

THE CORRELATION STUDY: STUDENT'S MASTERY OF SIMPLE PRESENT AND THEIR ABILITY IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE

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Abstract

This study is about the correlation between student's mastery of simple present and their ability writing descriptive. The problem of study was there any significant correlation between student's mastery of simple present and their ability writing descriptive. The purpose of this study was to find out significant correlation between student's mastery of simple present and their ability writing descriptive. The population of this study was all eighth grade students at SMP N 1 BPR Ranau Tengah. The total number of the population was 107 students; out of which 52 students were chosen as the samples. Simple random sampling was used to collect the data proportionally to represent the population, so that they were all well represented. The instruments test was grammar and writing test. In analyzing the data, Pearson product moment correlation coefficient analysis was used. Based on the result of study, the writer found that there was a strong and significant correlation between students' writing descriptive ability and their simple present achievement that if the students had a good mastery on simple present tense, they would had a good ability in writing descriptive text. There was many students that had good mastery of simple present tense and good writing descriptive paragraph as well.

Keywords: correlation, mastery, writing descriptive

Introduction

The students are expected to be able to communicate in English using correct structure. Structure or grammar is one of the basic components of language which must be learnt by students. It is very useful and important as Nasr (2008:52) said that grammar is a part of any language. Just as there is no language without sounds (at least no live or oral language) so, there is no language without grammar. Having knowledge of grammar will help people to comprehend what other people say or write. On the other hand, it is difficult for Indonesian students to use the correct structure in English. This is mostly because the students are influenced by their mother tongue on the acquisition of the new structures. Smith and Kellerman (2006:13) called that as a cross linguistic influence because "it is about the interplay between earlier and later acquired languages."

From the statement above, one of the Indonesian students' problems in mastering English is that their mother tongue rules still influence them in using it. Since having differences with their mother tongue from English languages, the students often find problems with grammar, vocabulary, spelling, pronunciation, and the like. Nevertheless, the students usually face difficulty in English grammar that is in arranging words into correct utterances or sentences. It means that grammar is one of the most important parts of English to communicate with others. When we communicate, both in written and spoken ways with other people, we should not only have a good vocabulary but also correct grammar.

Therefore, without grammar, it is hard for people to understand what people say or write because grammar makes a string of words or utterances meaningful. There are many rules in grammar that cannot be ignored. They are articles, parts of speech, sentence pattern, tense, etc. Part of the grammar that is considered to be most difficult to learn for Indonesian students is tenses. Simple present tense is the example. Frank (2010:66) said that "Simple present tense is used to express a habitual action with adverbs like usually, always, or often". The use of simple present tense often makes students confused with its complexity, especially for the eight year students of junior high school. They usually have some problems in finding out the verb form of simple present tense. They often write "He walk to school every day," instead of "He walks to school every day. The third singular persons such as *he*, *she*, and *it* need suffix *-s* or *-es* for the verb. It shows that Indonesian students do not consider that in English there are verbs formed in singular or plural. In Indonesian language, singular or plural forms do not affect the verb form.

In this study, the writer discussed students' English skill in writing descriptive text using simple present tense. Writing a descriptive text should be clear, vivid, and concrete. If a student has made a mistake in using simple present tense, it means that he/she is not competent yet in making his/her text. It makes the reader confused and difficult to understand what the writer means. Therefore, through descriptive text, the writer would like to find out the students' learning problems, to know the students' achievement and difficulties in learning the simple present tense. Wishon and Burks (2008:379) stated that "descriptive writing is used to create a visual image of people, places, even units of time days, times of day or seasons." Hopefully, it will help students in using the simple present tense.

Tense is a systematic structure to describe different forms of verbs that showed the time of action. Meanwhile, simple present tense is formed by using the simple form of the verb that is the form which was listed in the dictionary or it was called infinitive without „to“. When the third person singular subject is present, an –es or –s ending is added (Cook and Suter, 2003:49). Brewton et al also stated that the present tense expresses an action or a state of being in the present (Brewton et al, 2002:263).

