

## **STUDENTS' ABILITY IN PRODUCING THE SENTENCES OF SIMPLE PRESENT TENSE AT STMIK MUSIRAWAS**

**Herlina**

STMIK Musi Rawas

**Maria Ramasari**

STKIP PGRI Lubuklinggau

### **ABSTRACT**

This research aimed to find out the students' ability in producing the sentences of simple present tense at STMIK Musi Rawas. The research was a qualitative study. As stated in findings, it interpreted that there were 34 students (62.91%) in the *low* category. Thus, there were 15 students (27.50%) in the *good* category. Finally, there were 5 students (9.59%) in the *excellent* category. Hence, it can be concluded that students' ability in producing the sentences of simple present tense was still low. It showed that many students still got difficulties in producing the sentences of simple present tense especially for verb in third person singular as the subject pronoun.

*Keywords: students' ability, simple present tense, sentences*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Grammar is one of English components that need to be understood how to improve your English grammar in making sentences by using a simple sentence. As stated by Hudson (2003:2) a sentence with a good grammar is important because it tests your understanding, you can't do it without some understanding of what you're doing, but it's important for other reasons too, it gives a concrete skill which can develop and also gives a measure of progress your grammar skill. Good grammar in making sentences is necessary and will also be useful for serving opportunities for some students who have problems with grammar to practice new structures. One of an opportunity is using simple present tense to increase the students' knowledge of grammar. Grammar teaching may grow directly from the task students are performing or have just performed as a part of focus on form approach. Grammar can be introduced in a number of ways, and can show students' grammar competence and ask them to work out for themselves how the language is constructed. It will also provide opportunities for the students to

practice different grammatical points. One of an opportunity is using simple present tense to increase the students' knowledge of grammar (Harmer, 2007:210).

The present simple is used to talk about things in general or things that happen repeatedly (Murphy, 2004:4). However, Azar (2002:13) states that the simple present tense is used to express habitual or everyday activities. In other words, the present-tense is relatively simple to form. There are three distinct types of present-tense: (1) the simple present tense which indicates a habitual or repeated action, (2) the progressive which indicates an ongoing or incomplete action, (3) the emphatic response (Swick, 2010:3).

STMIK Musi Rawas is a college of management and computer science that located at Jendral Besar HM.Soeharto Street KM.13 Lubuk Kupang South Lubuklinggau I, South Sumatera. Based on teaching learning activity, it was found that every student has different problems in producing the sentences of simple present tense; they were difficulties how to produce the sentences of simple present tense. They found difficult how to use suitable verbs of simple present tense. So, it can be concluded that students' ability in producing the sentences of simple present tense was not maximal yet. Dealing with these reasons, the researcher's interested to investigate dealt with the following question: how was the students' ability in producing the sentences of simple present tense at STMIK Musi Rawas?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Grammar is very necessary in learning English. The students have to be able to master them in order to get easier in using it in communication. The other importance of mastering grammar is to support other skills in English such as use simple present tense in sentences. In writing skill, the students will write sentences in correct sentence. In addition, tenses can give us further information about some events or actions done at present, past or future time (Toago, 2013: 1-2).

According to Manser (1995:427) the term 'tense' means verb form that shows the time of the action. It means that traditionally the tense is defined in term of time. Downing (2006:352) observes definite differences that tense is the grammatical expression of the location of events in time. It means that an event to the speaker's experience of the world by relating the event time. Hence, the basic meaning of the present tense is to locate a situation holding at the present moment. This may be an instantaneous event, a state which holds over time, or a habitual occurrence. Secondary meanings of the present include reference to past and future events, historic present and the quotative. In short, simple present is one kind of tenses that is used to write in English. It is important because simple

present tense usually takes place in writing activity. Simple present tense usually took important place in writing, particularly use simple present tense in sentences.

Furthermore, Swick (2010:3) classify the present-tense into three distinct types: (1) the simple present tense which indicates a habitual or repeated action, (2) the progressive which indicates an ongoing or incomplete action, (3) the emphatic response. However, Walker (2000:30) states that the use of the present simple, it's used for something which is permanently true and for repeated actions. In short, simple present tense is a tense that used to express a daily action that is habitual or repeated (Fachruddin, 1975:92).

