A PORTRAYAL OF TENSES IN LANGSTON HUGHES’ SELECTED POEMS

A THESIS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

I. LIFE IS FINE

II. THE NEGRO MOTHER

III. WILL V-DAY BE ME DAY TOO?

IV. AS I GREW OLDER

V. DEMOCRACY

VI. TOO.

VII. NEGRO SPEAKS OF RIVERS

VIII. LOVE SONG FOR LUCINDA
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study.

To use English as a foreign language is not easy. There are many things about English must be learnt either the vocabulary, pronunciation, or the grammar but the most important thing to be learnt of English is the grammar. Pooleyin (1970: 288) says that Grammar is rules for, or science of, or study of how language works. Grammar describes how a language works in communicating ideas which are generally expressed in sentences. People who know the language system (grammar) can produce correct English in their speaking and writing but the person who did not follow that system is supposed to be incorrect. It means that grammar is a standard to correct speakers and writers.

Tenses are parts of grammar. They are one of the grammatical categories which show whether an activity is done in the past time, present or in the future time. Tenses are the form of verb which expresses time relation. In Oxford Dictionary (1995), Tenses are any of the forms of a verb that may be used to indicate the time of the action or state expressed by the verb. So, tense means time. English has sixteen different tenses but there are only six tenses will be portrayed. These sixteen tenses are different from each other. The difference is in the forms of the verb used and the time of verb takes place. In another word, English verb varies in its usages.

Watts Dunton Hold says, “Absolute poetry is the concrete and artistic expression of the human mind, in emotional and rhythmic language.” Poems are a composition in verse that is characterized by a highly developed artistic form, the use of rhythm and the employment of heightened language to express an imaginative interpretation of a situation or idea. Because of the characteristic of poems applies artistic or aesthetic values, the poets often use the tenses in the lyrics of poems without concern to the rule of using tenses so that the use of
tenses in poems are not suitable anymore for the real rule and function of each tenses. Based on the description, the reason of this thesis to portray about tenses is to know the presence of tenses in literary works such as poetry and its function.

The poems which will be described are Langston Hughes’ selected poems. Langston Hughes is a Black American writer. He is particularly known for colorful portrayals of black life in America from the twenties through the sixties. He wrote sixteen books of poems, two novels, three collections of short stories, four volumes of "editorial" and "documentary" fiction, twenty plays, children's poetry, musicals and operas, three autobiographies, a dozen of radio and television scripts and dozens of magazine articles. In addition, he has edited seven anthologies.

In this portrayal, there are only eight poems of 46 Hughes’ Poems that will be described because they are representative enough to be described. These eight poems will show the function of each tense and the tabulation of the most frequent tenses type.

1.2 Problem of the Analysis.

According to the background above, the problems of the portrayal are formulated as follows:

1. What are the tenses used in the Langston Hughes’ selected poems?

2. Which tense is used dominantly?

1.3 Objective of the Analysis.

Concerning to the problems of the analysis as mentioned above, the objectives of the portrayal are:

1. To identify the types of tenses used in the Langston Hughes’ selected poems.
2. To determine which tense is used dominantly.

1.4 Scope of the Analysis.

In order to avoid an overlapping and misleading discussion, the writer would like to give delimitation on this analysis. This analysis has been limited to the focus on six types of tenses, namely: *Simple present tense, Present continuous tense, Present perfect tense, Simple past Tense, Past perfect tense,* and *Simple future tense.*

The poems are accessed in the internet website (http://www.poemhunter.com), which is from the selected poems of Langston Hughes. There are 47 poems but only 8 poems will be portrayed, entitled: “Life is Fine”, “The Negro Mother”, “Will V-Day Be Me Day Too?”, “As I Grew Older”, “Democracy”, “I, Too”, “Negro Speaks of Rivers”, and “Love Song for Lucinda”.

1.5 Significance of the Analysis.

The results of this portrayal are expected:

1). to add the English students’ knowledge about tenses used in poems.
2). to be used as a reference in grammar teaching to the students and teachers.