Literature Review

Present Tense of Verb Be

Present tense form of „be“ is formed with to be *am, are, or is* after the subject of the sentence. According to Praninskas (2010:20) in English, the present tense of „be“ is used to express following situations:

- (1) Profession, trade, occupation
- (2) Nationality
- (3) Size and shape
- (4) Age
- (5) Characteristic
- (6) Condition
- (7) Place
- (8) Color

Pattern of Present Tense of Verb Be

S+ be + a noun or a noun phrase

Madona is a singer.

Madona is a beautiful woman.

S + be + adjective or adjective phrase

Michael Jackson is famous.

Dewi is extremely courteous.

S + be + adverb or adverbial phrase

Eric is here.

Clinton is from the State of Arkansas.

In negative statements with the verb *be*, the word *not* is used after the verb *be*.

Present Tense of Verb

The present tense of verb is formed with simple form of a verb for first person, and third person plural subject except for third person singular subject; the verb ends in s, or es, (Soemarto, 1994:27). In terms of forms, the simple present can be divided into: positive, negative, interrogative, and negative interrogative. The adverbs of frequency or adverbial phrases that are often used in the simple present tense are *always, often, usually, everyday, sometime, never, occasionally, seldom, twice a week, etc.*

For example:

I always go to school by bus.

He often goes to bed late.

Pattern of Present Tense Form of Other Verb

(1) Positive Form

I, We, You, They + Verb + Complement

He, She, It, Singular name of people, Noun + Verb + s/es + Complement

In the information question, we use question word *who*, *what*, *when*, and *where*. When *who* or *what* is as a subject, the auxiliary *do/does* is not used in this sentence, and the verb that follows is singular, but the answer could be either singular or plural. And in negative question word, we put *do* or *does* after the question word.

Example:

Who lives in the house? The answer could be John or John and Michael.

What makes him happy? The answer could be movie or money and health.

Who does not come here?

What does not he buy in this shop?

And when *who* and *what* are as an object and *where*, *when* are as an adverbial, we put *do* or *does* after question word.

Example:

Who does Jack live with?

What does Doni buy?

Where do they go?

When do they study in a group?

The *s / es* form is used after a singular name, noun, or one of the pronouns; he, she, or it. There are some characteristics in making the *s / es* form in the simple present tense. Add *es* for verbs ending in *o*, or in a letter or combination of letters which represent a sibilant sound such as: *s*, *sh*, *ch*, *x*, *or*, *z*.

Uses of Simple Present Tense

Frank (2010) stated that the simple present tense could be used:

- 1) To express a habitual action, with adverbs like usually, always, or often. Example: They often play football together.
- 2) To state a general truth. Example: The earth revolves around the sun.
- 3) To express future action, especially with verbs of movement or travel such as „come“, „leave“, „stay“, or „arrive“. Example: I arrive in Hong Kong on Saturday.
- 4) In commentaries on games and plays. Example: He takes the shuttlecock and sends it high above the net.
- 5) In exclamations, announcements or demonstrations. Example: Our club gives its annual dinner next week.

Descriptive Writing

Writing is one way to communicate with other people besides speaking, reading, and listening. The word „writing“ seems to be very simple and easy to understand. However, it cannot be ignored. When a student writes a paragraph, he/she should write not only semantically correct but he/she should also use a correct grammar. Writing is not a spontaneous activity. It is learnt in a formal instruction.

Scholes and Klaus (2007: 2) supported this statement. They described, “Writing is an unnatural activity. It must be taught formally and deliberately. In addition, it requires some conscious mental efforts; we think of sentences and consider various ways of combining and arranging them.” Moreover, Glaude et al. (2009: 3) explained that: “...writing as a series of related text-making activities: generating, arranging and developing ideas in sentences, drafting, shaping and reading the text we make: and editing and revising them.” It supports the statement that writing requires some conscious mental effort and considers various ways of combining and arranging.