In relation to the explanation above, simple present tense is that this refers to something taking place now (DeCapua, 2008:168). Simple present tense consists of the main verb in its simple form, except in third person singular when the –s inflection is added to the main verb and for questions and negatives in the simple present need to add *do/does* auxiliary. For general guidelines, the simple present is used to:

a. Describe repeated actions, customs or habits.	1. Ned <i>leaves</i> for school at 8:00. 2. Blair and Jamie <i>work</i> at a bank.
b. Describe general truths or facts.	1. The sun <i>rises</i> in the east. 2. The president and his family <i>live</i> in the White House.
c. Describe certain characteristics, mental states, emotions, and senses.	1. Gina <i>is</i> thin. 2. The sky <i>looks</i> gray. 3. Good teachers <i>understand</i> their students' needs. 4. Max <i>loves</i> pizza. 5. Helen <i>seems</i> happy.
d. <i>Feel, smell, taste</i> used intransitively, with the idea of using one of the "five senses".	1. A baby's skin <i>feels</i> smooth. 2. The soup <i>smells</i> delicious. 3. The noodles <i>taste</i> salty. 4. The audience <i>hears</i> the orchestra tuning up.
e. <i>Hear, see</i> used transitively with the idea of using one of the "five senses".	The worshippers believe God <i>sees</i> everything.
f. Narrate stories and events.	She gets up, turns on the oven, leaves the room, and the next thing you know, there's smoke coming out of the kitchen.
g. Summarize stories and articles.	1. The president addresses the soldiers and asks for their continued support in the fight against terrorism. 2. The reviewer argues that the conclusions presented by the researchers are erroneous.

Grammar deals with the rules for combining words into larger units. The largest unit that is described in grammar normally the *sentence* (Greenbaum and Nelson, 2002:13-14). They conform to patterns are then grammatical sentences. Sentences that conform to the major patterns are *regular sentences* and sentences that do not conform to the major patterns are *irregular sentences*.

Further, Dutwin (2010:154-172) a simple sentence is an independent clause containing a subject, a verb, and a complete thought, i.e., visualization prepares athletes for success. This sentence shows that no punctuation, other than a period, is necessary in this simple sentence. It can be even added a compound subject, and the sentence remains a simple. At this point, you have reviewed the building balanced sentences that the essentials of grammar and you can identify parts of speech and their functions; also recognize common errors in grammar. Now you are ready to make sure the words you use function correctly in sentences. Balanced sentences are ones in which related descriptions, actions, or ideas are written in the same form. Grammarians call this *parallel construction*. There is power in parallel construction. In fact, some very famous examples of parallel construction exist in history; Julius Caesar: I come; I see; I conquer. How does this sentence exemplify parallel construction? There are three verbs: *come*, *see*, and *conquer*. All expressed in the present tense and all preceded by *I*. **Incorrect:** Carol is attractive and has good sense. If you say this sentence aloud, you will probably agree that it sounds unbalanced. Why? If you analyze the sentence, you see that Carol is the subject and *is* is a descriptive word or a word that stands for the subject. In this sentence, Carol is being described. What two elements describe her?. *Attractive* and *has good sense* are the elements. How can you change the second element, *has good sense*, to match the first, *attractive*? *Attractive* is an adjective describing Carol. To meet these purposes, it needs convert *has good sense* into an adjective, a single word, to match *attractive*. This is the result: **Correct:** Carol is *attractive* and *sensible*, the sentence is balanced.

In addition, Oshima and Hogue (2006:164) propose a sentence is a group of words that use to communicate the ideas. They are classified four basic kinds of sentence in English:

1 *Simple sentence*, which has one independent clause, for instance:

freshwater boils at 100 degrees celsius at sea level.

freshwater boils at 100 degrees and freezes at 0 degrees celsius

Freshwater and salt water do not boil and do not freeze at the same temperatures.

The first sentence has one verb, *boils* and the second sentence has two verbs, *boils* and *freezes*. This is called compound verb. The third sentence has both a

compound subject and a compound verb. All three examples are called as simple sentences because they have only one clause.

