

A CORRELATIONAL STUDY BETWEEN THE FIRST YEAR STUDENTS' SIMPLE PAST TENSE MASTERY AND THEIR ABILITY IN WRITING RECOUNT TEXT AT SMAN 1 TIMPEH DHARMASRAYA

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Abstract

The background of the problem of this research was the students at SMAN 1 Timpeh, Dharmasraya still got difficulties in writing recount text. It happened because they did not understand and master grammar, especially simple past tense. Therefore, this research was aimed at finding out the correlation between simple past tense mastery and the ability in writing recount text. To analyze the data, the researcher used the Pearson Product Moment Formula and calculated the data by using Microsoft Excel and manual calculation. After analyzing the data, the researcher found that the value of r -counted was .65 and the value of r -table was .36. It means that r -counted was higher than r -table. Therefore, the relationship between two variables, simple past tense mastery and the ability in writing recount text was significant. Learning from the result, it can be concluded that the correlation between simple past tense mastery and the ability in writing recount text of the first year students at SMAN 1 Timpeh, Dharmasraya was high. Based on the conclusion, in selecting teaching material for writing class, especially in writing recount text, the teacher should consider the complexity of simple past tense. In order to improve their ability in writing a recount text, the students should make efforts to increase their mastery in simple past tense since the complexity of a text is partially caused by the grammatical structures used to construct a text.

Key words: correlation, past tense, writing recount

Introduction

Mastering English is very important for certain group of people in their life nowadays since English is an international language that is used almost in every part

of the world. In Indonesia, English is taught in elementary school up to university.

In English, there are many skills are taught. They are listening, speaking,

reading, and writing. Those skills cannot stand alone. They need another language component such as grammar to support them. Without grammar, those skills will not be perfect. For example in writing, if a student wants to write a text but she/he does not understand about grammar, she/he will not produce a good text.

According to Klammer (2007:3), grammar refers to the linguistic system that presumably exists in the mind of a speaker of a language, the knowledge that we refer to when we say that someone “knows” a language. In addition, grammar is a set of implicit rules that govern the formation of sentences.

Furthermore, grammar also gives much contribution in writing text. Nordquist (2013:1) says that correct writing simply means writing that contains no mistakes, that is, no errors of grammar, punctuation, or spelling. In fact, good writing is much more than just correct writing. It's writing that responds to the interests and needs of our readers.

In addition, grammar mastery is important to write a text. Without the correct usage of grammar, the written text will not be understood by the reader because in written form we do not have direct interaction with reader like we usually do in speaking

In the first year of senior high school, there are many kinds of text that are learned such as recount, narrative, procedure, descriptive, and news item text. Recount text is to tell the reader what happened in the past, narrative text is to amuse or entertain the reader with actual or imaginary experience in different ways, procedure text is to help the reader to task or make something, narrative text is like myths and legends, descriptive text is to describe a particular person / thing, and news item text is to inform the reader or listener about events of the day which are considered news worthy or important (Sudarwati, 2007). In this research, the researcher only discussed one of them. It was recount text.

Recount text relates to the generic structure and language features. The generic structure of recount text consists of three parts: orientation, series of events, and reorientation. Whereas, the language features used in recount text are using past tense, using action verbs, focusing on specific participants, and using time connectives (Derewianka, 1990:15).

There are many problems that influence the students' ability in writing a text, especially recount text such as punctuation, spelling, and grammar.

Based on the researcher's interview with English teacher and some students of SMA N I Timpeh, Dharmasraya, the

students still got difficulties in writing text, especially recount text. It happened because they did not understand and master grammar, especially simple past tense.

Because of the problem, the researcher was interested in doing research about the correlation between the first year students' simple past tense mastery and their ability in writing recount text.

In general, the purpose of the research was to find out the correlation between the first year students' simple past tense mastery and their ability in writing recount text. Specifically, it was aimed at finding out: students' simple past tense mastery, students' ability in writing recount text, and the correlation between simple past tense mastery and the ability in writing recount text.