1.6 Review of Related Literature.

In designing this thesis, the writer refers to some information supplied in some books to support the idea of the analysis. They are as follows:

Downing and Locke (2002 : 354) state that tense is a way of expressing events as occurring at points situated along the linear flow of time.
Dewi (2000) in her thesis entitled the Errors in Using Tenses Made by the Second Year of SMU Darma Pancasila Medan analyzed the tenses that the English language has, explained that Tense is one of the grammatical categories which shows whether an activity is done in the past time, present or in the future time. Tense is the form of verb which expresses time relation. English uses different forms of verbs which express different tenses.

Djauhari (1996:13) states that Tenses are classified from four fundamental tenses namely Present Tense, Past Tense, Future Tense and Past Future Tense and then divided into four parts which make the total of sixteen tenses in English.

Kennedy and Gioia (1995:583) say that poetry may state facts but more important, it makes imaginative statements that we may value even its facts are incorrect. Poetry appeals to the mind and arouses feeling.

According to Dunton in Pradopo (2000:6) that the poem constitutes concrete human mind and artistic in emotionally rhythmical language such as figurative that is arranged poetically. It is also full with emotion and rhyme like music in terms of regular change of phonetics.
CHAPTER II

2.1 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF TENSES

2.1.1 Understanding of Tenses.

Tenses indicate whether an activity has been completed, has extended over a period of time or is still in progress. Tense means time. Downing and Locke (2002) state that tense is a way of expressing events as occurring at points situated along the linear flow of time. Within a linear flow, a point of reference must be established, with respect to which past events precede and future events follow. It can be diagrammed as follow:

```
   Past      Future
      |          |
    now
```

In Oxford Dictionary (1995), tenses are any of the forms of a verb that may be used to indicate the time of the action or state expressed by the verb.

Tense can be classified into four fundamental forms or it is called ‘The Four Fundamental Tenses’, then they are divided into four parts; Therefore, English has 16 tenses. They are:

1. Present Tense:
   a. Simple Present Tense
   b. Present Continuous Tense
   c. Present Perfect Tense
   d. Present Perfect Continuous Tense

2. Past Tense:
   a. Simple Past Tense
   b. Past Continuous Tense
c. Past Perfect Tense  

d. Past Perfect Continuous Tense  

3. Future Tense :  
   a. Simple Future Tense  
   b. Future Continuous Tense  
   c. Future Perfect Tense  
   d. Future Perfect Continuous Tense  

4. Past Future Tense :  
   a. Past Future Tense  
   b. Past Future Continuous Tense  
   c. Past Future Perfect Tense  
   d. Past Future Perfect Continuous Tense  

These 16 tenses are different from each other based on its usages but in this chapter, there are only six tenses will be portrayed because they are representative enough to be portrayed. Those six tenses and the forms of tenses can be seen in this following description:  

2.2 The Grammatical Rules for Tenses.  

2.2.1 Simple Present Tense  

Simple Present Tense is the tense for description, definition, and statements of general truth and universally true.  

Form :  

\[ A: S + \text{V1 (Infinitive) } + s/\text{es} + O/C \]  
\[ B: S + \text{to be (am, is, are)} + O/C. \]
**Examples:** She *works* in a bank.

They *study* English at school.

*I am* here every morning.

When the sentence used in Pattern A is an affirmative sentence and the subject is the third person singular (he, she, it), the Infinitive will use some rules:

a. The infinitive generally will be added with -s

   to cut → cuts
   to dig → digs
   to put → puts

b. The infinitive with ending *ch, sh, s, and x* are added with –es.

   to teach → teaches
   to wash → washes
   to watch → watches

c. The infinitive with ending *o* are added with –es

   to do → does
   to go → goes

d. The infinitive with vocal *e*, although they are sounded *z* and *j*, are added with –s

   to use → uses
   to leave → leaves
   to come → comes

e. The infinitive with ending *y* and preceded by consonant will be changed with *i* and added with –es.

   to fly → flies
to study  →  studies

f. The infinitive with ending *y* and preceded with vocal is only added with –s

to buy  →  buys

to play  →  plays

to pay  →  pays

The simple present tense performs the following functions (Wishon and Burks : 1980):

a). Expresses general statement of facts (a law of nature)

For examples: water *boils* at 100° C

The earth *revolves* around the sun

The sun *rises* in the east and sets in the west

b). Expresses custom and habitual actions (regular repeated action), often with such adverbial expressions as frequently, usually, everyday, and so on.

