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A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH TENSE MASTERY IN COMPUTER SCIENCE AND MANAGEMENT STUDENTS: IMPLICATIONS FOR LANGUAGE EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to compare the mastery of English tenses between students majoring in Computer Science and those in Management. This study employs a quantitative methodology with a comparative approach. Utilizing purposive sampling, 20 students from each major were selected to receive instruction on nine English tenses using a uniform teaching method, followed by a comprehension test on the same tenses. The data, derived from test results, were statistically analyzed based on score ranges categorized by frequency, percentage, highest score, lowest score, and average score. The statistical outcomes from both majors were then compared to identify similarities and differences. The findings indicate that Computer Science students demonstrated greater proficiency in the Simple Present, Simple Future, Present Continuous, Present Perfect, and Past Perfect tenses, while Management students excelled in the Simple Future, Present Continuous, Past Continuous, Present Perfect, and Future Perfect tenses. According to the average test scores, Management students outperformed their Computer Science counterparts in nearly all tenses, with the exception of the Past Perfect tense. The difference in tense proficiency between Computer Science students and Management students can primarily be attributed to the nature of their academic training and the skills emphasized in their respective disciplines This research can serve as a foundational reference for English language instructors at the higher education level, applicable to both scientific and non-scientific study programs. By understanding the characteristics and proficiency levels of tense usage across different disciplines, English teachers can adapt their teaching methods accordingly to achieve optimal outcomes.

Keywords: *Comparative Study; Tense Mastery; Computer Science; Management*

INTRODUCTION

Language proficiency is a crucial skill that is often linked to an individual's academic background. The ability to comprehend and understand complex concepts, ideas, and instructions is essential for success in education. Students who have a strong grasp of language are more likely to excel in their studies, as they can effectively communicate their thoughts and ideas, as

well as comprehend information presented to them (Fitria, 2024). Additionally, language proficiency is closely tied to critical thinking skills, which are necessary for analyzing and evaluating academic materials

In the realm of education and cognitive psychology, there exists a widely held belief that learners with a background in the sciences tend to excel in analytical and logical thinking skills. This notion is based on the premise that individuals who have been exposed to scientific principles and methodologies are more adept at problem-solving and critical analysis (Qamariah & Yuliani, 2024). However, it is important to recognize that individuals with a social background also possess valuable skills, particularly in the realm of language acquisition. Research by Valisneria (2018) has shown that individuals with a social background often have stronger reasoning abilities and critical thinking skills, which can facilitate their understanding of foreign language learning.

Previous research has delved into the impact of an academic background in either the sciences or the humanities on proficiency in English language acquisition. The findings by (Wijayanto et al., 2024) have shown that individuals with a background in the sciences tend to have a more technical and precise approach to language learning, focusing on grammar rules and syntax. On the other hand, those with a background in the humanities may have a more creative and expressive style of communication, prioritizing vocabulary and literary techniques (Maming & Patintingan, 2023). These differences in approach can influence the way individuals develop their English language skills and proficiency. Therefore, it is possible to explore how the academic background of individuals can shape their attitudes towards English language acquisition. For example, individuals with a background in the sciences may approach language learning as a structured and logical process, seeking to understand the underlying rules and patterns. In contrast, individuals with a background in the humanities may view language acquisition as a form of self-expression and creativity, focusing on the emotive and literary aspects of English. These differing perspectives can influence the strategies individuals use to improve their English proficiency and the areas they prioritize in their language development.

This study distinguishes itself from prior research by focusing on the differing interpretations of tenses between two distinct fields: the exact sciences, exemplified by Computer Science, and the non-exact sciences, represented by Management. Each discipline employs tenses with specific nuances and implications that reflect their foundational principles and areas of inquiry.

In addition to the impact on language learning strategies, an academic background in either the sciences or the humanities can also influence the level of exposure individuals have to English language use. For example, individuals with a background in the sciences may have more opportunities to engage with technical English language materials, such as research articles and academic journals. On the other hand, individuals with a background in the humanities may have a greater exposure to literary works and cultural texts, which can enhance their vocabulary and comprehension skills in English. Thoyyibah (2019) stated that understanding these differences in exposure can provide valuable insights into how individuals from different academic backgrounds navigate the process of English language acquisition.

