THE CORRELATION BETWEEN STUDENTS' SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT MASTERY AND THEIR WRITING ABILITY OF DESCRIPTIVE TEXTS

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Abstract: *This research intends to find out whether or not there is a correlation between students' subject-verb agreement mastery and their writing ability of descriptive texts at SMAN 2 Tapung. There were 56 tenth grade students of social science major chosen as samples. The instruments were subject-verb agreement test and writing descriptive text test. The subject-verb agreement test was used to assess the students' mastery of subject-verb agreement. The writing descriptive text test was used to assess descriptive text writing ability. The data were obtained by calculating the subject-verb agreement test and writing descriptive text test results. The calculation was done using SPSS Statistics 25. Based on the calculation, it was found that the students' subject-verb agreement mastery and their descriptive text writing ability are classified into sufficient category. Besides, the value of correlation coefficient obtained was 0.793 which means that there is a correlation between students' subject-verb agreement mastery and their writing ability of descriptive texts. The correlation is categorized into high correlation since the value of correlation coefficient obtained is 0.793 which is in the range of 0.70 - 0.90. According to determination analysis, subject-verb agreement mastery had a 62.9% influence on the descriptive text writing ability. From the research findings, it is recommended that the English teacher provide more exercises and strategies to help students grasp the rules of subject-verb agreement easily and the students do and practice more exercises on subject-verb agreement. Further, other researchers conduct further research on the correlation between other language skills and language aspects on different sample size and location were also recommended.*

Key Words: *Correlation, Subject-Verb Agreement Mastery, Writing Ability of Descriptive Text*

HUBUNGAN ANTARA PENGUASAAN SISWA DALAM KESESUAIAN SUBJEK-KATA KERJA DAN KEMAMPUAN MENULIS TEKS DESKRIPTIF

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui apakah ada hubungan antara penguasaan siswa dalam kesesuaian subjek-kata kerja dan kemampuan menulis teks deskriptif di SMAN 2 Tapung. Sampel dari penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas X jurusan ilmu sosial yang berjumlah 56 siswa. Instrumen yang digunakan dalam pengumpulan data adalah tes kesesuaian subjek-kata kerja dan tes menulis teks deskriptif. Tes kesesuaian subjek-kata kerja bertujuan untuk mengetahui kemampuan mahasiswa dalam memahami kesesuaian subjek-kata kerja. Tes menulis teks deskriptif bertujuan untuk mengetahui kemampuan mahasiswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif. Data dianalisis menggunakan SPPS Statistics 25. Berdasarkan hasil perhitungan, dapat disimpulkan bahwa penguasaan siswa dalam kesesuaian subjek-kata kerja dan kemampuan menulis teks deskriptif dikelompokkan pada kategori cukup. Selain itu, ditemukan juga bahwa nilai dari koefisien korelasi sebesar 0.793 yang berarti terdapat hubungan antara penguasaan siswa dalam kesesuaian subjek-kata kerja dan kemampuan menulis teks deskriptif. Kriteria korelasi kedua variabel tersebut berada pada kategori tinggi. Berdasarkan analisis determinasi, penguasaan kesesuaian subjek-kata kerja mempunyai pengaruh sebesar 62.9% terhadap kemampuan menulis teks deskriptif. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, guru Bahasa Inggris direkomendasikan untuk menyajikan lebih banyak soal latihan dan strategi untuk membantu siswa agar mampu memahami aturan kesesuaian subjek-kata kerja. Para siswa juga direkomendasikan untuk lebih banyak berlatih mengerjakan soal latihan tentang kesesuaian subjek-kata kerja. Lebih lanjut, peneliti selanjutnya direkomendasikan untuk mengembangkan penelitian lebih jauh mengenai hubungan antara kemampuan bahasa dan aspek bahasa lainnya dengan jumlah sampel dan lokasi yang berbeda.