It is also the usual present tense form of stative or “private” verbs, such as *wish, hope, fear, love, like, understand and know*.

For examples: He *goes* to school by bus every day.

She *loves* her husband.

They often *come* late to school.

c). When used with the verb do, shows emphasis.

For examples: He *does* look like his father.

We *do* not speak Italian, but we do speak English.

*Do* write to her!

d). Expresses commands or requests (second person only).

For examples: Please *let* me know how you get along.

*Get out* of my sight!
Telephone him if you have time.

e). Expresses future time with a future time adverbial.

For example:  
She *leaves* next week.

Classes *begin* the day after tomorrow.

The team *plays* in Jakarta next month.

Adverb which show the time in Simple Present Tense are:

- always
- seldom / rarely
- usually
- generally / commonly
- often / frequently
- once in a while / sometimes
- never
- every / each ( everyday, every week, every month, every year, every Saturday night, etc )

2.2.2 Present Continuous Tense

Based on Azar (1993 : 3), Present Continuous Tense is tense which expresses an activity that is in progress ( is occurring, is happening ) right now. The event is in progress at the time the speaker is saying the sentence. The event began in the past, is in progress now, and will probably continue into the future.

Form:


\[
S + \text{to be ( am, is, are )} + \ V1 + \text{ing } + O / C
\]
Examples : I am eating lunch at the cafeteria right now.

She is writing a letter to her mother.

They are playing football right now.

The Present Continuous Tense performs the following functions :

a). To indicates an activity in progress ( happening now).

For examples : He is watching TV now.

Mrs. Lena is cooking rice right now.

b). To indicates a temporary activity over a more extended period of time

For examples : I am living with some friends.

We are eating in the kitchen during this cold weather.

c). Refers to a series of actions of limited durations.

For examples : It’s getting colder.

I’m getting lazier.

Adverbs which show the time in Present Continuous Tense are :

- now
- soon
- right now
- at present
- this…. ( this morning, this afternoon, etc )
- today
- tonight
- tomorrow
- in a few days

2.2.3 Present Perfect Tense.

Present Perfect Tense is tense which expresses an activity that took place at an indefinite time or over a period of time in the past, but still has relevance in the present. The time of the action is not mentioned and it is not implied. If the time is mentioned or implied, the past tense is usually used.

Form:

\[
\text{S} + \text{have / has} + \text{V III (been)} + \text{O / C}
\]

Examples: I have met Ann’s husband at a party last week.
She has read the story many times.
He has been absent from class a lot lately.

The Present Perfect Tense may be used in the following ways:

a). To show that an action began in the past and has continued up to the present.

For examples: - We have studied English for five years. (we started our study five years ago, we continued it, and we are still working on it.)
b). To show that an action was completed in the very recent past by using adverbs: *just, finally, recently, at last.*

For examples: He has just spoken to me.

They has recently come to my office.

Adverbs which show the time in Present Perfect Tense are:

- for - ever
- since - never
- up to the present / now - yet
- so far - not yet
- many times - recently
- often - lately
- frequently - all day
- already - several times
- finally

### 2.2.4 Simple Past Tense.

According to Peterson (1981: 64), Simple Past Tense is tense which describes one completed action in the past.
Form:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{A} & : \ S + V^2 + O/C \\
\text{B} & : \ S + \text{to be} (\text{Was, Were}) + O/C
\end{align*}
\]

Examples: The airplane arrived at noon.

She finished her university studies at the age of twenty.

I was a student in SMU Putri Cahaya.

The simple past form ends in \textit{ed} for regular verbs. Most verbs are regular but many common verbs have irregular past forms.

The regular verbs:

- admire  admired  admired
- believe  believed  believed
- explain  explained  explained

The irregular verbs:

- come  came  come
- find  found  found
- give  gave  given

There are two past tense auxiliaries in English (Wishon: 1980):
1. The past tense of the verb *use* combines with *to* to form an auxiliary which is used to describe customary or habitual action in the past. This auxiliary combines with the simple form of the verb. It will be discussed in more detail in the next unit.

   - I *used to* get up at 5:30 every morning.

