

# The Influence of Mastery of Simple Past Tense and Adverbs on Recount Text Writing Skills of Vocational High School Students in Bogor Regency

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## ABSTRACT

English grammar mastery is very important for Vocational High School (SMK) students, especially in writing recount texts, where the use of simple past tense and adverbs is very important. However, many students have difficulty with these elements, which affects their writing skills. This study aims to investigate the combined effect of simple past tense and adverb mastery on students' ability to write recount texts effectively. A quantitative research design with a correlational approach was used, involving 60 students from 30 Vocational High Schools in Bogor Regency. Data were collected through grammar tests and writing tests, focusing on students' mastery of simple past tense and adverbs. Data analysis was carried out using SPSS version 25.0, including normality, linearity, and regression tests. The results showed that simple past tense mastery contributed 17.86%, while adverb mastery contributed 27.19% to the variance of students' writing skills. The combined effect of the two variables explained 45.1% of the variance of students' ability in writing recount texts. These findings emphasize the importance of teaching simple past tense and adverb usage in improving students' writing ability. The implications of this study suggest that English curriculum in Vocational High Schools should prioritize these areas to improve students' ability to communicate effectively in writing.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

English proficiency is essential for students, especially in Vocational High Schools (SMK), as it plays a key role in their academic success and future professional careers. However, many students in

SMK continue to face significant challenges in mastering writing skills, particularly in the use of the simple past tense and adverbs when writing recount texts. These writing difficulties hinder students' ability to effectively communicate past events in written form, a skill that is crucial for both academic assignments and professional documentation. The correct use of simple past tense and adverbs is fundamental in recount text writing, as these grammar elements help students express actions that have occurred in the past and describe how, when, or where these actions took place. Despite the importance of these elements in writing recount texts, many students struggle to apply them correctly. These issues are particularly noticeable in SMK students, who often fail to use simple past tense appropriately, either confusing regular and irregular verb forms or misapplying adverbs to modify verbs correctly. As a result, their recount texts lack clarity, accuracy, and coherence, which are essential qualities in written communication. The writer produces words, sentences, paragraphs unified Nakata et al., (2017) Mastering writing skills involves not only delivering ideas but also understanding strategy, punctuation, and grammar.

Tenses are grammatical instruments that describe when events occur; they clarify storytelling and everyday narration in English. The simple past, frequently chosen by native speakers, marks completed actions a speaker no longer considers current. It employs regular or irregular verbs-and the verb be, appearing as was or were-to reflect this past perspective (Schembri et al., 2018). Azar (2003) summarize its function: it reports brief incidents downward, lengthier episodes, events that recurred, and states that existed before now. From this, one understands that, by default, the simple past signals an action that has closed. Linguists agree this form suits nearly every bygone circumstance, whether the event unfolded in a flash-took weeks-resolved as a routine (Eltahir & Alsahhi, 2021). Theory further clarifies that the simple past grammatical frame identifies deeds thought finished prior to the moment of speech (Serrano-marín, 2022). Such deeds can happen once, repeat intermittently, or become a settled habit; He usually went by train tells of a regular journey the speaker no longer makes. In short, the simple past always gestures toward instances completed within an earlier bracket of time. My parents lived in that house offers another case, indicating, the speaker suggests, that their residency is a completed event confined to a specific past period (Schwaller et al., 2021). Adverbs, as content words, clarify how, when, or where an action occurs and their careful inclusion tends to make a sentence sharper and more evocative (Lee et al., 2019). When simple past verbs work alongside considerate adverbials, listeners receive a tighter sense of when the action took place and of the way it unfolded, thus reinforcing the richness of the overall account.

Several studies related to this research include the study by Jäger et al., (2020) titled "A Correlation between Students' Mastery of Simple Past Tense and Their Ability in Writing Recount Text." This study found that students needed to focus more on mastering simple past tense specifically, as well as grammar in general. The study also emphasized the need for students to better understand test types and grammatical structures that support writing tasks. However, this study primarily focused on the impact of simple past tense on writing ability, without addressing the role of adverb mastery or the combined effect of both elements. Additionally, the research by Lin et al., (2020) examined how students could improve their writing skills by focusing on grammar elements, including the use of adverbs. This study highlighted the importance of adverb usage in enhancing writing clarity. However, it did not specifically investigate the interaction between simple past tense and adverb mastery in improving recount text writing skills, particularly in the context of Vocational High Schools (SMK).