- 2 *Compound sentence*, which has two or more independent clause joined together. There are three ways to join the clauses:

- a. With a coordinator

Salt water boils at a higher temperature than freshwater, **so** food cooks faster in salt water.

*Punctuation note:* There is a comma after the first independent clause.

- b. With a conjunctive adverb

Salt water boils at a higher temperature than freshwater; **therefore**, food cooks faster in salt water.

*Punctuation note:* Put a semicolon before and a comma after the conjunctive adverb.

- c. With a semicolon

Salt water boils at a higher temperature than freshwater, food cooks faster in salt water. *Punctuation note:* Put a semicolon between the two independent clauses.

- 3 *Complex sentence*, that contains one independent clause and one (or more) dependent clause(s). In a complex sentence, one idea is generally more important than the other. There are three kinds of dependent clauses: (i) adverb clause acts like an adverb; that is, it tells where, when, why, and how. An adverb clause begins with a subordinator, such as *when, while, because, although, if, so, or that*. It can come before or after an independent clause, i.e., **although** women in the United States could own property, they could not vote until 1920; (ii) adjective clause acts like an adjective; that is, it describes a noun or pronoun. An adjective clause begins with a relative pronoun, such as *who, whom, which, whose, or that*, or with a relative adverb, such as *where or when.*, i.e., men **who** are not married are called bachelors; and (iii) noun clause begins with a *wh-* question word, *that, whether*, and sometimes *if*, i.e., **that** there is a hole in the ozone layer of Earth's atmosphere is well known

- 4 *Compound-complex sentence* which has at least three clauses, at least two of which are independent, for instance: I wanted to travel **after** I graduated from college; **however**, I had to go to work immediately. Punctuate the compound part of a compound-complex sentence like a compound sentence; that is, use a semicolon/comma combination.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The research was a qualitative study. Ary, *et. al.*, (2010:440) descriptive method is used to describe events as they naturally occur. It involved describing, analyzing, and interpreting of condition that exist.

### **Population**

The population of the research was the information of technology students at first semester of STMIK Musi Rawas. It consisted of two classes. They were class TI Regular A1 and A2. The total population was 54 students. Arikunto (2010:134) stated if the total population is less than 100, it would be better as taken as whole, and if the population is more than 100, it can be 10-15% or 20-25% or more.

### **Instrument of Research**

In collecting data, the researcher used test form as a main instrument. The instrument of the research was used an essay test to measure students' ability in producing the sentences of simple present tense.

### **Techniques of Collecting Data**

In this research, the steps in collecting the data were: first, the researcher gave the students a test. It was a worksheet that consisted of 20 items with 45 minutes. Second, the researcher gave the instruction how to answer or complete the item in worksheet. Third, the researcher asked students to answer the items in the blank underline which was matching the choice answer and the students were given the time was 45 minutes. Finally, the researcher collected all students' worksheet and analyzed the students' answer.

### **Techniques of Analyzing Data**

In analyzing the data obtained from the test. The researcher was applied three techniques. They're: (1) conversion of score range; (2) matched percentage formula test and (3) validity check.

#### *Conversion of score range*

The researcher presented the criteria score that was given to students as below:

**Table 1.**The Conversion of Score Range Classification

<b>Score Range</b>	<b>Alphabet</b>	<b>Classification</b>
85 - 100	A	Excellent
75 - 84	B	Good
65 - 74	C	Enough
55 - 64	D	Low
0 - 54	E	Very Low

Source: BAAK STMIK Musi Rawas

There were five criteria of classifications obtained from test score on students' ability in producing the sentences of simple present tense. The most excellent classification was A with the range score 85-100; good classification was B with the range score 75-84; enough classification was C with the range score 65-74; low classification was D with the range score 55-64; and very low classification was E with the range score 0-54.

#### *Matched percentage formula test*

In calculating the data, the researcher analyzed the students' work papers to see percentage of their ability in producing the sentences of simple present tense by collected the data and classified the student' ability from the students' work, and then counted the total number of students' ability by using the percentage formula in descriptive statistic based on Sudjiono (2012:43) stated that:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

Note: P = The percentage of student' ability

F = Total number of students

N = Total number of students' ability in producing the sentences of simple present tense.