Kata Kunci: Korelasi, Penguasaan Kesesuaian Subjek-Kata Kerja, Kemampuan Menulis Teks Deskriptif

INTRODUCTION

Grammar is one of the language components that students should acquire when studying English. Grammar is defined as a collection of guidelines that describe the way words or parts of words are used or changed to form appropriate meaning units within a language, according to Ur (2009). Basic grammar knowledge is necessary to comprehend and use a language effectively. This is relevant to the theory stated by Huddleston and Pullum (2005) that grammar allows speakers to communicate their goals and emotions more efficiently because it deals with sentence forms and small units like clauses, phrases, and words.

There are numerous things to learn about grammar. The subject-verb agreement is one of the grammatical topics covered. According to Kurniawan & Seprizanna (2016), subject-verb agreement relates to the selection of the appropriate plural verb or singular verb to follow the subject. The definition of subject-verb agreement given by Svartvik & Sager (2010) is when the verb form matches the subject form. A singular subject usually has a singular verb, whereas a plural subject has a plural verb. It indicates that the subject and verb are in agreement. In an agreement or set of rules, the verb changes its form to match the subject.

Stapa & Izahar (2010) believed that subject-verb agreement is essential for communicating ideas, particularly in writing when there is no non-verbal communication. To write well, students need to learn these guidelines. To ensure that sentences have a clear meaning, subject-verb agreements in writing are important for the students to master. Mastering subject-verb agreement means the students understand the variety of rules in choosing the verb that follows the subject. Subject-verb agreement is essential to grammatically correct English writing. Grammatically correct English writing indicates that the writing follows the guidelines of the language.

According to Choudhury (2013), listening, speaking, reading, and writing are the four important language abilities. Writing is regarded as the hardest ability for second and foreign-language learners to acquire. Taylor (2009) also stated that one of the most difficult abilities to acquire is writing. Many different elements are required in writing, including content, organization, vocabulary, mechanics, and grammar. Muhsin (2015) stated that good writing involves both a mastery of grammar and the ability to use rhetoric, which includes the placement of words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs. Grammar is necessary to create meaningful and understandable sentences, while rhetoric is necessary to grab the reader's attention. It may be claimed that students who want to write well must develop effective sentences. But first, students must master the basics of grammar. According to the 2013 Curriculum, writing must be included as one of the four English proficiency abilities that students should acquire to accomplish students writing needs.

The 2013 Curriculum generally highlights that tenth-grade students should learn 5 types of texts, including descriptive, narrative, news item, procedural, and recount. The descriptive text is the focus of this research. Because simple present tense is a language feature that is frequently utilized in descriptive texts, the researcher chose this type. The simple present tense is the most commonly used to construct sentences in everyday life. It implies that before learning the next level of tenses, students first understand the fundamental one. A description text is a text that briefly describes things. To write descriptive texts, the students need to understand the language features and grammatical rules used to write effective sentences. One of the grammatical rules they must acquire

to be able to write properly is subject-verb agreement. So it is essential to give attention to subject-verb agreement used in writing descriptive text.

In the process of teaching and learning English, SMAN 2 Tapung uses 2013 competency-based curriculum. The curriculum mandates that tenth-grade students must learn to organize descriptive text in written form. By considering social functions, text structure, and language features, students are able to recognize text structures, recognize main ideas of descriptive texts, name social functions, and write descriptive texts. The topic description in this material is related to popular tourist places and historic buildings. In short, they are required to write a descriptive text that informs the readers about popular tourist places or historical buildings. It is expected that when they write, they implement their mastery of grammatical rules, especially when using subject-verb agreement.

SMAN 2 Tapung tenth-grade students are divided into two majors: natural science major and social science major. Based on an interview with the tenth grade English teacher at SMAN 2 Tapung, the researcher found some phenomena dealing with students' grammar in writing assignments, especially writing descriptive text. The teacher stated that the social science class students faced more difficulties in the mastery of grammar than the natural science class students. Their writing ability in descriptive texts was also far from the expectation that is stated in the 2013 Curriculum.