Tenses in the English language denote the various verb forms that signify the temporal context of an action. The primary tenses in English are present, past, and future, with each category further subdivided into simple, continuous, perfect, and perfect continuous aspects. The role of tenses is to convey the timing of actions, thereby enhancing clarity and precision in communication (Calude &

Bauer, 2021). Mastering tenses in the English language can be achieved through a combination of consistent practice, studying grammar rules, and exposure to a wide range of written and spoken English. To improve proficiency in using tenses accurately, one must first familiarize themselves with the various forms and functions of present, past, and future tenses.

Mastering tenses in the English language can pose a significant challenge for non-native speakers due to the complex system of verb conjugation and the various nuances that different tenses convey (Zentall, 2013). English has a wide range of tenses, including simple present, present continuous, simple past, past continuous, present perfect, past perfect, and future tenses, each serving a specific purpose in communication. Understanding when to use each tense correctly can be daunting for learners, especially when faced with irregular verbs that do not follow regular patterns. Additionally, English tenses can vary in meaning depending on context, making it crucial for learners to grasp the subtle distinctions between them. One of the main difficulties associated with mastering tenses in English is the concept of tense consistency and agreement within a sentence or paragraph. In English, sentences must maintain a consistent tense throughout to ensure clarity and coherence. However, learners often struggle with maintaining tense consistency, leading to confusion and misunderstandings in communication. Furthermore, the English language allows for a certain degree of flexibility in tense usage, depending on the speaker's intended meaning and emphasis (Shield et al., 2023). This flexibility adds another layer of complexity for learners trying to navigate the intricacies of English tenses effectively.

According to the theoretical frameworks and prior studies discussed earlier, a research gap exists that warrants investigation into whether notable differences exist in the proficiency of English tenses between students from scientific disciplines, such as Computer Science, and those from social sciences, such as Management. This study aims to compare the extent to which students majoring in Computer Science and those majoring in Management are able to tackle the challenges associated with mastering English tenses, as assessed through the provided instruction and the written tests administered. This study highlights distinct characteristics in how Computer Science and Management students address the complexities of English tenses. By comparing their performance and approaches, educators can better tailor language instruction to meet the specific needs of different academic disciplines. This targeted strategy can ultimately enhance language competence among students across various fields, leading to improved communication skills essential for their future careers.

METHODOLOGY

This type of research is quantitative in nature and employs a comparative approach. Comparative research investigations involve the analysis and comparison of different variables across multiple subjects or groups (Newhart & Patten, 2023). These studies aim to identify similarities and differences in order to draw meaningful conclusions and insights. Then, this study aims to compare the proficiency in mastering English tenses between students majoring in Computer Science and those majoring in Management.

The population for this study consists of first-semester students at Universitas Kristen Immanuel. Subsequently, the researcher employed purposive sampling techniques to specifically target the research subjects. Purposive sampling techniques are commonly used in academic research to select participants based on specific criteria that are relevant to the

research question at hand (Tashakkori et al., 2020). The researchers subsequently selected 20 first-semester students from the Computer Science program and 20 first-semester students from the Management program as the subjects of the study.

The rationale for selecting 20 first-semester students from the Computer Science program and 20 first-semester students from the Management program for the study of tense proficiency lies in the diverse linguistic backgrounds, educational focuses, and learning environments inherent in each program

Both groups received identical treatment concerning the tense learning model and a written test designed to assess their mastery of English tenses. The tenses under examination included Simple Present, Simple Past, Simple Future, Present Continuous, Past Continuous, Future Continuous, Present Perfect, Past Perfect, and Future Perfect. Each tense was evaluated through a written test consisting of 10 questions.

The rationale for using essay written tests to examine tense proficiency is grounded in both pedagogical theory and practical assessment strategies. Tense proficiency is a critical component of language mastery, influencing how students express time-related concepts in their writing. By employing essay tests, educators can measure not only students' understanding of grammatical structures but also their ability to contextualize and use tenses appropriately in coherent discourse.

The data collected from test results across multiple departments undergoes a rigorous process of statistical analysis in an academic setting. This analysis involves examining various metrics such as the range of scores, grading categories, frequency distribution, mean, highest score, and lowest score. These statistical findings are then compared between groups and presented visually through tables, providing a comprehensive overview of the performance differences within the departments.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The following presents the statistical analysis results of the written test conducted to assess the tense proficiency of students in the Computer Science program.

The Proficiency Assessment of Computer Science Students

The table below presents a detailed assessment of tense proficiency among Computer Science students.