#### *Validity check*

In order to maintain validity and avoid biases in collecting and analyzing the data, the researcher used *triangulation technique* as estimates to guide the researcher. As commonly defined, triangulation is a validity check that applies more than one methods of data collection within a single study (Stubbs as cited in Syahri, 2010:16). In addition, according to Guion, A. Lisa, *et. al.*, (2012:1) triangulation is a method used by qualitative researchers to check and establish validity in their studies by analyzing a research question from multiple perspectives. Typically, this manifests as an evaluation team consisting of colleagues within a field of study wherein each investigator examines the program with the same qualitative method. It refers to the use of more than one audience in the field to gather and interpret data (Bryman, 2002:2).

Related to the research, the researcher used *peer debriefing*. As stated by Lincoln and Guba (1985:308) peer debriefing is a process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytical sessions and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer's mind. Further, Hendricks (in Hail *et. al.*, 2006:3) points out that peer debriefing helps focus on correctness and accuracy of research interpretations and conclusions, guards against researcher-bias, provides

evidence of collaboration of stakeholders, and enables distribution of findings. In short, peer debriefing is a strategy used to *enhance credibility* in a research.

In analyzing the data of percentage students' ability in producing the sentences of simple present tense, the researcher involved a partner. She is Maria Ramasari, M.Pd in order that she'd like to help the researcher to get the data accurately.

## FINDINGS

This research investigated the students' ability in producing the sentences of simple present tense. Based on data analysis, it was found that there were five classifications of range score are identified, they are: excellent, good, enough, low and very low. The percentages of occurrences are illustrated in table 2 and 3 below.

The students' ability in producing the sentences of simple present tense for class TI Regular A1 revealed that the excellent percentage was 12.50% which were reached by 3 students, good percentage was 25% reached by 6 students, enough classification was 54.17% reached by 13 students and low classification was 8.33% reached by 2 students. Based on findings, the researcher found that the students mostly right in item for object as adverb of time and adverb of place. Thought, students had difficulties in producing the sentences of simple present tense mostly in item the subject pronoun: he, she, it that as third person singular. They did not understand how to put s/es in verbs. So, they fill in the blanks with the unsuitable verbs of simple present tense.

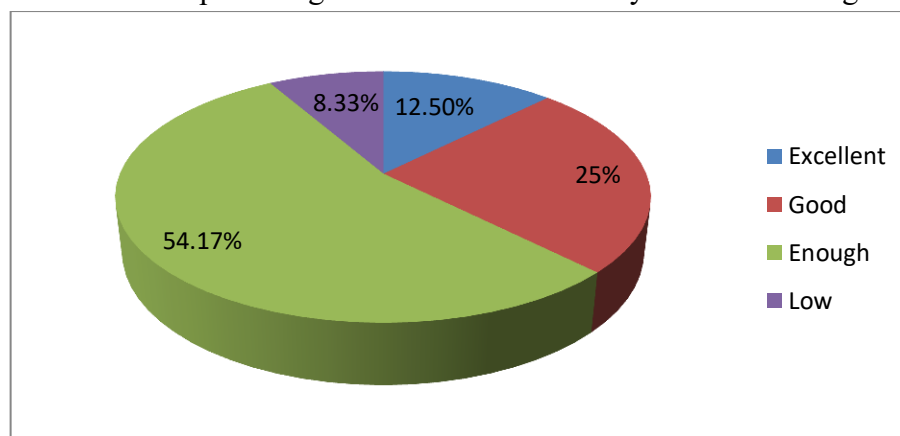
**Table 2.**Percentage of Students' Ability for Class TI Regular A1

Score Range	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
85 – 100	Excellent	3	12.50%
75 – 84	Good	6	25%
65 – 74	Enough	13	54.17%
55 – 64	Low	2	8.33%
0 – 54	Very Low	-	-
Total		24	100%