2. The past form of *do* as an auxiliary is used with the simple form of the verb to express emphasis.

   - I *did* study for the examination
   - No matter what Lisa said, he *did* finish the work.

The Present Perfect Tense may be used in the following ways:

a). To show an action or situation which is occurred in the past.

   For examples: Mary *walked* downtown yesterday.
   I *slept* for eight hours last night.
   I *ate* breakfast this morning.

b). Habitual or repeated action/event in the past.

   For examples: We *always made* our own dinner few days ago.

Adverbs which show the time in Simple Past Tense are:

- yesterday.
- last… (last Monday, last year, last morning, etc).
- an our ago.
- a few minute ago.
- the day before yesterday.
- in … (in 1980, in summer, etc).
- the other day

Past Perfect Tense.
Past Perfect Tense is tenses which used in connected discourse in conjunction with the past tense and shows that an activity was completed at or before some definite time in the past.

Form:

\[
S + \text{had} + V\ 3\ (\text{been}) + O/C
\]

Examples: - The lecture did not begin until everyone had arrived.
- When he finally stopped talking, we all realized that more than an hour had passed.

The past Perfect Tense is also used in these specific ways:

a). To replace the present perfect or simple past tense when a direct quotation is changed into reported speech.

For example:

The lecturer said, “I have studied the problem for years.”

The lecturer said that he had studied the problem for years.

b). In certain sentences to express an unrealized wish that something in the past had been different. Expressions such as if only, wish, would rather are commonly used in such sentences.

For example:

- If only you had told me!
- I wish you had come with us.

c). In certain contrary-to-fact conditional sentences.
For example: If he *had known* the facts, he would have told you.

Adverbs which show the time in Past Perfect Tense are:
- already
- before
- after
- until
- as soon as

**Simple Future Tense.**

Simple Future Tense is tense which shows that an action or state will occur in the future.

**Form:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>S + shall, will + V1 (be) + O/C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>S + to be (am, is, are) + going to + V1 (be) + O/C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Example:**

I will come here tonight.
She shall go to Malang tomorrow.
They are going to swim next Sunday.

There are several ways to indicate future tense in English (Wishon and Burks : 1980):
The Will and Be Going To Futures

Form:

\[ S + \text{Will/Shall} + V1 + \text{be going to} + V1 \]

While these constructions are often used interchangeably, each has functions distinctly its own. The be going to future shows that the subject consciously intends or plans the future action, while the will future is more likely to be used for actions that are to be taken impulsively or without prior thought.

I am going to talk to Professor Kim tomorrow

but:

I just heard that Professor Kim is back in town; I think I’ll telephone him.

He is going to answer Lisa’s letter today

but:

Don’t bother about the telephone; John will answer it.

The will future expresses futurity when the futurity depends on a condition of circumstance which is expressed in an accompanying adverbial clause. The clause is introduced by such conjunctions as if, when, as soon as, whenever and so on. The be going to future is rarely used in such sentences.

If I see him, I will give him your message.

When he comes, I will give him your message.

Note that the verb in the adverbial clause is the simple present tense, not future tense: not if he will come, but if he comes.

Distinctions between Will and Shall
For simple futurity, no distinction is made between will and shall either in everyday speech or in informal writing, although will is used with much more frequency than shall. For formal writing and speech, shall is sometimes preferred with the first person singular and plural pronouns. Will is used with the second person to make a request, make an offer, or issue an invitation. It is used with the first person to make a promise.

Will you answer the telephone, please?
Will you join me for a cup of coffee?
Won’t you please join me for a cup of coffee?
I will consult you before making a decision.

Shall is used with first and third persons to inquire as to the preference of the person spoken to.

Shall I answer the telephone for you?
Shall we go?
Shall the doctor come on Monday or Wednesday?

❖ Other Future Constructions

Be + to + the simple form of the verb shows plan, intention, obligation, or necessity in the future.

My dentist says I am to see her twice a year.
They are to be here at 10:00 in the morning.

The sense of some modal auxiliaries, such as must, ought to, should, may, and might, is future in some instances. Futurity tends to be expressed in an adverbial.

I must remember to call Lisa.
They may go to the concert tonight.

I should read the book before I talk to the author.