Based on the background of the research above, the researcher is interested in finding the correlation between students' subject agreement mastery and their writing ability of descriptive texts. The researcher conducted this research entitled "The Correlation Between Students' Subject-Verb Agreement Mastery and Their Writing Ability of Descriptive Texts".

METHODOLOGY

The researcher conducted this research using a correlational design. Moreover, the method is automatically quantitative because this research utilized a correlation design. The researcher utilized the Pearson Product Moment in SPSS Statistics 25 to analyze the data in this research.

The research took place at SMA Negeri 2 Tapung, which is located on Jalan Garuda Sakti, Sari Galuh, Kampar, Riau. The populations are tenth grade students of SMAN 2 Tapung. The students are divided into five classes, consist of two majors: natural science major and social science major. The total population was 136 students. In this research, the researcher used purposive sampling as a sampling technique. The researcher selected the sample based on the needs about the research. In this research, the tenth grade students in social science major class were chosen because it was found some phenomena dealing with their grammar mastery and writing ability of descriptive text. There are three classes: X IIS 1, X IIS 2, and X IIS 3. Furthermore, X IIS 2 becomes "try-out" class in this research, and X IIS 1 and X IIS 3 become "sample" class.

The data instruments that were used to collect the data were in the form of subject-verb agreement test and writing descriptive text test. The subject-verb agreement test is administered to assess the students' understanding of subject-verb agreement. As it is one of the language features of descriptive text, it consists of 40 elements of various grammatical rules of subject-verb agreement in the simple present tense form. Because it belongs to multiple choices, there are four options for each item. They are A, B, C, and D. For each correct answer, 2.5 points are given, while wrong

answer receives a score of 0 points. So the total score is 100 points. Writing descriptive text test was used to assess descriptive text writing ability. The students are required must write a descriptive text about popular tourist places or the historic buildings they have visited. The text should contain 100-150 words. In assessing writing ability, there are five assessment indicators to consider. They are the following: content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. To obtain data scores, the researcher used Brown's (2007) assessment rubric to assess students' descriptive writing on this test. There are five components to measuring students' writing ability: content (30 points), organization (20 points), vocabulary (15 points), grammar (20 points), and mechanics (15 points).

The researcher analyzed the data after obtaining it from the sample to get the answer of the research question. Therefore, the researcher inputed the data from the subject-verb agreement test and writing descriptive text test sample into SPSS Statistics 25 to do the statistical analysis. To know the correlation, the researcher used the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient formula to find out the correlation between subject-verb agreement mastery and descriptive text writing ability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results

In this research, two variables were investigated: subject-verb agreement mastery as the independent variable (x) and writing ability of descriptive texts as the dependent variable (y). The data were presented based on the research conducted at SMAN 2 Tapung. Subject-verb agreement test and writing descriptive text test were used to collect data in this research. Subject-verb agreement test consisted of 40 questions and writing descriptive text consisted of one writing topic.

1. Students' Subject-Verb Agreement Mastery

From the test that has been carried out, the highest student score for mastery of subject-verb agreement is 92.5 and the lowest score for student mastery of subject-verb agreement is 45. The mean of variable X is statistically calculated that the result was 67.72 which is classified as "sufficient" category.

Table 1. The Frequency Data Distribution of Subject-Verb Agreement Mastery

No	Interval Class	Frequency	%	Category
1	80-100	15	26.78%	Very Good
2	70-79	13	23.21%	Good
3	60-69	9	16.7%	Sufficient
4	50-59	14	25%	Low
5	<49	5	8.92%	Very Low
Total		56	100%	

Out of 56 students, there were 15 (26.78%) with a very good score, 13 (23.21%) with a good score, 9 (16.7%) with a sufficient score, 14 (25%) with a low score, and 5 (8.92%) with a very low score.