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that there were 3 students (12.50%) in the “excellent” classification for score A, then 6 students (25%) in the “good” classification for score B, thus 13 students (54.17%) in the “enough” classification for score C and 2 students (8.33%) in the “low” classification for score D. The percentages of the student's ability in producing the sentences of simple present tense for class TI Regular A1 that can be seen in the following chart:



**Chart 1.** The percentages of the student’s ability for class TI Regular A1



Furthermore, the students’ ability in producing the sentences of simple present tense for class TI Regular A2 revealed that the excellent classification was 6.67% which were reached by 2 students, good classification was 30% reached by 9 students, enough classification was 50% reached by 15 students and low classification was 13.33% reached by 4 students. Based on data analysis, the researcher found that the students mostly right in item for object as adverb of time and adverb of place. But, most students also had difficulties in producing the sentences of simple present tense mostly in item the subject pronoun: he, she, it that as third person singular. They found difficult how to use suitable verbs of simple present tense because did not understand yet how to put s/es in verbs of simple present tense.

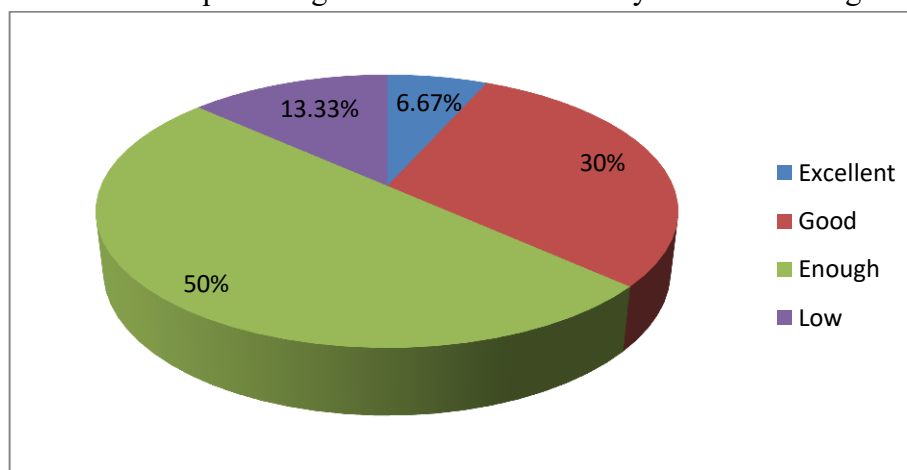
**Table 3.** Percentage of Students’ Ability for Class TI Regular A2

Score Range	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
85 – 100	Excellent	2	6.67%
75 – 84	Good	9	30%
65 – 74	Enough	15	50%
55 – 64	Low	4	13.33%
0 – 54	Very Low	-	-
Total		30	100%

Based on the table above, it was found that there were 2 students (6.67%) in the “excellent” classification for score A, 9 students (30%) in the “good” classification for score B, 15 students (50%) in the “enough” classification for score C and 4 students (13.33%) in the “low” classification for score D. The

percentages of the student's ability in producing the sentences of simple present tense for class TI Regular A2 that can be seen in the following chart:

**Chart 2.** The percentages of the student's ability for class TI Regular A2



Based on the students' ability obtained both of class TI Regular A1 and A2, it was revealed that the excellent percentage was 9.59% reached by 5 students, good percentage was 27.50% reached by 15 students, enough percentage was 52.08% reached by 28 students and low percentage was 10.83% reached by 6 students. It means that there were not different students' ability in producing the sentences of simple present tense both of class TI Regular A1 and A2. It was showed that the students had no problems in producing the sentence of simple present tense mostly right in item for object as adverb of time and adverb of place. But, most students had difficulties in producing the sentences of simple present tense mostly in item the subject pronoun: he, she, it that as third person singular. They found difficult how to use suitable verbs of simple present tense because did not understand yet how to put s/es in verbs of simple present tense.

