

An Analysis of Students Ability Using Simple Present Tense at Laboratorium Junior High School Jambi Academic Year 2024/2025

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze students' ability to use simple present tense in descriptive text. The research method used is quantitative with a descriptive approach. The population of this study consisted of seventh grade students at Jambi Laboratory Junior High School in the 2024/2025 school year, with the sample including all seventh-grade students. The research instrument was a multiple-choice test used to assess students' understanding. The results showed that the average score obtained by students was 49.66. Of the 15 students tested, 2 students scored "good", 8 students scored "fair", and 5 students scored "poor". The most common errors found were in the use of to be (is, am, are) and verbs in simple present tense. The conclusion of this study is that students' ability to understand simple present tense in descriptive text is in the moderate category. This finding highlights the need for more effective teaching strategies to improve students' understanding of English grammar, especially simple present tense.

Keywords: *students' ability, simple present tense, descriptive text.*

INTRODUCTION

English is an international language, also referred to as "lingua franca" (Iamsiu, 2013). In Indonesia, English is a foreign language that influences many aspects of life, particularly in education. Language plays a crucial role as a communication tool, supporting both personal development and societal progress. In many Indonesian schools, students are expected to master all language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing, to achieve functional communication competence.

Despite its importance, English education in Indonesia faces several challenges, such as the lack of adequate teaching materials and limited learning resources. In addition to learning how to speak well, students must also develop reading, listening, and writing skills, as these competencies are fundamental to mastering a language. Grammar is one of the sub-skills that support writing ability.

However, many students struggle with grammar, particularly when constructing sentences. The simple present tense is a fundamental grammatical structure used to describe general truths, facts, and habits. It is commonly found in descriptive texts, where students describe people, objects, animals, and places using adjectives and proper sentence structures. Writing descriptive texts is a requirement for Junior High School students based on Indonesia's national curriculum. However, students often make grammatical errors, particularly in using the simple present tense.

Simple present tense is the most important aspects which support the process of writing. The tenses are used in every sentence that is produced by the person (Bukit, (2020). The importance of tenses can be seen from the frequency. The tenses always appear in learners' speaking, writing, listening, reading, and also the use of the English language. One of the common uses of

tense in the teaching and learning process is simple present tense.

Many students perceive grammar as confusing and challenging, which leads them to avoid applying grammatical rules correctly in their writing. Errors and mistakes in grammar are common obstacles in foreign language learning. Brown (2000) states that error analysis is a useful method for identifying students' difficulties in learning a language. By analyzing errors, teachers can better understand students' challenges and develop effective teaching strategies to address them.

This study aims to analyze students' errors in using the simple present tense in descriptive texts, identify the most common mistakes, and explore their causes. The findings will provide insights for improving English grammar instruction. Based on these considerations, this research is conducted under the title "An Analysis of Students' Ability in Using Simple Present Tense in Descriptive Texts at Seventh Grade of Laboratorium Junior High School, Jambi City."

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Descriptive Text

Descriptive text is a kind of text with the purpose to describe a subject such as describing a person, a place and a thing. The descriptive text is one of genres text which is demanded to master by junior school and high school students in Indonesia (Noprianto, 2017). He also explains the descriptive text is included in English curriculum in Indonesia. By knowing how the descriptive text should ideally be composed and given is very essential for the teacher or educator as the one who is responsible in delivering and guiding it

for the students who are demanded to master it in the classroom.

A descriptive text is a type of writing that aims to paint a picture with words, creating a vivid and detailed image in the reader's mind. It focuses on capturing the sensory details of a person, place, object, or even an abstract concept. Here's the purpose of descriptive text:

1. To describe and reveal a particular person, place, or thing.
2. To provide a sensory experience for the reader, letting them see, hear, smell, taste, or touch the described subject through language.
3. To create a specific mood or atmosphere.
4. To convey information about the subject in an engaging and evocative way.

Furthermore, grammar especially simple present is one of the important tenses that should exist in descriptive text. Wishon and Burks in Purba & Hutauruk (2022) explained that descriptive text writing reproduces the way someone or something looks, feels, or sounds, smells, and tastes. It may also evoke the moods, such as sadness, happiness, loneliness, or fear. Further, a descriptive writing creates a vivid, clear and detailed impression of a person, place, or thing. This descriptive text, the object could be an abstract or concrete object. It can be a person or people, or an animal, or a thing such as a tree, a house, or a camping site, then it can be a situation and condition, it can be about any topic that existed.