According to the forecast, it might rain tonight.

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

3.1 The Method of the Study

In accomplishing this thesis, the writer uses a library research as an approach in this portrayal and also supporting information which related to the topic of portrayal by browsing internet and reading some books. The data from the references is function as a support for this portrayal.

3.2 Data Collecting Method
In this thesis, firstly, the writer chooses the poems from the internet website. There are eight poems of 47 Langston Hughes’ poems will be portrayed. The poems are chosen that is representative enough to be portrayed. The eight selected poems are: “Life is fine”, “The Negro Mother”, “Will V-Day Be Me Day Too?”, “As I Grew Older”, “Democracy”, “I, Too”, “Negro Speaks of Rivers”, “Love Song for LUCINDA”.

Next, every Tense which found in the poems will be underlined and described based on the function. Finally, the most frequent tense type will be counted to put in the top of the table and followed by the tenses which have less frequency by calculating the data in percentage on the following formula (Bungin, 2005 : 171-172):

\[
\text{Type of Tenses} = \frac{F_X}{N} \times 100%
\]

\(F_X\) = individual frequency (one type of Tenses)
\(N\) = number of appearance (all types of Tenses)

Example:

*When I take off my uniform,*

*Will I be safe from harm—*  

*Or will you do me*  

*As the Germans did the Jews?*  

*When I’ve helped this world to save,*  

*Shall I still be color’s slave?*  

*(Will V-Day Be Me-Day Too)*
CHAPTER IV

4.1 PORTRAYAL OF TENSES IN LANGSTON HUGHES’ SELECTED POEMS.

In this chapter will be portrayed the types of tenses which is used in Langston Hughes’ selected poems. The portrayal of tenses in the poems is:

I. Simple Present Tense.

1) Life is Fine (I, 1)
2) I guess I will live on
3) You may hear me and holler
4) And you may see me cry-
5) Children, I come back today
6) I am the dark girl who crossed the red sea
7) I am the woman who worked in the field
8) I am the one, who labored as a slave
9) My dreams must come true
10) I write this letter
11) When this war is through
12) I ask, WILL V-DAY BE ME-DAY TOO
13) I wear a U.S Uniform
14) I am Negro American
15) I am there
16) I take munitions through
17) I fight
18) I face death the same as you do everywhere
19) So this is what I want to know.
20) When we see Victory’s glow
21) Because I’m Black
22) Here is my own, my native land
23) When I take off my uniform
24) You can’t say I didn’t fight
25) You can’t say I wasn’t with you
26) When this war comes to an end
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Poem</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>That’s all I ask of you</td>
<td>( III , 69 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>When we lay the guns away</td>
<td>( III , 70 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>I am black</td>
<td>( IV , 15 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>I lie down in the shadow</td>
<td>( IV , 16 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>I have as much right</td>
<td>( V , 5 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Tomorrow is another day</td>
<td>( V , 12 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>I do not need my freedom when I’m dead</td>
<td>( V , 13 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>I cannot live on tomorrow’s bread</td>
<td>( V , 14 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Freedom is a strong seed</td>
<td>( V , 16 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>I live here, too</td>
<td>( V , 17 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>I want freedom</td>
<td>( V , 20 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>I, too, sing America</td>
<td>( VI , 2 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>I am the darker brother</td>
<td>( VI , 3 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>They send me to eat in the kitchen</td>
<td>( VI , 4 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>When company comes,</td>
<td>( VI , 5 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>But I laugh</td>
<td>( VI , 6 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>And eat well</td>
<td>( VI , 7 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>And grow strong</td>
<td>( VI , 8 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>They’ll see how beautiful I am</td>
<td>( VI , 17 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>I, too, am America</td>
<td>( VI , 19 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Love is a ripe plum</td>
<td>( VIII , 1 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Love is a bright star</td>
<td>( VIII , 7 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Love is a high mountain</td>
<td>( VIII , 13 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Do not climb too high</td>
<td>( VIII , 18 )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II. Present Continuous Tense.

