

SIMPLE PRESENT TENSE MASTERY AND WRITING ABILITY OF FEMALE AND MALE STUDENTS

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Abstract: Grammar is very important in learning and using languages so that using correct grammar will indicate clearly what the writer says. The objective of this research is to find out if the correlation between simple present tense mastery and writing ability in self-introduction texts of the tenth grade students of SMK N 1 Kalinyamatan Jepara is 1) significant for female students, and 2) not significant for male students. This correlational research was conducted in SMKN 1 Kalinyamatan Jepara with 30 students from Class X Tata Boga 2 (BG 2) for female and 30 students from Class X Teknik Elektronika Industri 1 (EI 1) for male as the samples. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to analyze the data. The findings show that the correlation of simple present tense mastery and writing ability in self-introduction texts of female students is significant while that of male students is not significant.

Key words: simple present tense, writing ability, female and male students

INTRODUCTION

To create a good writing, we must have sufficient knowledge about grammatical structures, vocabulary, spelling, and a good paragraph development. According to Byrne, 1997 (in Winarni, 2016: 17), writing is producing a sequence of sentences arranged in particular order and linked together in certain ways. He also states that writing is the act of forming letters or combination of letter: making marks on a flat surface of some kind. Meanwhile, Cahyono (2009) states that writing is a means of communication, especially when the person we want to communicate is not right there in front of us.

Based on our observation in SMK N 1 Kalinyamatan Jepara, there were a lot of students who did not really master grammar especially tense. When their teachers taught tense, some of them did not understand it at all. They had difficulty to learn English grammar, because most of them focused on learning the patterns or the rules that made them bored and confused. When the writers read the students' writings, such as descriptive text, narrative text, and recount text, there were some students who were good in tenses, but not always good in writing and there were some students who were bad in tenses, were not always bad in writing. This is similar with the result of the research conducted by Septiani (2014) which shows that there is no significant correlation between grammar mastery and writing ability. This fact can be interpreted that students who have minimum level of grammar also get poor achievement in writing. Another research on writing descriptive text was conducted by Winarni (2016). The result shows that there is significant correlation between writing ability and simple present tense mastery and vocabulary mastery. This means that the improvement of simple present tense and vocabulary mastery will be followed by the improvement of the ability in writing descriptive text.

Another phenomenon the writers noticed was that female students in X BG class were mostly good in writing, in terms of how they expressed the idea, how they arranged sentences, and how they used grammar. But male students in X EI class mostly ignore the tenses in their writing and they just write what they know. This phenomenon is in line with what Narayanan (2005) has found out that female students have higher mean score in all motivational categories, those are, integrative, instrumental, resultative and intrinsic than male students do. In other words, male students have less motivation to learn English than female do.

The high motivation of female students to learn English happens also in their motivation to write English texts. Supported by their emotion, feeling, and arrange-words ability, they may make a good writing.

In accordance with the strategy in learning English, Bacon (1992) states that male students use translation strategies more than female students. When male students learn English, they translate it directly without considering the arrangement of the words. This then affects their writing ability. They must work hard to make a good writing and pay attention to the grammar. Referring to those relationships, the writers assume that female students are better in writing ability and grammar mastery than male students are. Using this analogy, the writers assume that female students of SMK N 1 Kalinyamatan Jepara are better in writing than male students.

This research was conducted to find out if 1) there is a significant correlation between simple present tense mastery and writing ability in self introduction text of the tenth grade female students of SMK N 1 Kalinyamatan Jepara, and 2) there is no significant correlation between simple present tense mastery and writing ability in self introduction text of the tenth grade male students of the school.

Simple Present Tense

Simple Present Tense (SPT) is used to talk things in general. According to Murphy (1994), we are not thinking only about now. We use it to say that something happens all the time or repeatedly, or that something is true in general. It is not important whether the action is happening at the time of speaking.

There are 2 basic patterns of SPT: verbal and nominal. Verbal SPT is used to express about an activity, whereas Nominal SPT is used to express about a noun. The adverbs of time which are frequently used in SPT are today, every day, every time, every month, every year, in the morning, at night, on Saturdays, etc.

Examples:

Verbal SPT: I/They/We/You work every day.

He/She/It works every day.

Nominal SPT: I am beautiful.

