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## The Correlation between Students' Mastery in Simple Past Tense and Their Ability in Writing Recount Text at The Tenth Class of SMAN 6 Kendari

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### ABSTRACT

This research aimed to find out: 1) The students' mastery score in simple past tense at the tenth class of SMAN 6 Kendari, 2) The students' ability score in writing recount text at the tenth class of SMAN 6 Kendari, 3) Whether or not there is any correlation between students' mastery in simple past tense and their ability in writing recount text at the tenth class of SMAN 6 Kendari. The sample was taken from the population by purposive sampling consists of 27 students. Furthermore, the instrument used for collecting the data by giving simple past tense test and writing recount text test to the students. Then, the students' mastery score in simple past tense at the tenth class of SMAN 6 Kendari was classified as "good" with score 67.21 and the students' ability score in writing recount text at the tenth class of SMAN 6 Kendari was classified as "very good" with score 81.68. Besides that, students' mastery in simple past tense and their ability in writing recount text were positively correlated. The correlation coefficient between the two variables was  $r = 0.636$ . It demonstrated how strongly the two variables were correlated. The researcher found that  $N. Sig = 0.000$ , where significance  $< 0.05$  indicated that  $H_0$  was rejected and  $H_1$  was accepted. From the statement above it can be concluded there is any correlation between students' mastery in simple past tense and their ability in writing recount text at the tenth class of SMAN 6 Kendari.

### Keywords:

*correlation, grammar mastery, simple past tense, writing ability, recount text.*

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### 1. Introduction

Grammar is regulation and meaning structure of language that connects words. Ostler (1962), defined grammar as the study of grammatical rules that establish the relationships among words, where the relationships are the proper grammatical rules between words so that users of that language can create sentences and give sentences meaning. According to Harmer (1987), grammar is crucial for language learning. Without understanding the proper construction of words, people cannot use it. Additionally, Greenbaum (2022), states that grammar is a crucial component of language. It means that grammar is a key component in English, consisting of grammatical structure rules that govern the relationship between words in a sentence. The grammatical aspect of a language determines how sentences are formed in the language itself.

Muhsin (2015), Cook and Ricard's work, state that grammar encompasses numerous rules, such as articles, parts of speech, sentence patterns, and tenses, among others. According to Azar (2007), categorizes tenses into four sections,

consisting of sixteen types altogether. One of these tenses is the simple past tense, which conveys the notion that an action commenced and concluded at a particular time in the past. Uchiyama (2016) supports this by asserting that the simple past tense is applicable to a wide range of past actions, including quick events, actions occurring over a period, or habitual actions from the past. Furthermore, according to Puspita (2014), the simple past tense signifies a past action that took place at a specific time in the past, whether explicitly mentioned or not. This tense is applicable in various types of texts, such as recount texts that narrate past events and narrative texts that involve conflicts in a story.

Apart from grammar, learning English also requires mastery of the following four skills, one of which is writing skill. Writing is one of the abilities in communication. According to Abbas (2016), writing skill is the capacity to communicate thoughts and opinions to other people using written language. The majority of individuals believe that writing is a challenging ability to have. On the other hand, Byrne (1984), defined that writing is the skill of create graphic symbols, specifically letters in writing that are related to sounds the writer makes when speaking. It means that in order to make words and sentences, words must be ordered in accordance with particular rules. This skill requires not only the arrangement of letters, symbols, and numbers but also a variety of other tasks include creating paragraphs, organizing content using procedures, and using vocabulary and grammar that are appropriate for the situation. Furthermore, Heaton (1988), states that "writing is one way of making meaning out of the experience for oneself and another." Writing skills are the basis for language users to express thoughts or ideas through writing which is formed from symbols arranged in such a way with the correct grammatical context to form meanings that can be understood by readers.