1) I’m still here livin’ 
(I, 20)

2) I’m reaching the goal 
(II, 19)

3) I’m driving a tank 
(III, 7)

III. Present Perfect Tense.

1) I might’ve sunk and died 
(I, 9)

2) I might’ve jumped and died 
(I, 18)

3) I could have died for love 
(I, 22)

4) I’ve done the enemy 
(III, 12)

5) I’ve driven back 
(III, 13)

6) I’ve dropped defeat 
(III, 17)

7) I’ve seen my buddy lying 
(III, 27)

8) … have learned what this war 
(III, 48)

9) When I’ve helped this world to save 
(III, 54)

10) I have almost forgotten my dream 
(IV, 3)

11) I’ve known rivers 
(VII, 2)

12) I’ve known rivers ancient as the world 
(VIII, 3)

13) My soul has grown deep like the rivers 
(VIII, 5)

14) and I’ve seen its muddy 
(VIII, 10)

15) I’ve known rivers: 
(VIII, 12)

IV. Simple Past Tense.

1) I went down to the river 
(I, 2)

2) I sat down on the bank 
(I, 3)
3) I tried to think but couldn’t (I, 4)
4) So, I jumped in and sank (I, 5)
5) I came up once and hollered (I, 6)
6) I came up twice and cried (I, 7)
7) It was Cold in that water! It was Cold (I, 10)
8) I took the elevator (I, 11)
9) I thought about my baby (I, 13)
10) and thought I would jump down (I, 14)
11) I stood there and I hollered (I, 15)
12) I stood there and I cried (I, 16)
13) But it was high up there! It was high! (I, 19)
14) That I had to climb, that I had to know (II, 4)
15) …who crossed the red sea (II, 8)
16) …who worked in the field (II, 10)
17) …who labored as a slave (II, 12)
18) For the work that I gave (II, 13)
19) God put a song and prayer in my mouth (II, 18)
20) God put a dream like steel in my soul (II, 18)
21) I realized the blessing deed do me. (II, 21)
22) I couldn’t read then. I couldn’t write (II, 22)
23) I had nothing (II, 23)
24) But I kept trudging on through the lonely years. (II, 25)
25) The road was hot with the sun (II, 26)
26) But I had to keep on! (II, 28)
27) I was the seed of the coming free

28) I nourished the dream that nothing could

29) I promised him that I would try

30) Where his son could be a man

31) As I grew older

32) It was a ling time ago

33) But it was there then

34) And then the wall rose

35) Rose until it touched the sky

36) I bathed in the Euphrates

37) I built my hut near the Congo

38) I looked upon the Nile and raised the

39) I heard the singing of the Mississippi

40) When Abe Lincoln went down to New Orleans

V. Past Perfect Tense

1) If that water hadn’t been so cold

2) If it hadn’t been so high

VI. Future Tense

1) I guess I will live on

2) I’ll be dogged, sweet baby

3) For I will be with you till no white brother
4) WILL V-DAY BE ME-DAY, TOO? (III, 9)
5) Will you still let old Jim Crow hold me back (III, 37)
6) Will I still be ill-fated because I’m Black? (III, 41)
7) Will the Jim Crow laws still stand? (III, 44)
8) Will Dixie lynch me still? (III, 45)
9) Or will you comrades in arms (III, 46)
10) Will I be safe from harm-- (III, 51)
11) Or will you do me as the Germans did the Jews? (III, 52)
12) Or will Victory change your antiquated views? (III, 57)
13) Will you herd me in a Jim Crow car like a cattle? (III, 64)
14) Will you stand up like a man at home? (III, 65)
15) Democracy will not come (VI, 2)
16) Tomorrow, I’ll be at the table (VI, 10)
17) Nobody ‘ll dare (VI, 12)
18) They’ll see how beautiful I am (VI, 17)
19) … will never let you be (VIII, 6)
20) … will always hurt your eyes (VIII, 12)
4.2 THE TABULATION OF TENSES IN LANGSTON HUGHES’ SELECTED POEMS

After having the portrayal, it will be counted the most frequent Tense Type by calculating the data in percentage on the following formula from Bungin (2005: 171 – 172)

\[
\text{Type of Tenses} = \frac{F_x}{N} \times 100\%
\]
Fx = individual frequency (one type of Tenses)
N = number of appearance (all types of Tenses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO</th>
<th>Tenses</th>
<th>Number of Appearance</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Simple Present</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>41.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Present Continuous</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Present Perfect</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Simple Past</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>33.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Past Perfect</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Future</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>120</strong></td>
<td><strong>100 %</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

5.1 Conclusion

1. Tenses are parts of English grammar that must be learnt in order to produce correct English in speaking and writing.

2. Tenses are any of the forms of a verb that must be used to indicate the time of the action or state expressed by the verb.