METHODOLOGY

This research used quantitative research design with a descriptive quantitative approach. According to Creswell (2014) quantitative research

design is a method for investigating the relationship between two variables in order to find out the result of objective theories. These two variables can then be measured by using instruments, resulting in numbered data that can be examined by using statistical processes. Quantitative research design are objectives, formal, deductive, and rigorous approach, with systematic strategies for generating and refining knowledge to problem solving. In addition, this quantitative research design uses to examine certain populations or samples, with the aim of testing predetermined hypotheses then to explain how variables affect another variable. The population in this study was be the seventh grade student of SMP Laboratorium Jambi City in the academic year 2023/2024. In deciding the sample, this research used total sampling. Total sampling is a sampling technique to collect or gain data which is the total number of samples is similar to the total population since the total of students at seventh-grade student of SMP Laboratorium Jambi City. Next, the sample of this research is students from the seventh-grade student of SMP Laboratorium Jambi City in academic year 2023/2024. This research used a test as the instrument of the research in this study, test aims to collect data and to know the ability of students to understand simple present tense in descriptive text. The test that used in this research is a multiple-choice test. The result of the test was be shown the ability of students to understand the simple present tense. The test consists of 20 questions, which in it discuss the simple present tense. In collecting the data of the search. The test is very important to collect the result. It used to show students' understanding of the

simple present tense itself. There was be 20 questions of multiple-choice in this test. The questions in the form of multiple-choice are used to see students' general understanding of the simple present tense. The students asked to answer several questions in simple present tense based on the conditions and commands given. The errors in this test showed how much difficulty they have in understanding the use of the simple present tense. In technique in analyzing the data in form of quantitative results, the data calculated in scoring, mean and percentage. In addition, after analyzing the data in quantitatively, this study grouped the data based on the Likert scale used.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This research was conducted at Junior High School Laboratorium Jambi City through gave the students of class VII in the 2023/2024 academic year a multiple-choice test. The test was carried out in one meeting. The test is given on Monday, November 15th, 2024, the test is held once in the school. The purpose of this study was to describe students' skills in understanding simple present tense in descriptive text in class VII Junior High School Laboratorium Jambi City. The research data is based on the findings in the test with samples obtained by total sampling. The researcher analyzed about formula of simple present tense that consists of verb and to be. The text tells about the describing things namely pets in a house and situations in the classroom. The findings obtained from the multiple-choice test, the test is answering the blank space of descriptive text. This research analyzed all the data obtained from the research

and took data that supports research aspects. The researcher gave instructions to the students to answer the question in descriptive text related to a simple present tense formula. Then from each question gave a score of 5 for true and 0 for false. Then the score of each question is added up and the average value of the indicator is obtained. Finally, to determine the category for assessing student skill, the average results of each indicator are changed in a score range of 1 to 100 with the terms Very Poor, Poor, Moderate, Good, and Very Good.

The percentages shown in this section are a summary or general description of students' difficulties in understanding the simple present tense obtained through a test given to 15 students of Junior High School Laboratorium Jambi City. Each student is given 20 questions each which consists of 20 multiple choice questions. The results or general descriptions of the tests that have been given are described in the table below. The average of the results or test scores of the students as follows:

Based on the data in Table 4, the scores obtained by students show variations in their understanding of the material tested. The highest score obtained was 80, which was achieved by Student 13, while the lowest score was 35, which was obtained by five students, namely Student 2, Student 3, Student 9, Student 10, and Student 11. The majority of students obtained scores in the 35-65 range, which indicates that most students have understanding that still needs to be improved. The average score obtained was 49.66, which is below the passing

standard if the minimum passing score is set at 50. This indicates that overall student understanding of the material is still less than optimal. Some students showed good results with scores above 60, such as Student 5, Student 7, and Student 14, but there were still some students who had difficulty in understanding the material taught.

Based on these findings, corrective measures in teaching methods are needed. Students with low scores need additional guidance to improve their understanding. Meanwhile, students with medium grades can be given additional practice to deepen their understanding. In addition, more innovative teaching strategies, such as the use of interactive learning media or project-based approaches, can be applied to improve learning effectiveness. With the improvement of learning methods, it is expected that all students can achieve better understanding and improve their learning outcomes.