Table 1. Result of Tense Proficiency Assessment – Computer Science Students

Range	SiPr		SiPa		SiFu		PrCo		PaCp		FuCo		PrPe		PaPe		FuPe	
	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P
0-59 (E)	7	35%	9	45%	3	15%	3	15%	7	35%	9	45%	3	15%	3	15%	9	45%
60-69 (D)	2	10%	1	5%	2	10%	4	20%	3	15%	0	0%	2	10%	1	5%	5	25%
70-79 (C)	2	10%	6	30%	0	0%	0	0%	5	25%	2	10%	3	15%	0	0%	0	0%
80-89 (B)	0	0%	3	15%	7	35%	4	20%	5	25%	2	10%	1	5%	2	10%	1	5%
90-100 (A)	9	45%	1	5%	8	40%	9	45%	0	0%	7	35%	11	55%	14	70%	5	25%
Total	20	100%	20	100%	20	100%	20	100%	20	100%	20	100%	20	100%	20	100%	20	100%
Mean	65.5		56.5		79		77.5		60.5		66		77		80		61.25	
Max	90		100		100		100		80		90		100		95		95	
Min	20		10		30		40		10		30		35		30		30	

Source: processed data (2024)

According to the data presented in Table 1, it is evident that there is a clear distinction in the dominance of scores between different tense categories for students majoring in Computer Science. The notable prevalence of high scores in category A for tenses such as Simple Present, Simple Future, Present Continuous, Present Perfect, and Past Perfect indicates a strong understanding and proficiency in these particular tenses. On the other hand, the prevalence of lower scores in category E for tenses like Simple Past, Past Continuous, Future Continuous, and Future Perfect points towards significant challenges faced by these students in comprehending and utilizing these tenses effectively. This data suggests a need for targeted interventions

and support to improve students' grasp of the more complex tenses.

The observed pattern in the distribution of scores across different tense categories in Table 1 highlights interesting insights into the linguistic strengths and challenges of Computer Science students. The consistent dominance of high scores in tenses such as Simple Present, Simple Future, Present Continuous, Present Perfect, and Past Perfect implies a strong grasp of basic tense usage and construction among these students. However, the prevalence of lower scores in tenses like Simple Past, Past Continuous, Future Continuous, and Future Perfect signifies a clear struggle in applying more advanced tense forms correctly. This disparity underscores the importance of tailored language education programs to address the specific needs of Computer Science students in enhancing their overall linguistic proficiency.

An additional noteworthy observation from the assessment results is the clear discrepancy in scores across different tense categories. The highest scores were consistently achieved in category A, which comprised assessments on tenses such as Simple Present, Simple Past, Simple Future, Present Continuous, Future Continuous, and Future Perfect. Interestingly, only the assessment for Past Continuous fell into category B in terms of achieving the highest score. This pattern suggests that students in the Computer Science program generally had a better grasp of the tenses in category A compared to those in category B.

Despite the overall higher scores in category A, it is important to note that there were still some students who struggled with the material. The assessments revealed that while some students demonstrated a strong understanding of the various tenses being tested, there were also several students who faced challenges in grasping the concepts. This indicates that there is a variation in the level of understanding among students in the Computer Science program, highlighting the need for targeted support and additional resources to help those who are struggling to improve their comprehension of the tenses covered in the assessments.

Interestingly, the lowest scores across all tense assessments were consistently found in category E. This suggests that there may be specific areas within the tense categories that are more challenging for students in the Computer Science program. By identifying these areas of difficulty, educators can tailor their teaching methods and provide targeted interventions to support students in overcoming these challenges. Overall, the assessment results provide valuable insights into the proficiency levels of students in different tense categories and highlight the importance of providing additional support to help all students succeed in mastering the various tenses covered in the curriculum.

The following presents the statistical analysis results of the written test conducted to assess the tense proficiency of students in the Management program.

The Proficiency Assessment of Management Students

The table below presents a comprehensive assessment of tense proficiency among Management students.