He/she/it is beautiful.

They/We/You are beautiful.

In Verbal SPT, there is an exception. When the subjects are the third singular (he/she/it), the verbs must use s/es in the last word. For examples:

- a. He **works** in hotel.

- b. She **drives** car so fast.
- c. My cat **eats** a fish.

Writing Ability

According to Tarigan, 1985 (in Yuanita, 2017) writing is a productive skill, an indirect communication and the character is very different from that expressed by speaking directly, while to Harmer (2004) writing is a form of communication to deliver thought or to express feeling through written form. Meanwhile, Nordquist (2019) argues that writing is a system of graphic symbols that can be used to convey meaning. He further states that writing is the act of composing a text. Therefore, writing is not easy to do because in writing the writer should be able to produce something new and can give an idea or ideas to the readers.

In writing, there are micro skills and macro skills (Brown, 2001). The micro skills of writing are:

1. Produce graphemes and orthographic patterns of English
2. Produce writing at an efficient rate of speed to suit the purpose
3. Produce an acceptable core of words and use appropriate word order patterns
4. Use acceptable grammatical systems (e.g. tense, agreement, pluralization), patterns and rules;
5. Express a particular meaning in different grammatical forms; and Use cohesive devices in written discourse.

The macro-skills of writing are:

1. Use the rhetorical forms and conventions of written discourse;
2. Appropriately accomplish the communicative functions of written texts according to form and purpose
3. Convey links and connections between events, and communicate such relations as main idea, supporting idea, new information, given information, generalization, and exemplification.
4. Distinguish between literal and implied meanings when writing;
5. Correctly convey culturally specific references in the context of the written text
6. Develop and use a battery of writing strategies, such as accurately assessing the audiences' interpretation, using pre-writing devices, writing with fluency in the first draft, using paraphrases and synonyms, soliciting peer and instructor feedback, and using feedback for revising and editing.

Self-Introduction Text

Self-introduction text is a text which tells about the writer's personal identity. It deals address, date of birth, hobby and interest, and so on. Here is an example:

Hello! My name is Susan and I live in Hudson, Wisconsin, USA. Hudson is much smaller than Moscow, but it is a nice town to live in. I go to the Hudson Middle School. I am twelve years old and will be thirteen in July, 8th. My favorite subjects are English, History and German. I love to roller-skate, ski, and talk to my friends about school. I don't have any hobby, but I like to watch TV as much as possible. At school we learn Math, Science, History, Spanish, German, English, Computers, Woodwork and Home Economics.

(Source: <http://scholar.unc.ac.ru/courses/English/unit1/step1/text.html.ru>)

Hypotheses

The hypotheses of the research are:

- H₁ : There is a significant correlation between simple present tense mastery and writing ability in self introduction text of the tenth grade female students of SMKN 1 Kalinyamatan Jepara ($H_1 : r_{xy} \neq 0$)
- H₂ : There is no significant correlation between simple present tense mastery and writing ability in self introduction text of the tenth grade male students of SMKN 1 Kalinyamatan Jepara ($H_2 : r_{xy} = 0$)

METHOD

This correlation research was conducted at SMK N 1 Kalinyamatan Jepara. The population was the tenth grade students and the total number was 265, comprising of 5 classes which typically consisted of female students and 4 classes consisting of male students. By using cluster random sampling technique, the writers got X BG 2 for female class and X EI 1 for male class as the samples.

Instrument is the most important things to collect the data in research beside of design, population and sample. According to Biddix, instrument is the generic term that researches use for a measurement device (survey, test, questionnaire, etc.).

The instruments used to collect the data were tests. Arikunto (2006) states that a test is a series of question or practice or another instrument used to measure skill, knowledge, intelligence, ability, or talent owned by the individual or group. The tests used in this research were test of simple present tense mastery and test of writing self-introduction text. The simple present tense test was multiple choices consisting of 25 items while in writing test, the students were instructed to write a paragraph of self-introduction text.

The results of the two tests were then analyzed using Pearson Product Moment formula.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The important findings of this research are the finding of 1) the SPT mastery, 2) the writing ability in self-introduction text, and 3) the results of the test of significance of Pearson Product Moment correlation between the 2 variables for female and male students.