Writing skills are highly regarded by students as curriculum demands in learning English at the senior high school level. One of their writing materials is writing recount text, will be discussed more in this study. A recount text is a text that retells events or experiences from the past with the aim of informing or entertaining readers or listeners. Grace (2007), defines a recount text as a form of communication that conveys past events to the reader or listener by presenting a sequence of occurrences. From this statement it can provide an understanding and statement indirectly that in writing recount text use simple past tense as grammatical structures to tell readers or listeners about past events. According to Anderson (1997), the main purpose of a recount text is to present a chronological account of actual events to the reader. Recount texts typically follow three schematic structures: orientation, events, and reorientation. The orientation, found in the initial paragraph, provides background information about the recount, including details about the individuals involved, the time and location of the events. The events section describes the occurrences in chronological order, making it the most crucial element of the recount text as it centers around the story's core. The events are presented in a series of paragraphs, detailing the sequence of happenings in the story. The recount text concludes with the reorientation section, which may include the story's ending and any additional comments or reflections.

Anderson (1997), identify four language features commonly found in recount text: proper nouns, descriptive words, the use of simple past tense, and sequence

words. These features contribute to the clarity and coherence of the text, allowing the reader to follow the events smoothly. When students learn how to write an appropriate recount text, sometimes they will encounter a problem, because writing is different from speaking, which requires active face-to-face communication with other people, while writing is passive communication done through writing. Furthermore, Tribble (1997), states that when speaking, students will spontaneously express the ideas they want to convey, while writing requires formal guidelines in the form of steps to create an appropriate text.

As a result, in writing a recount text, students must be skilled at utilizing written form, grammar, and vocabulary. Nunan (1991), states that students must practice making sentences and practicing grammar as the first step before writing. Knowing these two techniques can help authors always communicate with readers in a straightforward and understandable manner. On the other hand, poor grammar will simply confuse the reader. Therefore, using proper basic grammar will help your writing appear more credible. Although using grammar is a necessary part of writing, anyone, particularly teachers, can urge pupils to proofread their own work for grammatical problems. Despite their proficiency with grammatical concepts, pupils still require instruction to develop as writers. Speaking and writing plainly go hand in hand. The more frequently a learner writes, the more proficient and good a writer they will become (Harmer, 2006). Effective grammar teaching starts with the concepts that students already understand and guides them in applying these concepts to their writing. Students can understand how grammatical principles affect their capacity to write effectively by making a connection between their understanding of those concepts and writing techniques. Thus, by mastering grammar in terms simple past tense, they will have the ability to produce correct sentences by combining components or word structures used in writing recount text. Simple past tenses one of the grammatical lessons that teachers and students believe to be the most challenging because mistakes are frequently made when using them, particularly when composing sentences in writing recount text.

Accordingly, based on the aforementioned phenomenon and the writer's observations at SMAN 6 Kendari while conducting *Pengenalan Lapangan Persekolahan* in class, students appear to struggle with writing recount text; in fact, the majority of them were even incapable of writing clearly and accurately to use precise simple past tense in writing recount text. The students' limited English vocabulary and grammar mastery in terms of simple past make it challenging for them to create an acceptable and correct recount text, even though the teacher has taught them about the stages and how to do so. Thus, students' ability to master grammar especially in simple past tense has an impact on their capacity to write recount text because students who are proficient in grammar are also proficient in writing.

## **2. Methods**

The designs used in this research was a correlational study to answer research questions of this research. All X-grade students at SMAN 6 Kendarir as population in this research. They had a combined total of 414 students across 12 classes. So the researcher uses a purposive sampling technique and selects the class X A, which comprises of 27 students of SMAN 6 Kendari, was used as the sample for this

research. The two primary tools utilized in this study were a grammar test to measure students' mastery in simple past tense and a writing recount text test to measure students' ability in writing recount text. The simple past tense test contains 40 questions, 25 multiple choices and 15 short answers. To provide a score of answers, each number was given 1 point. So, each correct answer got 1 point and the incorrect answer got 0 points. The location time for this test was approximately 45 minutes. Then, as a writing test, the researcher gave the students 60 minutes to write a personal recount text based on their prior knowledge. To provide a score answer based on aspects of writing good recount text which includes: language features of recount text. To examine the data that had been collected, the researcher used SPSS 25. Descriptive statistics, Cronbach's Alpha, and Pearson's Product Moment were used to examine the data. After obtaining the average level and correlation coefficient, the researcher intended to test the research's hypothesis to see whether or not there is any correlation between students' mastery in simple past tense and their ability in writing recount text at the tenth class of SMAN 6 Kendari.