Therefore, it is important to use specific and concrete details. To guide the students in a descriptive writing, Guthrie (2002:208) gave the generic structure of descriptive writing, they are:

- 1) Identification : identifies phenomenon to be described.
- 2) Description : describes parts, qualities, characteristics.
- 3) Then, the significant lexicogrammatical features of descriptive writing are focus on specific Participants, use of attributive and identifying processes, frequent use of Epithets and classifiers in nominal groups, and use of simple present tense. (Guthrie, 2002:128)

Method

The method of this study is correlation study. This study is used to examine the extent to which difference in one characteristic or variable is related to differences in one or more other characteristic or variables. A correlation exists if, when one variables increases, another variable either increases or decreases in a somewhat predictable fashion. The data were numbers that can reflect specific measurement of the characteristic in question which can be in the form of test score.

The population of this study was all the eighth grade students of SMP N 1 BPR Ranau Tengah in the academic year of 2016/2017. The total number of students was about 107 students from three classes.

In this study, the writer used proportional random sampling. The writer used the Slovin formula in drawing the samples as described as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

where:

n= number of Sample

N=Number of Population

e= margin error (0.05)

$$n = \frac{107}{1 + 107(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{107}{2,07}$$

=52 samples

Table 1. Sample of the Study

Class	Number
VIII.1	17
VIII.2	17
VIII.3	18
TOTAL	52

A test is a method of measuring a person’s ability or knowledge in a given area (Brown, 2004: 19) In this case, the vocabulary test was in form of multiple choice. There were 25 questions for vocabulary test. Then, according to Arikunto (2010:201), writing test is a technique to measure the students ability in writing. To get the students’ writing score, the writer and the English teacher of SMP N 1 BPR Ranau Tengah set the score. It was mean that the writer as the first rater and the English teacher as the second rater. The five aspect would be evaluate by the writer are grammar or structures, vocabulary, organization, content and mechanic.

A test is valid if it measures what it claims to measure. That’s why the writer constructed the table of specification item in order to get the validity of the test.

Table 2. Specification of Test Item

No	Objective	Indicators	Test Types	Test items
1	To measure the students mastery of simple present	The students are able to understand the sentence of Simple present: 1. Positive sentences 2. Negative Sentences 3. Interrogative Sentence	Multiple choice	2,17,23,24,25,26,27,28,29,30 1,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,15 11,12,13,14,16,18,19,20,21,22

Table 3. Specification of Writing Test Item

No	Objective	Indicators	Test Types	Test items
1	To measure the students ability in writing descriptive text	The students are able to write a descriptive text well	Writing test	1

Next, reliability refers to the consistency of test scores. According to Cohen, et al (2005: 117) states that reliability is essentially a synonym for consistency and replicability over time, over instruments and over groups of respondents". It is concern with precision and accuracy.

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.957	30

The result of the Cronbach's Alpha Point was 0.957, it was more than 0.70. So, it means that the items of the instruments were reliable and could be used as the instrument to get the data of the research.

Result and Discussion

It tells the result of the test was done at August 21th, 2017 by the eighth grade students" ability in understanding simple present tense at SMP N 1 BPR Ranau Tengah. The result of the test was as follow.

Table 4. Distribution Score of Students' Test

No	Score Range	Score Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
1	80-100	Very good	17	32.69
2	66-79	good	11	21.15
3	56-65	fair	14	26.92
4	40 – 55	poor	6	11.54
5	< 39	fail	4	7.69
	Total		52	100.00

Based on table11 above, it could be explained that there was 17 student (32.69%) who got very good score, 11 (21.15%) students got good score, 14 (26.92%) got fair score, 6 (11.54 %) students got poor score, and 4 (7.69 %) students got fail score The score distribution could be seen into chart 1.