3. Tenses are classified from four fundamental tenses namely Present Tense, Past Tense, Future Tense and Past Future Tense then divided into four parts which make the total of 16 tenses in English.
4. Poems are built by applying artistic and aesthetic values, so they sometimes cause the poems miss its grammatical rules.

5. After having the portrayal, it can be concluded that from six tenses which is portrayed have found 120 appearance of tenses in Langston Hughes’ selected poems with the most frequent tenses type is Simple Present = 41.7%, followed by Present Continuous = 2.5%, Present Perfect = 12.5%, Simple Past = 33.3%, Past Perfect = 1.7%, Future = 8.3%

6. The most dominant Tense used in Langston Hughes’ selected poems is Simple Present Tense because they mostly express the fact.

Suggestion.

1. The reader or those who interested in the literary works such as poems will do further analysis or linguistic research on the characteristic of tenses used.

2. The portrayal as found in the Langston Hughes’ selected poems could be more beneficial for a reference those who want to depend their knowledge so to the other can continue finding other aspect of linguistic in the future.
3. The writer realizes that this thesis is far from being perfect, but she do expect it will be of any use for the learners, So she welcomes to the constructive criticism as well as the advice from those who really want to have this thesis better improved.

APPENDICES

I. Life is Fine

I went down to the river.

I sat down on the bank.

I tried to think but couldn’t,

So, I jumped in and sank.

I came up once and hollered!
I came up twice and cried!
If that water hadn’t been so cold
I might’ve sunk and died.

But it was Cold in that water! It was Cold!

I took the elevator
Sixteen floors above the ground.
I thought about my baby
And thought I would jump down.

I stood there and I hollered!
I stood there and I cried!
If it hadn’t been so high
I might’ve jumped and died.

But it was high up there! It was high!
So since I’m still here livin’
I guess I will live on.
I could’ve died for love—
But for livin’ I was born.

Though you may hear me and holler,
And you may see me cry—
I’ll be dogged, sweet baby,
If you gonna see me die.

Life is fine! Life as wine! Life is fine!

II. The Negro Mother.

Children, I come back today
To tell you a story of the long dark way
That I had to climb, that I had to know
In order that the race might live and grow.

Look at my face – dark as the night –
Yet shining like the sun with love’s true light.

I am the dark girl who crossed the red sea
Carrying in my body the seed of the free.

I am the woman who worked in the field
Bringing the cotton and the corn to yield.

I am the one, who labored as a slave,
Beaten and mistreated for the work that I gave –
Children sold away from me, I’m husband sold, too.

No safety, no love, no respect was I due.

Three hundred years in the deepest South:
But God put a song and a prayer in my mouth.

God put a dream like steel in my soul.

Now, through my children, I’m reaching the goal.
Now, through my children, young and free,
I realized the blessing deed do me.
I couldn’t read then. I couldn’t write.
I had nothing, back there in the night.
Sometimes, the valley was filled with tears,
But I kept trudging on through the lonely years.
Sometimes, the road was hot with the sun,
But I had to keep on till my work was done:
I had to keep on! No stopping for me –
I was the seed of the coming Free.
I nourished the dream that nothing could smother
Deep in my breast – the Negro mother.
I had only hope then, but now through you,
Dark ones of today, my dreams must come true:
All you dark children in the world out there,
Remember my sweat, my pain, my despair.
Remember my years, heavy with sorrow –
And make of those years a torch for tomorrow.
Make of my pass a road to the light
Out of the darkness, the ignorance, the night.
Lift high my banner out of the dust.
Stand like free men supporting my trust.
Believe in the right, let none push you back.
Remember the whip and the slaver’s track.
Remember how the strong in the struggle and strife
Still bar you the way, and deny you life –
But March ever forward, breaking down bars.
Look ever upward at the sun and the stars.
Oh, my dark children, may my dreams and my prayers
Impel you forever up the great stairs –
For I will be with you till no white brother
Dares keep down the children of the Negro Mother.

