
THE CORRELATION BETWEEN PAST TENSE MASTERY AND STUDENTS' ABILITY IN WRITING A NARRATIVE

Nurhayati Sitorus

Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas HKBP Nommensen

Email: Hayati.sitorus@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This research aims to know whether past tense mastery and students' ability in writing a narrative has correlation or not. The research method in this research is descriptive quantitative research. The technique for collecting data by giving tests to the students. The test are objective test and subjective test. Objective test is completion test and subjective test is students' writing. To analyze the data, the writer did some steps. They are 1) Calculating the mean score of past tense mastery (X) and students' ability in writing a narrative, 2) Calculating a positive correlation between past tense mastery (X) and students' ability in writing a narrative (Y) by using Product Moment Formula, 3) Calculating the significant correlation between past tense (X) and students' ability in writing a narrative (Y) by comparing it with correlation table.

The result of this research shows that there is a positive and significant correlation between students' mastery in past tense and students' ability in writing a narrative. It can be seen from r count is bigger than r table ($0,894 > 0,312$).

Key Words: Past Tense, Writing , Narrative

INTRODUCTION

Language is a tool that used human to communicate one each other. Through language human can express their opinions and ideas to the other both orally or written. In other hand, it is used to deliver a concept and feelings that someone feels. It means that human can deliver what they think in their mind through language. That's why language has a necessary role in human's life.

There are so many languages in this world. One of them is English. It is an International language. There are some countries that used English as communication tool in their daily life. In other side, it is used as introduction language in education.

English had been introduced dan learnt in Kindergarten, Elementary School, Juniour High School, Senior High School dan University level in Indonesia. English is different with Indonesian. In English, writing is not the same as pronunciation. In other side, there so many rules that must be remembered in grammar, especially in tense.

Tense is a term used in grammar to indicate the time of the action or event (Murthy, 2003:151). In any language, tense is divided into three classes namely present tense, past tense and future tense. Some students said that studying tense is difficult, especially past tense. Past tense refers to a verb is used to show an action was completed. It is divided into

simple past tense, past continuous tense, past perfect tense, and past perfect continuous tense. Each tense has different pattern. So, the students felt difficult to understand, apply and build sentences with the right tense. It can be seen from students' translation and students' writing (Sitorus, 2017). That's why, the students did not able to produce a good translation and a good writing.

Writing a psychological activity of the language user to put information in the written text. A text is any meaningful linguistic in both linguistic context and non linguistic context. Nunan (1989:36) "writing is an extremely complex cognitive in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of context, format sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, and letter formation. It means that the students must know and understand format sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, and letter formation if they want to produce a good writing. As the writer knows that they are problems that faced by the students (Sitorus, 2016; sitorus, 2017). That's why they cannot produce a good translation and directly they cannot able to produce a good writing. It is caused they have weakness in grammar, vocabulary, spelling and also letter formation.

Based on the explanation above, the writer wants to investigate and prove the correlation between past tense mastery and students' ability in writing a narrative.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The writer used descriptive quantitative research to know whether there is the correlation between students' mastery in past tense and students' ability in writing a narrative or not. The population of the research was the third semester English Department students of HKBP Nommensen University academic year 2017/2018. They consisted of 3 classes/groups (A,B, and C). So, the writer took the sample from the population by using cluster random technique in this research. The sample of this research is group A. They consisted of 40 students.

In this research, the writer gave tests to the students to get the data. The tests were objective test and subjective test. The objective test is completion test. It consisted of 20 questions. To asses the students' mastery in past tense, the writer used formula, namely

$$S = \frac{R}{N} \times 100$$

Where:

S : The score of the test

R : The number of the right answer

N : The number of question.

Then, the subjective test is students' writing. Here the writer asked them to write a narrative. It was about their experience. There are some aspects that the writers used to assess the students' ability in writing. They are (1) organization; introduction, body, and conclusion, (2) logical development of ideas: content, (3) grammar, (4) punctuation, spelling, and mechanic, and (5) style, vocabulary, and quality of expression. The scales are (1) Excellent to Good (20-18); (2) good to adequate (17-15); (3) adequate to fair (14-12); (4) unacceptable (11-6); (5) not college-level work (5-1).