This research was intended to know the correlation between simple past tense mastery and the ability in writing recount text. By having the correlation between them, it could give some benefits, as follows:

1. For English teachers.

The result of this research will give information to the English teachers about the correlation between simple past tense mastery and the ability in writing recount text. It is expected that the result of this study can be considered as an input for English teachers in teaching the students

about simple past tense mastery and writing recount text.

2. For students.

The result of this research will give them information about how their simple past tense mastery correlates with their ability in writing recount text.

Research Method

This research is a correlational research. Gay (1987:230) says that a correlational research involves collecting data in order to determine whether, and to what degree, a relationship exists between two or more quantifiable variables. The population of this research was the first year students of SMA N 1 Timpeh, Dharmasraya who registered in 2012/2013 academic year. Total number of the population was 96 students. They were divided into five classes; class X.1, X.2, X.3, X.4, and X.5.

Sampling is the process of selecting a number of populations for a study in such a way that the individuals represent the larger group from which they are selected (Gay, 1987:101). The sample is only a part of the population. Gay (1987:103) adds that a good sample is representative of the population from which it is selected.

In this research, the researcher used cluster random sampling technique. According to Gay (1987:110), cluster random sampling is a sampling technique

in which groups, not individuals, are randomly selected. The researcher chose the sample class randomly because they have same characteristics. It means that, there was no superior class. Besides, they had studied with the same syllabus, teaching materials, time allocation, and teacher.

In selecting the sample, the researcher chose two classes of students by putting the name of the classes (X.1, X.2, X.3, X.4, and X.5) on small papers. Then, the researcher mixed them and took two of them twice. The first taking would be used for the try out test and the second one would be used for the real test. Class X.1 and X.3 were as the sample of the try out test and class X.2 and X.4 were as the sample of the real test.

To collect the data of this research, the researcher used simple past tense test and writing recount text test to measure student's simple past tense mastery and student's ability in writing recount text. Simple past tense test consisted of 24 items: they were 6 items for positive form (3 items for verbal and 3 items for nominal), 6 items for negative form (3 items for verbal and 3 items for nominal), 6 items for interrogative form (3 items for verbal and 3 items for nominal), and 6 items for information question form (3 items for verbal and 3 items for nominal). The researcher gave 60 minutes for

students to do the test. For recount text test, the researcher gave some topics and students' own topic with time allocation was 90 minutes.

Before giving the tests, simple past tense test and recount text test the researcher gave a try out test to the students out of the sample. In this case the researcher tried out the instruction of the test to find out whether or not the students understand what they will do with the test and the time allocation.

To have a valid test from two tests, the researcher used content validity. A test is valid if it measures what is supposed to be measured (Gay 1987:162). According to Brown (2004:22), one of the types of the test validity is content validity. It means that, the test is fitted with the materials that have been given to the students. For this reason, constructing the test was based on the curriculum and syllabus used at SMA N 1 Timpeh, Dharmasraya.

To know the reliability of two tests, the researcher used inter - rater technique where there were two scorers (scorer 1 and scorer 2). Its function is to minimize the subjectivity of the scoring the tests.

After the researcher calculated the coefficient correlation of two scorers by using Pearson Product Moment Formula, it was found that the values of r counted of both of the tests: simple past tense test and writing recount text test were .98.

Then, the researcher compared the values of r- counted with the value of r-table on the level of significance 95% (α .05) and the degree of freedom (df) n-2 (28), the value of r-table was .36. It means that, the values of r-counted (.98) were higher than r-table (.36). Therefore, the coefficient correlation of two scorers and the reliability of the tests were reliable. From the classification, the researcher categorized the testes as very high correlation.

In analyzing the data, the researcher followed the following steps:

1. Presenting the raw scores from two tests: simple past tense test and writing recount text test.
2. Correlating the total scores of two tests: simple past tense test and writing recount text test, the researcher used the Pearson Product Moment Formula (Arikunto, 2002: 243) as follows:

$$r_{xy} = \frac{n \sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{\{n \sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2\} \{n \sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2\}}}$$

Where:

r_{xy} = the coefficient of correlation between two variables of the test

x = the score of simple past tense test

y = the score of recount text test

n = the number of the students

$\sum xy$ = the total scores of cross product xy

$\sum x$ = the sum of simple past tense' test score

$\sum y$ = the sum of recount text' test score

$\sum x^2$ = the square of simple past tense' score

$\sum y^2$ = the square of recount text' score

Then, the researcher compared the value of r-counted with r-table on the level of significance 95% (α .05) and the degree of freedom (df) n-2 (28). The value of r-counted was .65 and the value of r-table was .36. It means that, the value of r-counted (.65) was higher than r-table (.36). Therefore, the correlation of two variables: simple past tense and writing recount text was significant.