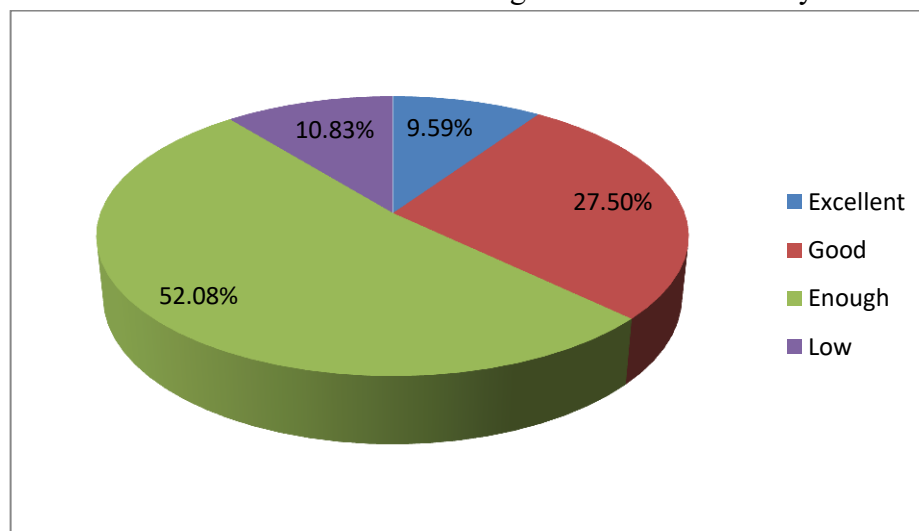
**Table 4.** Percentage of Students' Ability both of Class TI Regular A1 and A2

Score Range	Classification	Frequency Class TI Regular A1 and A2	Total Percentage Class TI Regular A1 and A2
85 – 100	Excellent	5	9.59%
75 – 84	Good	15	27.50%
65 – 74	Enough	28	52.08%
55 – 64	Low	6	10.83%
0 – 54	Very Low	-	-
Total		54	100%

From the total percentage of students' ability above, the criteria of classification occurred with various frequencies. However, it was found that the students in class TI Regular A1 and A2 who got A (excellent) were 5 students which meant that there was 9.59% turns of percentage. The students who got B (good) were 15 students which meant that there was 27.50% turns of percentage. The students who got C (enough) were 28 students which meant that there was 52.08% turns of percentage. The students who got D (low) were 6 students which meant that there was 10.83% turns of percentage. Thus, it indicates that many students did not understand how to use simple present tense in sentences. Based on data analysis, it showed that the students had a problem in producing the sentences of simple present tense especially for verb in third person singular as the subject pronoun.

The total percentages of the student's ability in producing the sentences of simple present tense can be seen in the following chart:

**Chart 3.** Total Percentages of Students' Ability



As stated in findings that were shown above, the researcher interpreted that the students' ability to use simple present tense that there were 34 students (62.91%) in the "low" in classification scores C and D. Thus, there were 15 students (27.50%) in the "good" in classification score B. Finally, there were 5 students (9.59%) in the "excellent" in classification score A. Hence, it can be concluded that students' ability in producing the sentences of simple present tense was still low.

## DISCUSSION

Based on findings, the researcher interpreted that the students' ability in producing the sentences of simple present tense had enough category. It can be seen from the percentage the students' average score in the students' ability of class TI Regular A1 and A2. It indicated that that the excellent percentage was 12.50% which were reached by 3 students, good percentage was 25% reached by 6 students, enough classification was 54.17% reached by 13 students and low percentage was 8.33% reached by 2 students. It means that the highest students' percentage score in the students' ability was 54.17%. It can be concluded that the students' ability was enough.

Besides, it's the same for the students' ability in producing the sentences of simple present tense for class TI Regular A2 showed that the excellent classification was 6.67% which were reached by 2 students, good classification was 30% reached by 9 students, enough classification was 50% reached by 15 students and low classification was 13.33% reached by 4 students. It means that the highest students' percentage score in the students' ability was 50%. It can be concluded that the students' ability was also enough.

The students' ability was proven enough, it was caused the students where mostly right in item for object as adverb of time and adverb of place. But, most students also had difficulties in producing the sentences of simple present tense mostly in item the subject pronoun: he, she, it that as third person singular. They found difficult how to use suitable verbs of simple present tense because did not understand yet how to put s/es in verbs of simple present tense.