Research Gap while these studies provide valuable insights into the role of grammar in writing, they do not address the combined effect of mastering both simple past tense and adverbs in recount text writing, which is crucial for students in Vocational High Schools. Additionally, there is a lack of research focusing on Vocational High School students and how their understanding of both of these grammar elements can improve their writing skills in specific contexts such as recount text writing. The present investigation addresses a noticeable gap in the literature by exploring how mastery of the simple past tense combined with effective adverb use affects the overall writing quality of recount texts produced by students in Vocational High Schools in Bogor Regency. Consistent with Ministry of

Education and Culture Regulation Nos. 68, 69, and 10/2013, English instruction at this educational level is expected to cultivate communicative competence, enabling learners to produce accurate and contextually appropriate messages in real-world settings. Language thus functions as the primary tool for cross-border interaction, and, as noted by Susan & Hang (2024), its correct, modern, and consistent teaching will largely determine whether students can engage meaningfully with speakers from other cultures.

Based on the pre-observation with the English teacher and some students in one of the Vocational High School. It was found that tenth grade students at Vocational High School are struggling with understanding simple past tense and regular and irregular verbs. They often make mistakes when writing past tense sentences, using base forms of verbs (Eastwood, 2005; Saar et al., 2021; T et al., 2024). They also struggle with distinguishing between words like “do not” and “did not” and correctly putting “was/ were” in sentences (Byrne, 1993; Salam et al., 2024; Sari et al., 2022; Susan & Hang, 2024). Additionally, they are confused about the adverb they must use in their writing, leading to confusion in their understanding of the language. Learning involves interpreting and analyzing written content to determine its usefulness and significance. If the text lacks adequate information, it is crucial to identify the causes and conduct further analysis (Sato & Oyanedel, 2019; Schembri et al., 2018; Siddiki et al., 2019). Using the simple past tense and descriptive adverbs can significantly improve students’ writing, especially in recount texts. When learners master these elements, their sentences become clearer, grammatically sound, and much easier for readers to follow. This study therefore examines how well Bogor Regency vocational high school pupils combine these skills and whether that blend lifts the quality of their recount writing. Ultimately, the research seeks to show whether joint control of the past tense and adverbs translates into more coherent, precise, and engaging recount texts.

## 2. METHODS

This study used a quantitative, correlational design to explore how well mastery of the simple past tense and adverbs together predict students writing skill in recount texts. The correlational framework was chosen because it permits clear examination of the links between each independent variable-simple past tense and adverb use-and the dependent outcome, writing performance. Data were gathered from tenth graders across vocational high schools (SMK) in Bogor Regency, forming the research population. Following Creswell (2017) guidance on random selection, 60 learners were drawn from 30 schools, each having the same chance to be included. Two instruments collected the necessary data: a grammar test and a writing task. The grammar component comprised thirty multiple-choice items focused solely on the simple past tense and adverb forms. Each correct answer was awarded 1 point, with an incorrect answer receiving 0 points, resulting in a score range from 0 to 100. The writing test required students to write a recount text on one of three topics: (1) going somewhere, (2) a story about a bad day, or (3) an experience that changed their life. Students had 30 minutes to complete the task. Both instruments were evaluated for validity through expert judgment, ensuring alignment with the study’s objectives, and their reliability was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha for the grammar test, yielding a coefficient of 0.85, and inter-rater reliability for the writing test, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.92.

Data analyses were performed with SPSS release 25.0. The first step involved assessing normality with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test; the resulting p-value exceeded the .05 threshold, indicating that the scores approximated a normal distribution and that parametric procedures could be used with confidence. A subsequent linearity test evaluated whether simple past-tense mastery and adverb mastery produced a straight-line relationship with writing skill; the analysis revealed a significant linear pattern ( $p < .05$ ) and no notable deviation from linearity ( $p > .05$ ). With these assumptions met, a multiple regression was then conducted to estimate the joint impact of the two independent variables on the dependent measure, writing skill.