### 3. Result

The test administration description table below, which was created using SPSS V.25, displays the findings of the average level (mean) of students' proficiency in using the simple past tense.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Mastery in Simple Past Tense

<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>		
Students' Mastery in Simple Past Tense		
N	Valid	27
	Missing	0
Mean		67.2107
Median		66.6600
Mode		48.14 <sup>a</sup>
Std. Deviation		16.32965
Minimum		37.03
Maximum		96.29

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

The table above showed that the minimum score of students' mastery in simple past tense was 37.03, the maximum score was 96.29, the median score was 66.66, the modes were 48.14 which was showed the smallest value, the mean score (average) was 67.21 or had 'good' based on the classification table score of students' mastery in simple past tense and standard deviation score (measurement of sample variations) was 16.32965.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Ability in Writing Recount Text

Descriptive Statistics		
Students' Ability in Writing Recount Text		
N	Valid	27
	Missing	0
Mean		81.6837
Median		83.6900
Mode		59.73 <sup>a</sup>
Std. Deviation		9.41740
Minimum		59.73
Maximum		96.42

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

From the result above, the minimum score of students' ability in writing recount text was 59.73, the maximum score was 96.42, the median score was 83.69, the mode was 59.73 which was showed the smallest value, the mean score (average) was 81.68 had 'very good', and then standard deviation score (measurement of sample variations) was 16.32965.

Table 3. The Result of Correlation- Calculation by Pearson Product Moment

Correlations			
		Students' Mastery in Simple Past Tense	Students' Ability in Writing Recount Text
Students' Mastery in Simple Past Tense	Pearson Correlation	1	.636**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	27	27
Students' Ability in Writing Recount Text	Pearson Correlation	.636**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	27	27

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

Based on the table 3, SPSS 25 Version output showed that the correlation coefficient between students' mastery in simple past tense and students' ability in writing recount text was 0.636. When compared with  $r_{table}$   $N=27$ , it can be seen that the level of significance in 5% was 0.381 (see appendix p.55), so that  $r_{arithmetic} > r_{table}$  or  $0.636 > 0.381$ . Therefore, it can be concluded that at the tenth class of SMAN 6 Kendari had a strong and meaningful connection was observed among students' mastery in simple past tense and their capability in composing recount text. In addition, based on the  $r_{arithmetic}$  (Pearson Correlation) between the two variables was 0.636. In the Product-Moment Correlation Scale Interpretation table, p. 31, the value was in the correlation value (r) 0.60 - 0.799 The standards for assessing the strength of the connection among the two variables indicate a robust relationship.

It be discovered that the value of Sig. (2-tailed) between the two variables was 0.000 ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ) and correlation coefficient ( $r_{count}$ )  $> r_{table}$  ( $0.636 > 0.381$ ) which means that the rejection of  $H_0$  and acceptance of  $H_1$  suggest a significant

relationship between students' mastery in simple past tense and their capability in writing recount text at the tenth class of SMAN 6 Kendari.

#### **4. Discussion**

This research used statistical data to answer research problems. This section covers a number of aspects of the research design, including data collection and analysis based on findings.

##### **1. The Students' Mastery Score in Simple Past Tense**

Simple past tense test contains 27 questions, 18 multiple choices and 9 short answers. Researcher found researcher found that 2 students (7.4%) had poor with classification score 21-40, 6 students (22.2%) had fair with classification score 41-60, 12 students (44.4%) had good with classification score 61-80. 7 students (25.9%) had very good with classification score 81-100. The minimum point of students' mastery in simple past tense was 37.03, the maximum point was 96.29, the median score was 66.66, the modes were 48.14 which was showed the smallest value, and then the mean score (average) was 67.21 or had 'good'. The outcome of the simple past tense test was deemed good.