Table 2. Result of Tense Proficiency Assessment – Management Students

Range	SiPr		SiPa		SiFu		PrCo		PaCp		FuCo		PrPe		PaPe		FuPe	
	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P
0-59 (E)	4	20%	10	50%	1	5%	0	0%	2	10%	3	15%	1	5%	7	35%	5	25%
60-69 (D)	3	15%	3	15%	2	10%	1	5%	1	5%	2	10%	0	0%	3	15%	3	15%
70-79 (C)	6	30%	2	10%	0	0%	4	20%	4	20%	6	30%	1	5%	3	15%	1	5%
80-89 (B)	5	25%	1	5%	4	20%	2	10%	4	20%	4	20%	6	30%	4	20%	1	5%
90-100 (A)	2	10%	4	20%	13	65%	13	65%	9	45%	5	25%	12	60%	3	15%	10	50%
Total	20	100%	20	100%	20	100%	20	100%	20	100%	20	100%	20	100%	20	100%	20	100%
Mean	67.5		61		87.5		88.5		78		70.5		85.5		66		74.5	
Max	100		90		100		100		100		100		100		100		100	
Min	30		40		30		60		10		10		50		30		40	

Based on the comprehensive analysis of the data presented in table 2, it is evident that there is a clear dominance of scores in category A for the tenses Simple Future, Present Continuous, Past Continuous, Present Perfect, and Future Perfect. This suggests that students enrolled in the Management program exhibit a strong grasp of these specific tenses, showcasing a high level of understanding and proficiency in their application. The consistent pattern of high scores in category A indicates a solid foundation in these particular grammar concepts, reflecting positively on the overall language proficiency of the students within this academic discipline.

Conversely, a notable predominance of scores in category E is observed in the results for the tenses Simple Past and Past Perfect among students in the Management program. This disparity in performance highlights a potential area of weakness or challenge for these students, indicating a need for further instruction and support in enhancing their comprehension and usage of these specific grammatical structures. The presence of consistently lower scores in category E suggests a potential gap in understanding or application of the tenses Simple Past and Past Perfect, signaling a need for targeted interventions to address these areas of weakness and improve overall language proficiency.

Furthermore, an interesting finding from the data analysis is the significant presence of scores in category C for the tenses Simple Present and Future Continuous among students in the Management program. This indicates a moderate level of proficiency and understanding of these particular grammar concepts, suggesting that students in this academic discipline possess a solid foundation in the tenses Simple Present and Future Continuous. While not as dominant as category A, the consistent performance in category C for these specific tenses highlights a level of competency and familiarity with these grammatical structures, demonstrating a balanced proficiency across different aspects of the English language within the context of the Management program.

In terms of the highest scores achieved in each tense assessment, all top scores are categorized within group A, predominantly featuring a score of 100. Conversely, the lowest scores in each assessment fall within category E, with only one score recorded in category D. This indicates that while some students in the Management program demonstrate a strong understanding of English tenses, there are still several students who have yet to grasp these concepts effectively.

Based on the data presented, the comparison of the highest frequency of the score achievements categorized by students from the Computer Science and Management departments is as follows.

The Comparison of The Highest Frequency of The Score Achievements

The table below presents a detailed comparison of the frequency of tense proficiency achievements between students of Computer Science and Management.

Table 3. Comparison of The Highest Frequency of The Score Achievements

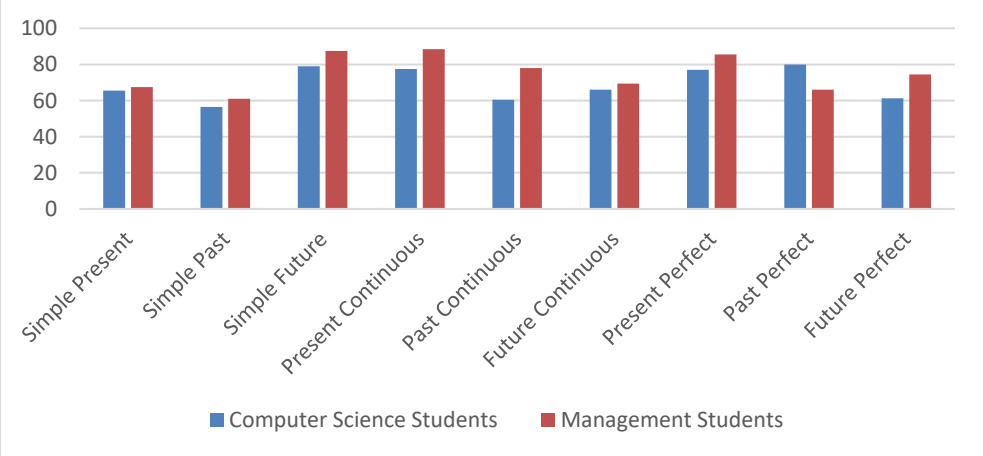
Tense	Computer Science Students	Management Students
Simple Present	Category A	Category C
Simple Past	Category E	Category E
Simple Future	Category A	Category A
Present Continuous	Category A	Category A
Past Continuous	Category E	Category A
Future Continuous	Category E	Category C
Present Perfect	Category A	Category A
Past Perfect	Category A	Category E
Future Perfect	Category E	Category A