### Linearity Test

The linearity test assesses whether the relationship between the independent variables (X1) and (X2) and the dependent variable (Y) forms a straight-line pattern in regression analysis. In this study, the test was conducted using version 25.0 of the SPSS software.

**Table 1.** The regression of the Effect of Variable X1 toward Y

**ANOVA Table**

			Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Simple Past Tense * Writing Skill nin Recount text	Between Groups	(Combined )	8950.878	17	526.522	3.295	.001
		Linearity	6317.299	1	6317.299	39.534	.000
		Deviation from Linearity	2633.579	16	164.599	1.030	.447
	Within Groups		6711.411	42	159.796		
	Total		15662.289	59			

Referring the output above, the score of Deviation from Linearity is  $F_{0.05} + 1,030$  and  $Sig. 0,447 > 0,05$ . The data indicates that the regression line linking mastery of the simple past tense with overall writing skill in recount texts is significantly linear. In practical terms, improvements in students' grammar and usage of the simple past correspond to higher overall quality in their recount writing.

**Table 2.** The Regression Linearity of the Effect of Variable X1 and Variable X2 toward Y

**ANOVA Table**

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Adverb Mastery * Writing Skill nin Recount text	Between Groups	(Combined)	8450.697	18	469.483	3.563	.000
		Linearity	5587.509	1	5587.509	42.406	.000
		Deviation from Linearity	2863.188	17	168.423	1.278	.254
	Within Groups		5402.246	41	131.762		
	Total		13852.943	59			

The researcher proceeded with the analysis of the quantitative data collected for the study. Following Zohrabi (2013) recommendation, all preliminary calculations were performed using SPSS version 17.0 the dataset was first examined for normality and linearity to confirm that the population sample met these assumptions. With those conditions satisfied, the researcher moved on to more advanced hypothesis testing, applying partial correlation, multiple correlation, simple linear regression, and both partial and multiple correlation analyses through SPSS version 25.0 (Creswell & Hirose, 2019).

This methodological framework allows for a thorough examination of how the targeted grammatical elements jointly influence students recount-text writing, yielding practical insights for improving writing instruction in vocational high-school contexts. Data were gathered using two instruments: a grammar proficiency test and a separate recount-writing task, which together provided a comprehensive measure of the participants language skills.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### Finding

In analyzing the data, the authors first present descriptive statistics of three variables-frequency distribution, measures of central tendency, and a histogram-before conducting hypothesis tests. To estimate the relationships among the variables, both simple and multiple linear regression are employed. Regression assumptions are evaluated by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality and a separate test for the linearity of the model.

#### Results of the Normality Test

A normality test was performed to verify that the sample distribution conforms to the normal curve, an assumption fundamental to the credibility of parametric analyses. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic returned a p-value of .169, exceeding the conventional threshold of .05 and thereby supporting the claim of normality. Consequently, the data satisfies the normality criterion and is deemed suitable for subsequent parametric tests.

#### Results of the Linearity Test

A linearity test was carried out to determine whether the independent variables mastery of the simple past tense and mastery of adverbs move together in a straight-line fashion with the dependent variable, writing skill in recount texts. The analysis revealed a strong linear link among the variables, marked by a p-value of .000 ( $p < .05$ ). Moreover, the p-value for deviation from linearity was .447 ( $p > .05$ ), indicating that no significant curvilinear trend exists and the relationship can be confidently treated as linear.

#### Results of the Multiple Regression Analysis

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to assess the combined effect of simple past tense mastery and adverb mastery on students' writing skills in recount texts. The regression analysis results are shown below in Table 1, with the regression equation given as:

$$Y = 35.515 + 0.199X_1 + 0.298X_2$$

Where:

- $Y$  = students' writing skill,
- $X_1$  = mastery of simple past tense,
- $X_2$  = mastery of adverbs.