Simple Present Mastery

After conducting the tests, the data of female students' mastery on simple present tense is in Table 1 while for male students is in Table 2.

Table 1. Simple Present Tense Mastery Scores of Female Students

Students' Number	Students' Initial	Simple Present Tense Score	Students' Number	Students' Initial	Simple Present Tense Score
1.	A P	40	16.	M Y A	36
2.	A B H	32	17.	N N U	40
3.	A J	36	18.	N C N	40
4.	A K	44	19.	N H W	44
5.	A Z F	56	20.	Q R	52
6.	A D P	56	21.	R A M	36
7.	A D P	28	22.	S M	36
8.	A N A	32	23.	S A R P	24
9.	A M	44	24.	S M N	40
10.	C P L	52	25.	S K	28
11.	E R A	52	26.	T F J	44
12.	J A	44	27.	V A D	32
13.	L S	24	28.	W A N	28
14.	L F	32	29.	W	36
15.	L N	48	30.	Y O R	40
Total score = 1.176 Mean = 39.20 and Standard Deviation = 8.88					

From Table 1 we can see that the highest score is 56, the lowest score is 24. From the calculation, the Mean is 39.2, and the Standard Deviation is 8.88.

From Table 1, it can be made the following diagram:

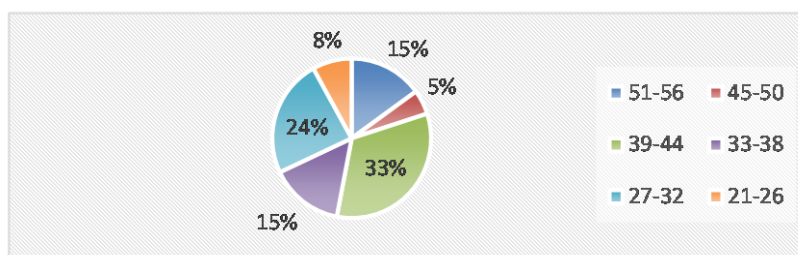


Figure 1 The Diagram of Simple Present Tense Mastery of the Tenth Grade Female Students of SMK N 1 Kalinyamatan

Table 2. Simple Present Tense Mastery Scores of Female Students

Students' Number	Students' Initial	Simple Present Tense Score	Students' Number	Students' Initial	Simple Present Tense Score
1.	A H U D	20	16.	H M	36
2.	A A H	28	17.	K W	32
3.	A D R	32	18.	K N	40
4.	A A B	40	19.	L A	24
5.	A F	32	20.	M I A	36
6.	A Y S	36	21.	M A N	20
7.	A S	28	22.	M A S	20
8.	A E	44	23.	M E R	36
9.	A R	40	24.	M F	40
10	B A N	36	25.	M K A A	36
11	B A	36	26.	M K H	28
12	D W	40	27.	N J F	32
13	D A A	28	28.	S G	40
14	D P	36	29.	W H C	32
15	F H	36	30.	W K	32
Total score = 996		Mean = 33.20 and Standard Deviation = 6.70			

From Table 2 we can see that the highest score is 44, the lowest score is 20. From the calculation, the Mean is 33.2, and the Standard Deviation is 6.7.

From Table 2, it is known that Based on the table above, it can be made the following diagram:

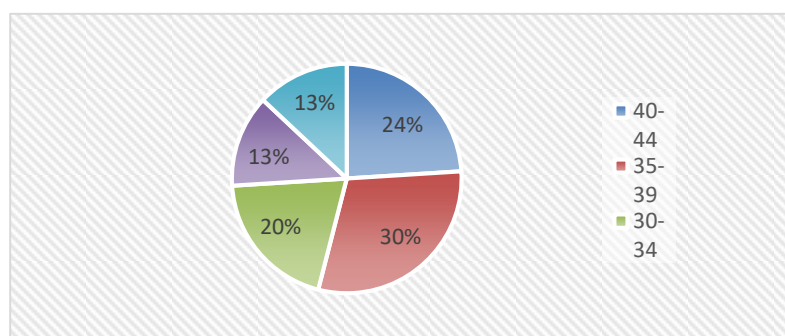


Figure 2. The Diagram of Simple Present Tense Mastery of the Tenth Grade Male Students of SMK N 1 Kalinyamatan

The Writing Ability in Self-Introduction Text,

After finding the scores of male and female students' mastery of simple present tense, the data of English writing ability were taken from writing test. The students were asked to make a self-introduction text.