The data presented in Table 3 brings to light an interesting observation regarding the language proficiency of students majoring in Computer Science and Management. It appears that students in both of these academic disciplines have a strong grasp of the Simple Future and Present Continuous tenses. This suggests that these students are able to effectively communicate about future events and ongoing actions. However, it is worth noting that both groups exhibit a limited understanding of the Simple Past tense. This could indicate a potential area for improvement in language education for these students.

The results of the study suggest a significant difference in the mastery of various English tenses between students majoring in Computer Science and Management. Specifically, it was found that Computer Science students excel in understanding the Simple Present and Past Perfect tenses, while Management students exhibit a stronger command of the Past Continuous and Future Perfect tenses. This disparity in language proficiency may be attributed to the nature of the subjects' respective curricula (Devi, 2023). Computer Science programs possibly place a greater emphasis on technical writing and communication skills related to coding and programming, where the Simple Present and Past Perfect tenses are frequently used. On the other hand, Management programs may focus more on business communication and project management, requiring a higher level of competency in the Past Continuous and Future Perfect tenses. These findings are in line with a research by (Anis & Khan, 2023) about the importance of tailoring language instruction to suit the specific needs of students in different academic disciplines, as well as the value of interdisciplinary collaboration in promoting a well-rounded education that encompasses both technical and communication skills.

The following is a comparative graph illustrating the average test results of various tenses between students majoring in Computer Science and those majoring in Management.

Figure 1. Comparative Graph of The Average Test Results of Various Tense



The data presented in the figure showcases a clear distinction in the average scores of Management and Computer Science students in tense assessments. Management students consistently outperform their Computer Science

counterparts across various tenses such as Simple Present, Simple Past, Simple Future, Present Continuous, Past Continuous, Future Continuous, Present Perfect, and Future Perfect. This trend indicates a higher level of understanding and proficiency in tenses among Management students compared to those in Computer Science.

However, the only exception to this trend is seen in the Past Perfect tense, where Computer Science students demonstrate superior performance compared to Management students. This particular disparity highlights the nuanced differences in the understanding of specific tenses between the two groups. Despite this minor exception, the overall data suggests a notable advantage in the grasp of English language tenses among Management students.

The striking comparison between Management and Computer Science students in the graph underscores the significant dominance of Management students in nearly all tenses, indicating a more comprehensive understanding of the English language. This proficiency in tenses exhibited by Management students implies a deeper knowledge and command of the language, which may contribute to their overall academic success and communication skills. The data provides valuable insights into the academic strengths and areas of improvement for students studying Management and Computer Science.

Further research is vital in identifying effective methods for teaching English tenses within Computer Science and Management programs. By analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of current approaches, educators can develop strategies that cater to the unique learning styles of students in these fields. With a professional approach, research can lead to the creation of innovative teaching techniques that enhance communication skills and overall academic success.

Discussion

To begin with, the results demonstrating high scores in tenses from category A suggest a strong command of fundamental English grammar. The Simple Present tense, for instance, is commonly used in programming documentation and textbooks. It conveys actions that are habitual or general truths. A solid grasp of this tense enhances a student's ability to articulate programming concepts clearly. Furthermore, the Simple Future and Present Continuous tenses play vital roles in project planning and ongoing tasks, making it crucial for students to comprehend their usage. The Present Perfect tense adds a layer of complexity by linking past actions to the present, while the Past Perfect tense shows progression in narratives, a useful skill in technical writing. Mastery of these tenses equips students with the linguistic tools necessary for efficient communication in both academia and the workplace.