III. Will V Day Be Me Day Too?

Over There

World War II

Dear Fellow Americans

I write this letter

When this war

Is through.
I’m a Tan-skinned Yank
Driving a tank.
I ask, WILL V-DAY
BE ME-DAY, TOO?

I wear a U.S Uniform
I’ve done the enemy much harm.
I’ve driven back.
The Germans and the Japs,
From Burma to the Rhinenat
On every battle line,
I’ve dropped defeat
In the Fascists’ laps.

I am Negro American
Out to defend my land
Army, Navy, Air Corps –
I am there
I take munitions through,
I fight – or stevedore, too.
I face death the same as you do
Everywhere.

I’ve seen my buddy lying
Where he fell.
I’ve watched him dying.
I promised him that I would try
To make our land a land
Where his son could be a man –
And there’d be no Jim Crow birds
Left in our sky.

So this is what I want to know.
When we see Victory’s glow,
Will you still let old Jim Crow
Hold me back?
When all those foreign folks who’ve waited
Italians, Chinese, Danes—are liberated.
Will I still be ill-fated
Because I’m Black?

Here is my own, my native land,
Will the Jim Crow laws still stand?
Will Dixie lynch me still?
When I return?
Or will you comrades in arms
From the factories and the farms,
Have learned what this war
Was fought for us to learn?
When I take of my uniform,
Will I be safe from harm—
Or will you do me
As the Germans did the Jews?
When I’ve helped this world to save,
Shall I still be color’s slave?
Or will Victory change
Your antiquated views?

You can’t say I didn’t fight
To smash the Fascists’ might.
You can’t say I wasn’t with you
In each battle.
As a soldier, and a friend.
When this war comes to an end,
Will you herd me in a Jim Crow car
Like a cattle?

Or will you stand up like a man
At home and take your stand
For Democracy?
That’s all I ask of you.
When we lay the guns away
To celebrate
Our Victory Day
WILL V-DAY BE ME-DAY, TOO?

That’s what I want to know.

Sincerely,

Gi Joe.

IV. As I Grew Older

It was a long time ago.

I have almost forgotten my dream.

But it was there then,

In front of me,

Bright like a sun--

My dream.

And then the wall rose,

Rose slowly,

Slowly,

Between me and my dream.

Rose until it touched the sky--

The wall.

Shadow.

I am black.

I lie down in the shadow.

No longer the light of my dream before me,

Above me.
Only the thick wall.

Only the shadow.

My hands!

My dark hands!

Break through the wall!

Find my dream!

Help me to shatter this darkness,

To smash this night,

To break this shadow

Into a thousand lights of sun,

Into a thousand whirling dreams

Of sun!

V. DEMOCRACY

Democracy will not come

Today, this year

Nor ever

Through compromise and fear

I have as much right

As the other fellow has
To stand

On my two feet

And own the land.

I tire so of hearing people say,

Let things take their course.

Tomorrow is another day.

I do not need my freedom when I’m dead.

I cannot live on tomorrow’s bread.

Freedom

Is a strong seed

Planted

In a great need.

I live here, too

I want freedom

Just as you.

VI.

I Too.

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.

They send me to eat in the kitchen

When company comes,

But I laugh,

And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I’ll be at the table
When company comes.

Nobody’ll dare
Say to me,

“Eat in the kitchen,”

Then.

VII. NEGRO SPEAKS OF RIVERS

I’ve known rivers:

I’ve known rivers ancient as the world and older than the

Flow of human blood in human rivers

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.
I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln
Went down to New Orleans, and I’ve seen its muddy
Bosom turn all golden in the sunset

I’ve known rivers:
Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

VIII. Love Song for Lucinda.

Love
Is a ripe plum
Growing on a purple tree.
Taste it once
And the spell of its enchantment.
Will never let you be.

Love
Is a bright star
Glowing in far Southern skies
Look too hard
And its burning flame
Will always hurt your eyes

Love
Is a high mountain

Stark in a windy sky

If you

Would never lose your breath

Do not climb too high.

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