The data of the writing ability of X BG 2 students (female) is as follows.

Table 3. The Writing Ability Scores of Female Students

Students' Number	Students' Initial	Writing Ability Score	Students' Number	Students' Initial	Writing Ability Score
1.	A P	80	16.	M Y A	70
2.	A B H	50	17.	N N U	85
3.	A J	80	18.	N C N	75
4.	A K	60	19.	N H W	80
5.	A Z F	80	20.	Q R	85
6.	A D P	85	21.	R A M	60
7.	A D P	80	22.	S M	80
8.	A N A	80	23.	S A R P	70
9.	A M	80	24.	S M N	60
10.	C P L	85	25.	S K	80
11.	E R A	85	26.	T F J	85
12.	J A	80	27.	V A D	80
13.	L S	60	28.	W A N	80
14.	L F	80	29.	W	70
15.	L N	85	30.	Y O R	70
Total score = 2.280		Mean = 76.00	Standard Deviation = 8.16		

From Table 3 above, it is known that the highest score of English writing ability of the tenth grade female students of SMK N 1 Kalinyamatan Jepara is 85, while lowest score is 50. The Mean score is 76.00 and the Standard Deviation is 8.16.

The pie diagram of the writing ability of the tenth grade female students is as the following.

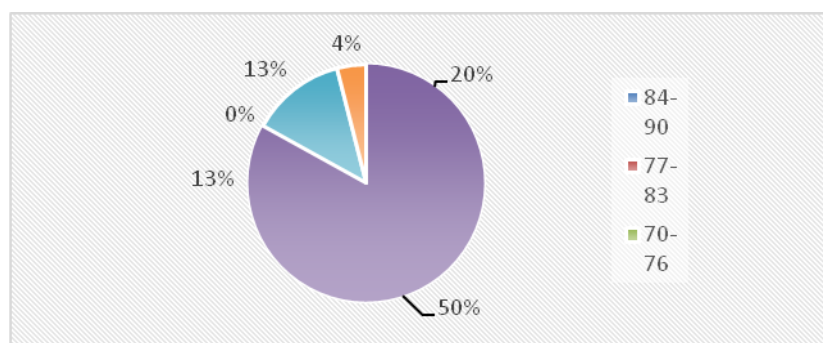


Figure 3. The Diagram of English Writing Ability of the Tenth Grade Female Students of SMK N 1 Kalinyamatan

After conducting the writing test to X EI 1, to collect the English writing ability, the writers found the data as follows.

Table 4. The Writing Ability Scores of Male Students

Students' Number	Students' Initial	Writing Ability Score	Students' Number	Students' Initial	Writing Ability Score
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Number	Initial	Ability Score	Number	Initial	Ability Score
1.	A H U D	60	16.	H M	60
2.	A A H	80	17.	K W	60
3.	A D R	80	18.	K N	60
4.	A A B	70	19.	L A	70
5.	A F	70	20.	M I A	80
6.	A Y S	70	21.	M A N	70
7.	A S	70	22.	M A S	70
8.	A E	80	23.	M E R	80
9.	A R	70	24.	M F	80
10.	B A N	70	25.	M K A	60
11.	B A	60	26.	M K H	70
12.	D W	70	27.	N J F	70
13.	D A A	60	28.	S G	70
14.	D P	80	29.	W H C	60
15.	F H	60	30.	W K	60
Total = 2.070		Mean = 69	Standard Deviation = 10.92		

From Table 4 above, it is known that the highest score of English writing ability of the tenth grade male students of SMK N 1 Kalinyamatan Jepara is 80, while the lowest score is 60. The Mean score is 60.00 and the Standard Deviation is 10.92.

The pie diagram of the English writing ability of male students is the following.