To analyze the data, the writer did some steps or procedures. They are 1) Calculating the mean score of past tense mastery (X) and students' ability in writing a narrative, 2) Calculating a positive correlation between past tense mastery (X) and students' ability in writing a narrative (Y) by using Product Moment, 3) Calculating the significant correlation between past tense (X) and students' ability in writing a narrative (Y) by comparing it with correlation table.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Finding

The writer got the data from the tests that the writer gave to the students. Here, the writer gave completion test to the students to know the students' mastery in past tense and then asked them to write a narrative about their experience. There are 20 questions that the writer gave to the students to know the students' ability in mastering past tense. The tenses consisted of 4 tenses, namely simple past tense, past continuous tense, past perfect tense, and past perfect continuous tense. Each tense consisted 5 questions. The students' score in answering completion test and also the students' score in writing a narrative can be seen below. The score of students' mastery in past tense is symbolized with X and the students' score in writing a narrative is symbolized with Y.

Tabel 1. The Students' Score in Mastering Past Tense and The Students' score in writing a Narrative

No	Students' Initial Name	X	Y
1	LS	55	65
2	ITS	60	65
3	INS	50	55
4	DS	65	72
5	EDP	30	33
6	LCA	45	55
7	BPWG	60	62
8	RN	50	58

9	AAS	60	65
10	RS	50	45
11	MUM	45	42
12	MES	70	72
13	NPT	65	70
14	EPH	65	74
15	ANN	60	70
16	RRM	55	55
17	HRS	60	58
18	LNS	80	85
19	LPS	80	83
20	IS	70	77
21	RYN	60	68
22	RYS	65	74
23	RUM	55	50
24	RS	65	60
25	RAS	70	68
26	NH	50	60
27	ILS	60	65
28	YSN	60	68
29	BS	70	77
30	ARN	65	67
31	AT	60	62
32	HB	45	40
33	YS	60	65
34	NRB	60	70
35	GABS	55	60
36	DYRS	65	60
37	ESH	70	75
38	HP	65	74
39	MSP	70	65
40	AWDM	65	72
Sum		2410	2561

From the data above shows that the highest score in mastering past tense is 80. There are 2 students that get 80. And the lowest score in mastering past tense is 30, just one student that get 30. Whereas the highest score in writing a narrative is 85 and the lowest score is 33.

The data shows that the students' score in mastering past tense is compliance with their writing. If the students' mastery in past tense is low, so their writing is also bad. And if the students' mastery in past tense is high, so their writing is also good. If the writer saw from the students' score in mastering past tense, their grammar is enough if the writer saw from their average in mastering past tense.

After the writer got the data, the writer would analyze the data. There are some steps that the writer did to analyze the data. First, the writer calculated the mean of students' score in mastering past tense and also the mean of students' score in writing a narrative. Second, the writer calculated the correlation between students' mastery in past tense and students' ability in writing a narrative. The last, the writer compared r count with correlation table (r table). Based on the data above, the mean score of students' mastery in past tense and also the mean score of students' ability in writing a narrative can be calculated. The mean score of them can be seen below.

1. The mean score of students' mastery in past tense

$$\begin{aligned}\bar{X} &= \frac{X}{N} \\ \bar{X} &= \frac{2410}{40} \\ \bar{X} &= 60,25\end{aligned}$$

2. The mean score of students' ability in writing past tense

$$\begin{aligned}\bar{X} &= \frac{X}{N} \\ \bar{X} &= \frac{2561}{40} \\ \bar{X} &= 64,025\end{aligned}$$

From the calculation above shows that the mean score of students' mastery in past tense is 60,25 and students' ability in writing a narrative is 64,025. The writer concluded that the students' mastery in past tense and students' ability in writing a narrative are enough. After the writer got the mean score of students' mastery in past tense and students' ability in writing a narrative, then the writer calculated the correlation between past tense mastery (X) and students' ability in writing a narrative (Y) by using Product Moment to know whether students' mastery in past tense has correlation with the students' ability in writing a narrative or not. To know the correlation between both of them, the writer used product moment formula. The correlation can be seen below.