Furthermore, based on the students' ability obtained both of class TI Regular A1 and A2, it was found out that there were 34 students (62.91%) in the low category. Thus, there were 15 students (27.50%) in the good category. Finally, there were 5 students (9.59%) in the excellent category. It means that the highest students' percentage score in the students' ability was 62.91%). As cited in DeCapua, (2008:170) claims the learner difficulties that a common problem among students is using simple present tense when referring to something happening now when native speakers would prefer the simple present. More significantly for learners are problems using the *do* auxiliary correctly. To recap briefly, learners frequently forget to insert *do* in questions and negatives, and/or to inflect *do* and the main verb correctly. Hence, it can be concluded that students' ability in producing the sentences of simple present tense was still low. It showed that many students still got difficulties in producing the sentences of simple present tense especially for verb in third person singular as the subject pronoun.

Therefore, the final conclusion the researcher expected for all students to learn simple present tense to keep studying and practicing more how to produce the sentences of simple present tense correctly.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion is the students' ability in producing the sentences of simple present tense at STMIK Musi Rawas still had problems. The researcher found that the students mostly right in item for object as *adverb of time and adverb of place*. Thought, students had difficulties in producing the sentences of simple present tense mostly in item *the subject pronoun: he, she, it that's function as third singular person*. They did not understand how to put *s/es* in verbs of simple present tense. Consequently, it can be concluded that students' ability in producing the sentences of simple present tense was still low. Finally, the researcher expected for all students to learn simple present tense to keep studying and practicing more how to produce the sentences of simple present tense correctly.

## REFERENCES

- Azar, S. B. (2002). *Understanding and Using English Grammar*. New York: Pearson Edition.
- Arikunto, S. (2010). *Dasar-Dasar Evaluasi Pendidikan*. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara.
- Ary, Donald, Jacobs, C. Luci and Sorensen, Chris. 2010. *Introduction to Research in Education*. New York: Nelson Education, Ltd.
- Bryman, Alan. (2002). *Triangulation*. United Kingdom: Loughborough University.
- DeCapua, A. (2008). *Grammar for Teachers*. New York: Springer.
- Downing, A. (2006). *English Grammar: A University Course*. New York: Prentice Hall International.
- Dutwin, P. (2010). *English Grammar Demystified: A Self -Teaching Guide*. United States: McGraw-Hill.
- Fachruddin. (1975). *Learning The English Language*. Palembang: Offset Usaha Baru.
- Greenbaum, S. and Nelson, G. (2002). *An Introduction to English grammar*. London: Pearson Education.
- Guion, A. L., Diehl, D. C. & McDonald, D. (2012). *Triangulation: Establishing the Validity of Qualitative Studies*. USA: University of Florida.
- Hail, C., Hurst, B. C. & Deanne. (2006). Peer Debriefing: Teachers' Reflective Practices for Professional Growth. *E-Journal of Critical Questions in Education*, 2(2).
- Harmer, J. (2007). *The Practice of English language Teaching*. United Kingdom: Longman, Inc.
- Hudson, R. (2003). *English Grammar*. London: Taylor & Francis e-Library.
- Lincoln, YS and Guba, EG. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

- Manser, M. H. (1995). *Oxford Learners Pocket Dictionary*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Murphy, R. (2004). *English Grammar in Use with Answers*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Oshima & Hogue. (2006). *Writing Academic English Fourth Edition*. USA: Addition Wesley Publishing Company.
- Sudjiono, Annas. (2012). *Pengantar Statistik Pendidikan*. Jakarta: PT. Raja Grafindo Persada.
- Swick, Ed. (2010). *English Verbs and Essentials of Grammar for ESL Learners*. United States: McGraw-Hill.
- Syahri, I. (2010). *Conversation Analysis*. Palembang: Tunas Gemilang Press.
- Toago, P. A. (2013). The Ability of Students to Apply Simple Present Tense in Descriptive Text. *E-Journal of English Language Teaching Society (ELTS)*, 1(2), 1-11.
- Walker, E. & Elsworth, S. (2000). *New Grammar Practice for Pre-Intermediate Students*. Malaysia: Longman.