In contrast, the lower scores in category E highlight significant challenges faced by Computer Science majors when using the Simple Past, Past Continuous, Future Continuous, and Future Perfect tenses. The Simple Past, for example, narrates completed actions, often found in reporting past experiences or project outcomes (Mustafa, 2021). Difficulty in using the Simple Past can hinder students when they are asked to reflect on previous work or to document their learning journey effectively. The Past Continuous tense, which describes ongoing actions in the past, is vital for discussions of historical context in technological advancements. If students struggle with this tense, they may find it challenging to connect the timelines of software development effectively. Moreover, the Future Continuous and Future Perfect tenses are essential in projecting future tasks and goals. In a rapidly evolving field like Computer Science, the ability to plan and communicate future projects can greatly affect a student's success. Poor

performance in these tenses may hinder a student's capacity to engage in effective planning discussions or professional presentations. This gap in understanding indicates not only a potential shortfall in communication skills but also a broader challenge in critical thinking and organization, skills crucial for success in this field.

The reasons for these disparities in performance related to tense categories may stem from several interconnected factors. One possible explanation is the cognitive load associated with learning certain tenses. Computer Science students often engage in intense computational tasks, which may detract from the mental resources available for mastering complex grammatical constructions. Furthermore, the iterative nature of programming languages and logic may cultivate a more straightforward approach to communication, inadvertently neglecting the nuanced aspects of English grammar.

Integrative approaches that meld linguistic training with technical instruction could provide effective solutions. For example, using programming scenarios that require the application of various tenses might provide a practical context that enhances learning. This is in line with the result of research by (Agustina, 2022) that collaborative projects could encourage students to articulate past experiences, ongoing processes, and future planning, thereby creating a richer linguistic environment that reinforces grammatical structures.

The key point to consider is the significance of the scores in category A. The strong performance in tenses such as Simple Future, Present Continuous, Past Continuous, Present Perfect, and Future Perfect highlights a fundamental understanding of verb forms that are often used in business communication. Effective management and leadership require clear and precise articulation of plans, actions, and results (Zada et al., 2023). The Simple Future tense, for instance, is vital for making predictions about market trends or outlining future objectives. Similarly, the Present Continuous is essential for communicating ongoing projects and current developments.

On the other hand, the predominance of scores in category E, particularly regarding the Simple Past and Past Perfect tenses, raises interesting questions about the language skills of Management students. The Simple Past tense often conveys completed actions and can be vital for reporting past performances and historical analysis in a business context. However, if students are performing poorly in this area, it may indicate a gap in their ability to analyze and communicate past events effectively. The Past Perfect tense, which describes actions completed before a certain point in the past, is equally important for developing a thorough understanding of chronological events (Zada et al., 2023). In the field of Management, retrospective analyses of projects and decision-making processes rely heavily on these tenses.

Several factors could contribute to the disparities observed in scores. The curriculum may place greater emphasis on certain tenses that align with future-oriented business strategies while neglecting the historical aspects necessary for past analysis. Additionally, students may be more motivated to learn tenses that they perceive as directly applicable to their futures as professionals. This trend points to a potential imbalance in language education within Management programs, where students may be well-prepared for forward-thinking discussions but less equipped to reflect critically on past experiences.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussions, students pursuing degrees in Computer Science and Management appear to excel in utilizing the Simple Future and Present Continuous tenses. This proficiency allows them to effectively discuss future intentions

and current actions. However, they seem to encounter challenges with the Simple Past tense, indicating a potential gap in their language skills. Addressing this area could significantly enhance their overall language education. Computer Science students tend to have a better understanding of the Simple Present and Past Perfect tenses. In contrast, Management students are stronger in the Past Continuous and Future Perfect tenses. This difference likely comes from the focus of their studies. Computer Science programs often emphasize technical writing and communication skills needed for coding, where the Simple Present and Past Perfect are frequently used. On the other hand, Management courses focus on business communication and project management, which require a good grasp of the Past Continuous and Future Perfect tenses. These findings suggest that language education should be tailored to fit the specific needs of different fields, and that collaboration between disciplines is important for a well-rounded education that combines both technical and communication skills. The strong presence of Management students in almost all tenses shows their high level of English language skills, indicating they are more proficient than students in other disciplines. This skill reflects a better grasp of the language and hints that Management students might achieve greater academic success and have better communication abilities. The information collected offers important insights into the strengths and weaknesses of students studying Management and Computer Science, highlighting the need for strong language skills in their studies and careers.

This study is also an essential resource for English language educators in higher education, offering valuable insights into tense usage across different academic fields. By understanding the nuances and proficiency levels of tense usage, instructors can adapt their teaching strategies to effectively improve student success. This resource empowers educators to tailor their lessons to meet the specific needs of students in both scientific and non-scientific programs, ultimately enhancing the learning experience and academic outcomes for all.

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