Below is the model summary for the regression analysis:

**Table 1.** Calculation Result of Double Correlation of the Effect of Simple Past Tense (X1) and Adverb Mastery (X2) on Students' Writing Skill in Recount Text (Y).**Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.671 <sup>a</sup>	.451	.431	7.95142

The  $R^2$  value of 0.451 suggests that 45.1 percent of the variation in students writing skills is accounted for by mastery of the simple past tense and adverbs taken together. The adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.431 refines this estimate by adjusting for degrees of freedom, thereby indicating the percentage of variance explained by these predictors after considering the sample size.

**Table 2.** The Calculation Result of Regression Coefficients Significance Test of the Effects of Simple Past Tense (X1) and Adverb Mastery (X2) on Students' Writing Skill in Recount Text (Y).**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	<b>Regression</b>	2956.356	2	1478.178	23.380	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	<b>Residual</b>	3603.827	57	63.225		
	<b>Total</b>	6560.183	59			

a. Dependent Variable: Writring Recount Text

b. Predictors: (Constant), Adverb Mastery, Simple Past Tense

Table 2 displays the ANOVA summary for the regression equation and thus reveals the networks collective predictive power. With an F-value of 23.380 and a p-value smaller than 0.001, the findings confirm that the model as a whole is statistically significant, indicating that mastery of the simple past tense and adverbs together meaningfully shape students writing performance in recount texts.

**Table 3.** The Calculation Result of Multiple Regression Equality Test of The Effect of Simple Past Tense (X1) and Adverb Mastery (X2) on Students' Writing Skill in Recount Text (Y).**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	35.515	5.188		6.846	.000
Simple Past Tense	.199	.082	.307	2.416	.019
Adverb Mastery	.298	.087	.433	3.407	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Writring Recount Text

Table 3 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis, listing the unstandardized coefficients (B), standardized coefficients (Beta), t-values (t), and significance levels (p-values) for the two predictors, mastery of simple past tense and mastery of adverbs.

**Effect of Simple Past Tense (X<sub>1</sub>) on Students' Writing Skill in Recount Text (Y)**

The findings indicate that mastery of the simple past tense positively influences students writing ability, evidenced by a p-value of .019 ( $p < .05$ ) and a t-value of 2.416. For each additional point gained in tense mastery, scores on recount-text writing improve by approximately .199 points. The proportion of variance in writing skill attributable to tense mastery can then be computed as follows:

$$KD = \beta X_1 Y \times r X_1 Y \times 100\%$$

$$KD = 0.307 \times 0.582 \times 100\% = 17.86\%$$

This means that simple past tense mastery contributes 17.86% to the improvement in students' writing skills in recount texts.

**Effect of Adverb Mastery (X<sub>2</sub>) on Students' Writing Skill in Recount Text (Y)**

The results also show that adverb mastery has a stronger effect on writing skills compared to simple past tense mastery, with a p-value of 0.001 ( $p < 0.05$ ) and a t-value of 3.407. The coefficient for adverb mastery is 0.298, meaning that for every 1-point increase in adverb mastery, students' writing skills improve by 0.298 points. The contribution of adverb mastery to writing skills is calculated as:

$$KD = \beta X_2 Y \times r X_2 Y \times 100\%$$

$$KD = 0.433 \times 0.628 \times 100\% = 27.19\%$$

Thus, adverb mastery contributes 27.19% to the improvement in students' writing skills in recount texts.

**Combined Effect of Simple Past Tense and Adverb Mastery**

The R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.451 shows that 45.1% of the variance in writing skills can be explained by the combined effects of simple past tense and adverb mastery. This suggests that while each variable

independently contributes to writing skills, their combined impact is substantial. This emphasizes the importance of teaching both elements together to improve students' writing proficiency.

## Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that effective recount text writing can be achieved through mastery of both simple past tense and adverbs. This aligns with research by Kasimini & Kadarmo (2016), who argue that grammar plays a pivotal role in ensuring clarity in meaning, especially when the context is not fully available or clear. In recount texts, where the accurate depiction of past events is crucial, mastering these two grammatical elements allows students to express themselves more clearly and in a well-structured manner. This finding also aligns with Thornbury (2020), who found that students with a solid understanding of simple past tense and adverbs tend to produce more effective recount texts. This study confirms that these two grammatical elements significantly contribute to enhancing students' writing abilities, especially in recount writing.