##### **2. The Students' Ability Score in Writing Recount Text**

Writing recount text test, contains 3 paragraphs included characteristics of recount text. Researcher found that 2 students (7.4%) had fair with classification score 56-65, 7 students (25.9%) had good, 18 students (66.6%) had very good with classification score 80-100. The minimum point of students' skill in writing recount text was 59.73, the maximum point was 96.42, the median was 83.69, the mode was 59.73 which was showed the smallest value, and then the mean score (average) was 81.68 had very good. The outcome of writing recount text test was deemed very good.

3. In order to ascertain whether there exists a relationship among students' mastery in simple past tense and their capability to write recount text, researcher selected a sample of 27 students for this research. The correlation coefficient between the two variables was  $r = 0.636$ . It demonstrated how strongly and positively the two variables were correlated. From calculating IBM SPSS 25 version, the researcher found that  $N. Sig = 0.000$  ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ) and correlation coefficient ( $r_{count} > r_{table}$ ) ( $0.636 > 0.381$ ) indicated that  $H_0$  was refuted, while  $H_1$  was embraced.

Based on the discussion above, it became evident that there exists a relationship among students' mastery in simple past tense and their ability to write recount text at the tenth class of SMAN 6 Kendari. In contrast, Twalbeh (2013), argues that having prior knowledge can be advantageous for students in rectifying their writing errors. This knowledge can lead to a positive impact on students' writing performance. Furthermore, teachers can enhance students' writing abilities by eliciting and utilizing their prior knowledge (Hall, 2004). In this case, the two opinions above strongly support that students' writing ability is supported by the background knowledge of the students themselves. However, these opinions do not clearly describe what kind of background knowledge possessed by students that can affect students' writing ability, while there are many types of knowledge that affect students' writing ability, one of which is the strongest relationship between students' grammar mastery and their writing ability. Students' writing ability has level of

grammar mastery because with this ability their writing will be more organized, structured and easy to understand. In addition, when students have a strong grasp of grammar it has a positive impact on their writing skills, while students with weaker grammar skills tend to struggle to achieve writing success. This is supported by several expert opinions which state that learners' proficiency in writing is influenced by their mastery of grammar (Celce-Murcia, 1983). Thus, according to Safitri (2021), state that there is a strong correlation among grammar and writing. Therefore, this study highlights the importance of studying grammar and writing.

Besides, according previous study entitled, "The Correlation between Students' Mastery of Simple Past Tense with the Ability of Writing Recount Text," was conducted by (Murdani, 2020). There is a relationship among two variables, where higher grammar mastery is associated with greater success in writing recount text, whereas lower grammar comprehension hinders the ability to write correctly. Grammar lessons may not be explicitly outlined in the curriculum but teachers must assist their students in developing grammar proficiency, as students with a solid grasp of grammar can effectively review and improve their writing (Viet, 1989).

## **5. Conclusion**

The researcher drew the following conclusion after analyzing the information from the preceding chapter:

1. The outcome of data description point out that the students' mastery score in simple past tense at the tenth class of SMAN 6 Kendari was 67.21 which was considered "good".
2. The outcome of data description denote that the students' ability score in writing recount text at the tenth class of SMAN 6 Kendari was 81.68 which was considered "very good".
3. The calculation of  $r$  value by using Bivariate Correlation (SPSS) 25 version to analyse the data. Researcher discovered, the correlation coefficient was  $r = 0.636$ . This demonstrates that there the correlation coefficient table between the two variables has a strong correlation. The findings also show that  $H_0$  was refuted, while  $H_1$  was embraced. Thus, it can be deduced that a relationship exists among students' mastery in simple past tense and their ability in writing recount text at the tenth class of SMAN 6 Kendari.

From the conclusions above, it was clearly that students' mastery in simple past tense, greatly influences students' skill to writing recount text. The writing recount text and grammar score make this evident. The teacher must also teach and explain in a simple manner related to simple past tense in complete recount text, such as by giving more practice and using different teaching methods, because one of the most crucial elements to create sentences in recount text is simple past tense. Additionally, if students want to master recount text, they must also master many other elements, such as language features in complete recount text. Therefore, it is crucial to develop students' grammar skills so that they can also develop their writing abilities.

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