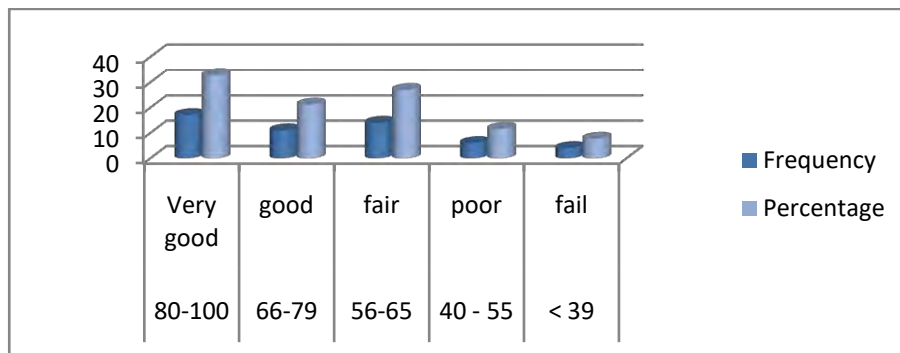


Figure 1. Distribution of Simple Present Score

The result of Writing Test

As the dependent variable in this study, the high score of students writing descriptive ability was 85, the lowest score was 47.5, and mean score was 68.99. This was the descriptive result of the reading test.

Table 5. The Score Distribution of the Writing Test

No	Score Range	Score Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
1	80-100	Very good	13	25.00
2	66-79	good	20	38.46
3	56-65	fair	9	17.31
4	40 - 55	poor	10	19.23
5	< 39	fail	0	0.00
	Total		52	100.00

Based on table above, it was found that there were 13 students (25%) who got excellent score of writing test, 20 students (38.46%) got good score, 9 students (17.31%) average, 10 students (19.23%) got poor, and 0 students (0%) got failed score.

Table 6. Distribution of Writing Score



To find out the correlation between students' ability in simple present tense and their writing descriptive ability, the researcher used Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. To analyze Pearson product moment correlation coefficient, the writer used SPSS 19. The result was as follows

Correlation Between Students' Writing Descriptive Ability And Their Simple Present Achievement

Table 7. Correlations

		Writing	simple_present
writing	Pearson Correlation	1	.789**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	52	52
simple_present	Pearson Correlation	.789**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	52	52

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the table 15 above, it was found that correlation coefficient between students' writing descriptive ability and their simple present achievement was 0.789. It was also consulted to the table of coefficient correlation interpretation of r value with coefficient interval 0.20-0.399 (low category). It means that there is a strong correlation between students' writing descriptive ability and their simple present achievement

Discussion

Based on the findings in this study, it was found that the Pearson correlation coefficient between students' writing descriptive ability and their simple present achievement was 0.789. The r table is 0.312 at N=52 and degree of freedom (50), the significance level of $p < 0.05$ and one tailed testing. Since the r-obtained (0.789) exceeds r table (0.2006). H_a was accepted and H_0 was rejected. Therefore, there is correlation between students' writing descriptive ability and their simple present achievement.

So, based on the result of the research, found that the correlation between students' writing descriptive ability and their simple present achievement of eighth grade students of SMP N 1 BPR Ranau Tengah was 0.789. Simple present achievement influence students writing descriptive ability because there was a strong correlation between students' writing descriptive ability and their simple present achievement of eighth grade students of SMP N 1 BPR Ranau Tengah. The result of study showed that if the students had a good mastery on simple present tense, they would have a good ability in writing descriptive text.

Conclusion

Based on the finding and the discussion, it can be concluded that was significant correlation between students' writing descriptive ability and their simple present achievement of eighth grade students of SMP N 1 BPR Ranau Tengah. And, based on the score criteria of correlation, the value of correlation was strong correlation between variable and it has the positive effect. It meant that if the students had a good mastery on simple present tense, they would had a good ability in writing descriptive text. There were many students that had good mastery of simple present tense and a good writing descriptive paragraph as well.

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