed that the significance level were 0.00. If the significance level is lower than 0.05, it means that the two raters were reliable.

2. The Technique for Analyzing Data
   The writers used percentage analysis to find out students' individual scores in test given. In analyzing the correlation between past tense mastery and writing skill in recount text, Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used. The significances of the correlation

are determined by comparing the data of coefficient *(r value)* in the level of significance 5% in the table of product moment *(r table)*. The correlation coefficient was significant if the *r table* in the level of significance of 5% is less than the *r data*. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2013), a correlation coefficient below 0.35 shows only slight relationship between the variables.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Descriptive Analysis

Based on the results of past tense mastery test, the minimum score was 8 and the maximum score was 100. The mean score of the test was 65.74 with standard deviation score was 21.285. Based on the results of writing test, the minimum score was 25 and the maximum score was 98. Mean score of the test was 61.63 with standard deviation score was 14.054. The result of past tense mastery test showed that 11 students or 18% was in very good level, 18 students or 29% were in good level, 17 students or 27% were in average level, 7 students or 18% were in poor level, and 9 students or 15% were in very poor level. The result of writing test showed that 2 students or 3% were in very good level, 10 students or 16% were in good level, 34 students or 55% were in average level, 13 students or 21% was in poor level, and 3 students or 5% was in very poor level. The score distribution of past tense mastery test can be seen in table 1.

Table 1. The Distribution of Past Tense and Writing Tests

Score	Level of Achievement	Past tense test		Writing test	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
86 – 100	Very Good	11	18	2	3
71 – 85	Good	18	29	10	16
56 – 70	Average	17	27	34	55
41 – 55	Poor	7	18	13	21
0 – 40	Very Poor	9	15	3	5
	TOTAL	62	100	62	100

2. Correlational Analysis

The writers measured the correlation between past tense mastery and writing by using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. It was found that the correlation coefficient between students' past tense mastery and writing skill was 0.633 at the significant level 0.062. It means that there is no significant correlation between students' past tense mastery and writing skill in personal recount text.

Table 2. Correlational analysis

Variables	Pearson Correlation	Sig.(2-tailed)	N
Past tenses mastery – writing	0.062	0.633	62

3. Discussion

According to the statistical calculation which was analyzed in the previous chapter, a conclusion can be summed up that there was no significant correlation between past tense mastery and writing skill in a personal recount text. The data showed that most of students

got the minimum score of past tense test but they got good score in writing test. Meanwhile, there were students got the minimum score of writing test but they got good score in past tense test. Therefore, the writers summarized that past tense mastery gave less contribution to the writing skill in personal recount text. It had very weak correlation and almost non-correlation to the ability of writing. It can be said that the students' mastery of past tense features did not have a significant role in writing. Students who had minimum level of past tense mastery, did not mean that they also got poor achievement in writing. It was affected by some relevant factors such as students' motivation in learning past tense and writing, their frequency of practice, and the writing assessment that was not only focus on tense area but also some other factors such as content, organization, vocabulary and mechanics.

Hence, grammar and writing skill however, are dependent each other. There is a relationship between grammar and the skill of writing a recount text. Students cannot write a good and correct recount text if they do not master grammar especially past tense. They have to comprehend past tense well before they develop writing skills. The study of grammar in past tense is the study of arrangement of the words into more or meaningful groups. In line with this, Putri, Silvianti & Achmad (2016) in their thesis entitled the correlation between grammar mastery and writing ability found a significant correlation between grammar mastery and writing ability. This means that applying grammar in every writing subject is a must since grammar is one of writing sub skills. It should be done by teacher for making the teaching of grammar and writing support each other. In addition, teachers should also apply interesting materials based on the students' needs and levels. Furthermore, the students have to enrich their ability in two aspects, grammar and writing. Then, the mastery of vocabulary can also help students in expressing their ideas in writing.

CONCLUSION

The finding revealed that there was a negative correlation between students' past tense mastery and writing skill. In other words, it can be stated that when students have minimum level of past tense mastery, it did not mean that they also get poor achievement in writing.

By having the finding, the writers suggests that the English teacher as a motivator and stimulator can explain that some students are still weak in their mastery of past tense. The teacher should explain about past tense rules and increase the students' comprehension by using a good method. Besides, the teacher should explain to the students that there are some criteria to assess writing subject in order that the students are not only focus on tense aspects in writing but also learn more about how to organize the text well by considering the content, vocabulary, spelling and also punctuation.

For language learners, even though students' mastery of past tense has less contribution to their writing, the students should pay attention to the language structures. The simple past tense indicates that an activity or situation began and ended at a particular time in the past. It is one of language components which interacts with other components. Knowing about simple past tense is very helpful for them to communicate effectively either spoken or written. This research can be a contribution to the research in education which is intended to find out the correlation of two variables, in this case past tense and writing. This research may also be a relevant previous study that can be used by other researchers to conduct further research related to the correlation between language skills and language components.

REFERENCE

Brown, H. D. (2004). *Language assessment principle and classroom practice*. New York: Longman

Creswell, J .W. (2012). *Educational research planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research (4ᵗʰed)*. USE: Pearson Education.

Crossman, A. (2017). Understanding purposive sampling. New York: Science Social.

Freankel, J. R., Wallen, N. E.,& Hyun, H., H. (2012). *How to design and evaluate research in education* (8ᵗʰed). San Fransisco: McGraw_Hill, Inc.

Heaton. J. B (1988). *Writing English language tests*. New York: Longman.

Hyland, K. (2004). *Genre and second language writing*. The united text of America: The University of Michigan press.

Ismayanti, I. (2010). *Improving students' writng skill through portfolio*. Paper for Sarjana Pendidikan Examination at FKIP Pakuan University Bogor. Unpublished.

Mark, Kathy, and Anderson. (1997). *Text types in English 1*. Australia: Mac Milan.

Syarif, R, R.(2014). *An error analysis on students' simple past tense mastery in their narrative text a case study at the eleventg grade students of SMA 4 Bekasi.* (Unpublished: Thesis), Syarif Hidayatullah state Islamic University, Jakarta.

Purnama, N. S. (2015). *Teaching writing by using four square writing method (fswm) to the tenth grade of SMK Madyatama Palembang* (Unpublished Thesis), Tridinanti university, Palembang.

Ur, P. (2009). *A course in language teaching: practice and theory.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.