The researcher used the coefficient of correlation by Arikunto (2002:245) as follows:

.00 - .20 = Very low correlation

.21 - .40 = Low correlation

.41 - .60 = Moderate correlation

.61 - .80 = High correlation

.81 - 1.00 = Very high correlation

From the result of the tests, the researcher categorized the correlation into high correlation.

The hypothesis of this research was that there is a correlation between the students' simple past tense mastery and their ability in writing recount text at SMA N 1 Timpeh. To test the hypothesis, a statistical analysis was used. The statistical or null hypothesis (H_0): "there is no correlation between the students' simple

past tense mastery and their ability in writing recount text at SMA N 1 Timpeh”, was accepted if the value of r -calculated was the same as or lower than r -table. Otherwise, the alternative hypothesis (H_a): “there is a significant correlation between the students’ simple past tense mastery and their ability in writing recount text at SMA N 1 Timpeh”, was accepted if the value of r -calculated was higher than r -table.

Then, to make sure whether there is a significant correlation or not the researcher tried to compare r -table and r -counted. The researcher compared the value of r counted with the value of r table on the level of significance 95% and the degree of freedom (df) $n-2$ (28) (Gay, 1987:367). It was found that the value of r - counted (.65) was higher than r - table (.36). It can be concluded that the correlation of simple past tense mastery and writing recount text ability was significant.

Finding and Discussion

As have been discussed before, the researcher had two instruments to collect the data for two variables: simple past tense test and writing recount text test. Both instruments were given to 30 students chosen as sample of this research. There were 24 items for simple past tense test and time allocation was 60 minutes. For recount text test the researcher gave some

topics and the students’ own topic with time allocation was 90 minutes.

Based on the result of the tests, it was found that the lowest score for simple past tense test was 16 and the highest score was 48. Whereas, it was also found that the mean was 39.49 and standard deviation was 7.35.

From the result of writing recount text test, it was found that the lowest score was 36 and the highest score was 98. Besides, the mean was 84.75 and standard deviation was 15.86.

To find out the correlation between simple past tense mastery and the ability in writing recount text, the researcher used Pearson Product Moment formula. From the data analysis, it was found the value of r between simple past tense and recount was .65.

Based on the result of testing hypothesis and the result of data analysis, the correlation between simple past tense mastery and writing recount text ability was positive and significant. It was found that the value of r – counted was .65.

In relation to the classification of correlation elaborated by Arikunto (2002:245), the correlation of two variables (simple past tense and recount text) could be classified as high. Relating to this, it could be interpreted that an increasing grade in simple past tense mastery probably has relationship with an

increasing grade in ability to write a recount text.

Conclusions

Based on finding as already discussed in the previous chapter, the researcher points out the following conclusions:

1. There was a positive and significant correlation between simple past tense mastery and the ability in writing recount text of the first year students at SMAN 1 Timpeh, Dharmasraya. It was proved by the value of r -counted was higher than r -table. It can be concluded that the grade of simple past tense mastery can influence the grade of writing recount text.
2. The correlation between simple past tense mastery and the ability in writing recount text of the first year students at SMAN 1 Timpeh, Dharmasraya was categorized as high correlation. It means that, simple past tense gives much contribution in writing recount text.

Based on the conclusions above, some suggestions can be presented as follows:

1. In selecting teaching material for writing class, especially in writing recount text, the teacher should consider the complexity of simple past tense.
2. For students, in order to improve their ability in writing a recount text, they should make efforts to increase their

mastery in simple past tense since the complexity of a text is partially caused by the grammatical structures used to construct the text.

3. Linguistic aspects in writing are not only grammar but many others. Therefore, the researcher suggests for further researchers to find another aspects in writing.

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