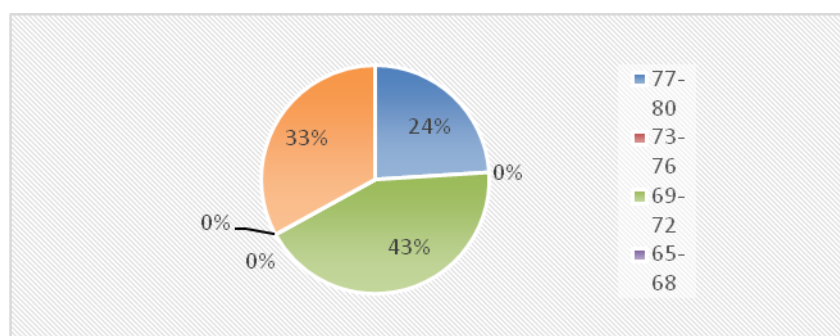


Figure 4. The Diagram of English Writing Ability of the Tenth Grade Male Students of SMK N 1 Kalinyamatan

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Test of Significance

In investigating the correlation between simple present tense mastery and English writing ability of the tenth grade female and male students of SMK N 1 Kalinyamatan Jepara, the writers used Pearson Product Moment Correlation formula. In the test of significance, the writers used the level of significance (α) .05 and degree of freedom (df) $N - 2 = 30 - 2 = 28$. The result of the computation for female student is $r_{xy} = 0.41$, which is categorized as moderate correlation,

while the result of the computation for male student is $r_{xy} = 0.17$, which is categorized as low correlation (Healey, 2005; McMillan, 2008).

In the level of significance (α) .05 and degree of freedom (df) 28, r_{table} is 0.36. Hence, $r_{xy} = 0.41$ is greater than $r_{table} = 0.36$ ($r_{xy} > r_{table}$) and $r_{xy} = 0.17$ is smaller than $r_{table} = 0.36$ ($r_{xy} < r_{table}$). This then can be interpreted that both H_1 and H_2 are accepted. In other words, there is a significant correlation between simple present tense mastery and writing ability in self-introduction text of the tenth grade female students of SMKN 1 Kalinyamatan Jepara (H_1) and there is no significant correlation between simple present tense mastery and writing ability in self-introduction text of the tenth grade male students of SMKN 1 Kalinyamatan Jepara (H_2).

The fact that there is a significant correlation for female but no significant correlation for male students can be flashed back to what happened when the students got the test. The writers noticed that when the students got the simple present tense test, they seemed so confused. The writers saw that many female students did not understand about simple present tense. They have difficulties how to use the correct verbs and male students did too. However, when the writers asked them to make an introduction text, the writers saw that the students were very excited. They wrote everything about themselves. Some of them have good grammar in their writing so that the writers conclude that the students who master grammar can write a good writing. However, some students do not have so much vocabulary, so that they only write what they know. Most of the tenth grade female students of SMK N 1 Kalinyamatan Jepara have no difficulties in doing writing test. They know what they should write when making an introduction text.

The research finding is relevant with the result of Winarni's research (2016) which investigated the correlation between students' mastery on simple present tense and vocabulary toward their ability in writing descriptive text. The result is that there is positive significant correlation, which means that the improvement of mastery on simple present tense and vocabulary will be followed by the improvement of the ability in writing descriptive text.

The findings also strengthen Septiani (2014) who reveals that there is negative significant correlation between grammar mastery and writing ability. It means that students who have minimum level of grammar, will not automatically get poor achievement in writing.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

After conducting the research, the writers conclude that in the level of significance (α) 0.05 and degree of freedom (df) 28:

1. There is a significant correlation between simple present tense mastery and the writing ability in self-introduction text of the tenth grade female students of SMK N 1 Kalinyamatan Jepara, because r_{xy} (0.41) is greater than r_{table} (0.36).

2. There is no significant correlation between simple present tense mastery and the writing ability in self-introduction text of the tenth grade male students of SMK N 1 Kalinyamatan Jepara, because r_{xy} (0.17) is smaller than r_{table} (0.36).

Suggestion

Concerning to the conclusion above, the writers would like to give some suggestions as follow:

1. For the teachers, they can enhance their teaching and learning process especially in teaching grammar. Make some strategies of teaching grammar which can make the students are easy to understand, for example through small talk or fun writing. The teacher also must teach their students about grammar to influence the students' writing ability.
2. For the students, they should realize that in writing there are grammars. The writers hope that the students can learn the grammar through their own English writing. Therefore, they can improve their English writing more by using their grammar mastery.
3. For further researchers, the result of this research can be used as a reference in carrying the same kind of research.

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