2. Students' Writing Ability of Descriptive Texts

From the test that has been carried out, the highest student score for descriptive text writing is 90 and the lowest student score for descriptive text writing is 43.75. The mean of the scores is statistically calculated that the result was 67.63 which is classified as "sufficient" category.

Table 2. The Frequency Data Distribution of Writing Descriptive Text

No	Interval Class	Frequency	%	Category
1	80-100	16	28.57%	Very Good
2	70-79	11	19.64%	Good
3	60-69	8	14.28%	Sufficient
4	50-59	15	26.78%	Low
5	<49	6	10.71%	Very Low
Total		56	100%	

Out of 56 students, there were 16 (28.57%) with a very good score, 11 (19.64%) with a good score, 8 (14.28%) with a sufficient score, 15 (26.78%) with a low score, and 6 (10.71%) with a very low score.

3. Correlation Analysis

In this research, the researcher used SPSS Statistics 25 to analyze data using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient formula to find out the correlation between mastery of subject-verb agreement and the ability to write descriptive texts.

The testing criteria are:
1. Sig. value < 0.05   = H_a is accepted
   Sig. value > 0.05   = H_a is rejected
2. r-obtained > r-table = H_a is accepted
   r-obtained < r-table = H_a is rejected

The hypothesis are:
1. Null hypothesis (H_0): There is no correlation between students' subject-verb agreement mastery and their writing ability of descriptive texts.
2. Alternative hypothesis (H_a): There is a correlation between students' subject-verb agreement mastery and their writing ability of descriptive texts.

The following table showed the results of the correlation analysis:

Table 3. The Correlation Analysis

Correlations		WRITING	SVA
WRITING	Pearson Correlation	1	.791**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	56	56
SVA	Pearson Correlation	.791**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	56	56
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

According to the correlation analysis table, the significance value of variables X and Y is 0.000, that is lower than 0.05. It indicated that H_a is accepted and H_0 is rejected. Meanwhile, it is clear from the table's Pearson Correlation value that the obtained value, or r, is 0.791. Comparing the obtained r-value with the value in the r-table (0.2632 (df = n-2), the r-obtained value is higher (0.791 > 0.2632). This also implies that H_a is accepted and H_0 is rejected. So, based on the two findings above, it is possible to conclude that there is a correlation between subject-verb agreement mastery (X) and writing ability of descriptive text (Y).

Based on the strength of the correlation coefficient table by Sudijono (2015), the correlation value between mastery of subject-verb agreement and ability to write descriptive texts ranged from 0.70-0.90, which is interpreted as a high correlation.

4. Coefficient Determination

The coefficient of determination test (R square) was used to evaluate how much the independent variable (X) influenced or contributed to the dependent variable (Y). To calculate the coefficient of determination test, the researcher used SPSS Statistics 25. The following table showed the R-Square value as a result:

Table 4. Coefficient Determination Test

Model Summary[b]				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.791[a]	.626	.619	8.91917
a. Predictors: (Constant), SVA				
b. Dependent Variable: WRITING				

The coefficient of determination (R square) is 0.626, as seen in the table above. This means that the mastery of subject-verb agreement influenced the ability to write descriptive text by 0.626 or 62.6%, with the remaining 37.4% influenced by other variables.

DISCUSSIONS

According to the result of the research, it can be concluded that students' subject-verb agreement mastery and their writing ability of descriptive texts are classified into poor category. Based on the analysis, this research accepted the alternative hypothesis (H$_a$) and rejected the null hypothesis (H$_0$). This showed that there is a correlation between students' subject-verb agreement mastery and their writing ability of descriptive texts. The result of this research, in line with the results of previous research. A research conducted by Eka Melati (2022) found that students' grammar ability had a correlation to students' writing ability. The average scores of grammar test and writing test were categorized as poor. She stated that the better student's mastery of grammar, their writing achievement will be better. Another research conducted by Fauzul Etfita (2019) found that there is correlation between students' grammar mastery and their achievement in news writing. The average scores of grammar test and news writing test were classified into sufficient. But, there was a little difference in a research conducted by Tri Septiana Kurniati (2012). It was found that the average score of subject-verb agreement test are classified into poor category while the average score of writing are classified into sufficient category. The writing focused on writing complex sentences. She stated that students might be good at expressing their writing ideas, but the problem is they are sometimes careless in paying attention to other aspects of writing, such as grammar. Another research, conducted by Muhammad Wira Rizki et. al (2019), found that the mean accuracy of students in subject-verb agreement in paragraph writing course is 37.4%, which is categorized as fail. It showed that subject-verb agreement errors are commonly found in students' writing.