Then, this research grouped the respondents' scores into a Likert scale using certain intervals as described above. The following table is created based on the summary of the data above.

The lowest score from the students is 35 and the highest score is 80. There are 5 students who get a score of 35, and 1 student who get a score of 80. To do so, the average overall score of the sampled class is 49.66. The average is obtained by adding up all the scores

obtained by 20 students and dividing by the number of students in the sampled class. The total value of the sample class is 745 and divided by the number of students, 20, then the average value (mean) is 49.66.

From the data that has been obtained previously, the average value of the sample class is 49.66. Where based on grouping using a Likert scale, the majority of students in the class obtained the predicate "moderate". Followed by the predicate "poor" in the second position, and the third position of the predicate "good" with the total 2 students. This shows that there is a gap in the achievement of students in the classroom. The student's inability was dominated in the second part of the test, namely how to fulfill complete sentences in the simple present tense in descriptive text.

Based on the findings of this research, after this research conducted and analyzed data using the selected instrument to the students in class VI Junior High School Laboratorium Jambi City. With research that focuses on what are the students' ability to understate simple present tense in descriptive text, it can be concluded that students' ability is moderate and had several difficulties in writing paragraphs of descriptive text.

Based on the instrument used in this research, namely the multiple choice test. It was found that the students of class VII at Junior High School Laboratorium Jambi City in general still had difficulties in mastering and understanding the simple present tense. Which is dominated by the part where they are asked to make complete sentences of descriptive text using the simple present tense.

One example of an error that

often occurs is that students use different tense rules, such as the simple present tense. This is evidenced by one of the students who made the sentence related to choosing the correct verb if the subject is singular or plural with the verb within + s or without + s. Students tend to be confused and wrong to choose the correct verb related to the simple present tense. Therefore, a common mistake is to fulfill the simple present tense formula by fulfilling to be such as is, am, and are, students still tend to confuse in determining the correct "to be" with the use of several subjects such as I, You, They, We, She, he It. In summary, this research is enough to illustrate that some students have problems with their understanding of the simple present tense. Other evidence can be seen in the appendices. In general, this evidence is sufficient to support the numerical data obtained after processing the research instrument.

In determining each number that appears in this research, this research used tests with multiple-choice tests and assessments to get the respondents' scores in real terms. Then calculate the average (mean) of the sample used by adding up all the respondents' values which were then divided by the number of respondents. Meanwhile, the average value obtained is 49.66.

After being grouped using a Likert scale, it was found that 2 respondents from the sample class received the "good" predicate because they had a score above 60. Meanwhile, several students who received the "poor" predicate were 5 respondents from the sample class. Followed by 5 respondents getting the predicate "poor". Based on the number of respondents, the respondents with the "moderate"

predicate had the highest number, followed by the respondents with the "poor" predicate in the second place. In third place, there are respondents with the predicate "good".

Based on the data that has been obtained by this research, students have difficulty in making complete sentences of the simple present tense. This is illustrated by the large percentage of errors made by students which exceeds 51%, of the answers from students are wrong and only 49% are correct. This is inversely proportional to the way students determine the right aids and expressions in the multiple-choice section with the correct number of questions being tested. This illustrates that the scores obtained by students tend to be heterogeneous and most of them are below the sample average.

CONCLUSION

After this research was conducted and the data was analyzed using the selected instruments, this research was conducted on seventh grade students at Jambi City Laboratory Junior High School. This research focused on students' ability to understand simple present tense in descriptive text. In general, the results of this study can be concluded as follows:

First, the main difficulty experienced by students in general is in understanding and determining simple present tense, especially when completing sentences in descriptive text. Based on the results of the calculation of the data obtained, the mean score of the students in this study was 49.66, which was categorized as a moderate level. In addition, most of the

students were unable to make grammatically correct complete sentences, especially based on the rules of using simple present tense. Therefore, the sample data is heterogeneous, with the majority of students scoring below the average.

Secondly, based on the results of the classification of respondents based on the scores obtained, as many as 2 students are in the good category, 8 students in the medium category, and 5 students in the less category. Thus, it can be concluded that students' ability to understand simple present tense in descriptive text is at a moderate level.

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