$$r_{xy} = \frac{N(\sum XY) - (\sum X)(\sum Y)}{\sqrt{\{N \sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2\} \{N \sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2\}}}$$

$$r_{xy} = \frac{40(158.100) - (2410)(2561)}{\sqrt{\{40 \times 148.900 - (2410)^2\} \{40 \times 168.857 - (2561)^2\}}}$$

$$r_{xy} = \frac{6.324.000 - 6.172.010}{\sqrt{\{5.956.000 - 5.808.100\} \{6.754.280 - 6.558.721\}}}$$

$$r_{xy} = \frac{151.990}{\sqrt{147.900 \times 195559}}$$

$$r_{xy} = \frac{151.990}{\sqrt{28.923.176.100}}$$

$$r_{xy} = \frac{151.990}{\sqrt{170.068,15}}$$

$$r_{xy} = 0,8937$$

$$r_{xy} = 0,894$$

From the calculation above shows that the result of correlation between students' mastery in past tense (X) and students' ability in writing a narrative (Y) is 0,894. It shows that the correlation both of them is very high. It can be seen from the interval coefficient below

0,00 – 0,199 very low

0,20 – 0,399 low

0,40 – 0,5999 enough

0,60 - 0,799 high

0,80 – 1,000 very high

(Sugiyono, 2007:257)

After the data had been analyzed by using the Pearson Product Moment formula, it was found that the value of the correlation coefficient was 0,894. It means there is a positive correlation between students' mastery in past tense (X) and students' ability in writing a narrative (Y). To know that it is significant, the writer compares it with r table. The value of r table with N= 40 at the level of significance 0,05 and 2 tailed was 0,312. In testing hypothesis of the correlation between variable X and Y, r count > r table in which Ho was rejected and Ha was accepted. It means that there is a positive and significant correlation between students' mastery in past tense (X) and students' ability in writing a narrative (Y).

Discussion

Based on the result of the research shows that there is a positive and significant correlation between students' mastery in past tense and students' ability in writing a narrative. It can be shown through the correlation result between students' mastery in past tense and students' ability in writing is very high, namely 0,894. It means that they have a positive correlation. And to know that they have significant correlation, it can be seen from r count $>$ r table, namely $0,894 > 0,312$. The writer concludes that H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted. So, the result of the research proves that students' mastery in past tense will affect to the result of their writing. If the students' mastery in past tense is low so it will affect to their writing and their writing also is bad. Then, the result of the research also shows that the students' ability is enough. It can be seen from the average of students' mastery in answering multiple choice test about past tense. The average of their result is 60,25.

From the finding of the research shows that the result of the research is compliace with the previous theory that said the students felt difficult to understand, apply and build sentences with the right tense. It can be seen from students' translation and students' writing (Sitorus, 2017). That's why, the students did not able to produce a good translation and a good writing.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

The result of this research shows that there is a positive and significant correlation between students' mastery in past tense and students' ability in writing a narrative. It can be seen from r count is bigger than r table ($0,894 > 0,312$).

Suggestion

There is a positive and significant correlation between students' mastery in past tense and students' ability in writing a narrative. So, English lecturers are hoped to teach students seriously, especially for grammar. And they give more attention to grammar because from the result of the research shows that the students mastery in past tense is enough.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Arikunto, S. 2002. *Prosedur Penelitian Suatu Pendekatan Praktik*. Jakarta: PT.Rhineka Cipta.
- [2]. _____. 2009. *Dasar-dasar Evaluasi Pendidikan*. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara
- [3]. Barli, B. 1995. *Write Well Improving Writing Skill*. Yogyakarta: Kanisi
- [4]. Brown. 2004. *Language Assesment Principles and Clasroom Practices*. New York: Pearson Education.
- [5]. Harmer, J. 2004. *How to Teach Writing*. Harlow: Pearcson Education.
- [6]. Knapp, P & Watkins, M. 2005. *Genre, Text, Grammar*. Sydney: University of New South

Wales

- [7]. Latief, M. A. 2013. *Research Methods on Language Learning: An Introduction*. Malang: UM Press.
- [8]. Nunan, D. 1989. *Second Language Teaching and Learning*. Boston: University of Hongkong
- [9]. Murthy, Jayanthi Dakshina. 2003. *Contemporary English Grammar*. New Delhi: Book Palace
- [10]. Pardiyo. 2007. *Teaching Genre Based Writing*. Yogyakarta: Andi
- [11]. Sitorus, N. 2016. An Error Analysis of Fifth Semester English Department Students of HKBP Nommensen University in Translating English Text into Indonesian. *Penelitian Internal*. LPPM Universitas HKBP Nommensen
- [12]. _____. 2017. The Students' Problems in Translation. *Penelitian Internal*. LPPM Universitas HKBP Nommensen
- [13]. Sugiyono. 2012. *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R & D*. Bandung: Alfabeta