According to correlation analysis, it can be seen that the r-obtained value is 0.791. The correlation between subject-verb agreement mastery and writing ability of descriptive texts ranges from 0.70-0.90. According to the strength of the correlation coefficient table by Anas Sudijono (2015), it is interpreted as a high correlation. Eventhough this research has relevant conclusion with the previous research that there is a correlation between both variables, there are some differences between this research and the previous research. As previously stated, this research found that correlation between both variables are in high correlation. The research conducted by Eka Melati (2022) found the r-value is 0.92, Tri Septiana Kurniati (2012) found the r-value is 0.88, and Fauzul Etfita (2019) found the r-value is 0.874. Based on the correlation coefficient table, the r-value in the previous research indicated the very high correlation between both variables. Furthermore, the previous research did not include the determination analysis between the variables. Meanwhile, in this research, the determination analysis found that students' subject-verb agreement mastery had a 62.6% influence on their writing ability of descriptive text.

In conclusion, the findings of this research showed that there is a correlation between students' subject-verb agreement mastery and their writing ability of descriptive texts. Additionally, this is supported by other researches that had similar research findings about how students' writing are influenced by their mastery of grammar.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The findings of this research indicated that students' subject-verb agreement mastery is in sufficient category. According to the classification table, the mean score of the subject-verb agreement test of the tenth grade students of SMAN 2 Tapung is 67.72, which is classified into sufficient category. And students' descriptive text writing ability is also classified into sufficient category. It was evident from their mean score on the test of writing descriptive text. The mean score is 67.63.

Based on the analysis, this research accepted the alternative hypothesis (Ha) and rejected the null hypothesis (H0). This showed that there is a correlation between students' subject-verb agreement mastery and their writing ability of descriptive texts. The researcher used SPSS Statistics 25 to analyze the data. It was discovered that the significance value for the variables X and Y to be 0.000. This is less than 0.05. The Pearson Correlation between variables X and Y is 0.791. The correlation between subject-verb agreement mastery and the ability to write descriptive texts is in the range of 0.70-0.90, which is interpreted as a high correlation, according to the Sudijono (2015) correlation coefficient strength table. According to determination analysis, subject-verb agreement mastery had a 62.6% influence on the descriptive text writing ability.

Recommendations

The researcher would like to propose the following recommendations based on the findings of the research:

1. It is recommended that the English teacher provides more exercices and strategies to help students' easily grasp the rules of subject-verb agreement easily. Besides, the teacher is recommended to explain about five criteria for assessing writing. This allows students not only to focus on the grammatical aspects in writing, but also learn more how to construct their writing well by considering the indicators such as content, organization, vocabulary, and mechanics. It is hoped that the students' scores can increase to good category.
2. It is recommended that the students should do and practice more exercises on subject-verb agreement, because it has been proven that subject-verb agreement mastery can help them improve writing ability, especially when writing descriptive texts. They can ask the teachers or friends when getting difficulties in the process of learning.
3. It is recommended that other researchers can conduct further research on the correlation between other language skills and language aspects. And also there are still many other factors that may influence students' writing ability. Thus, it is recommended that they conduct a research which aims to find out other factors that can influence students' writing ability such as vocabulary, reading habit, reading comprehension, etc. Further research should be conducted on different sample size and location. Because the sample for this research included high school students in social science classes, future research can be conducted in natural science classes at high school or vocational school.

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