This study further supports Uusen (2006) finding that writing is a necessary skill for conveying ideas, emotions, and experiences clearly and logically. However, this study extends those findings by showing that mastery of the simple past tense and adverbs is essential not only for grammatical correctness but also for ensuring that recount texts are structured in a way that effectively conveys past events. Schwaller et al., (2021) highlighted that writing involves not only using correct grammar but also maintaining a logical sentence structure for effective communication. This is consistent with our study, where the ability to correctly use the simple past tense enables students to arrange events in the correct time order, while adverbs enrich the descriptions of those events. The research conducted by Geng (2020), which examined the correlation between simple past tense mastery and students' ability to write recount texts, supports these findings, confirming a significant relationship between tense mastery and writing quality. Similarly, King (2002) emphasized that mastery of simple past tense enables students to organize their writing in a more logical manner, which ultimately improves their writing skills. This research is also in line with our findings, as we observed that simple past tense mastery has a significant impact on students' ability to write structured recount texts.

Furthermore, Clark et al., (2007) argue that grammar is essential for ensuring clarity in communication, especially in writing, where accurate meaning is necessary. This aligns with our findings, as mastery of grammar, particularly the simple past tense and adverbs, ensures that recount texts written by students are not only grammatically correct but also clear and understandable. Starkey (2004) dan Ur (2009) emphasize the importance of using the correct tense in writing, as it helps writers arrange events in a logical sequence. In our study, the correct use of the simple past tense enabled students to structure the events in a chronological order, making their recounts more coherent. The use of adverbs also plays a significant role in enhancing students' writing abilities. Setiyadi (2006) explains that adverbs provide critical information about how, when, where, and to what extent actions take place, which enriches the narrative. This view is supported by Biber et al. (2019), who state that adverbs are crucial for adding meaning to sentences and clarifying the information conveyed. Our study demonstrates that students who have mastered the use of adverbs effectively produced more detailed and engaging recount texts.

Moreover, Derewianka (1990) states that mastery of both tense and adverbs allows students to express ideas and feelings more effectively. These two grammatical features enable students to produce writing that is not only grammatically correct but also rich in context and expression. The results of this study support Lee et al. (2019), who argue that adverbs play a key role in adding linguistic depth to texts, thereby improving students' writing quality. Further research by Eltahir & Alsalhi (2021) confirms that mastery of adverbs not only makes writing more vivid but also helps students deliver more precise and effective descriptions. This aligns with our findings, where students with higher mastery of adverbs produced more engaging and detailed recount texts. Similarly, Zhang & Huang (2024) found that the use of adverbs allows students to better link ideas in their writing, improving the coherence and readability of their texts.



The combination of simple past tense and adverb mastery is crucial for students who aim to develop more advanced writing skills. Geng (2020) argue that mastering both of these elements together enables students to write more accurately and effectively in recount texts. This study reinforces the importance of teaching both grammatical components together to enhance students' writing skills. This research is consistent with Uusen (2006), who emphasized the importance of grammar in making meaning clear, especially when information is not readily available or is unclear. In the context of recount texts, these elements are key to conveying accurate descriptions of past events, allowing students to express ideas in a clear and structured manner. Thornbury (2020) also supports this, providing evidence that students with a deep understanding of simple past tense and adverb usage tend to produce higher-quality recount texts. This view is further supported by Karlina & Kusnarti (2024), who emphasize that both grammatical elements are crucial for improving the quality of recount texts. Similarly, Nakata et al., (2017) notes that writing involves not only correct grammar but also the logical structure of sentences to ensure effective communication. Our study found that the ability to use simple past tense correctly allows students to arrange events in the correct temporal order, while adverbs enrich the descriptions of those events.

The findings of Jogo et al. (2024), which show a significant relationship between simple past tense mastery and students' ability to write recount texts, are consistent with our research. King (2002) further reinforced this, stating that mastery of tense impacts students' ability to organize texts effectively, contributing to the improvement of their writing skills. Clark et al. (2007) highlighted the importance of grammar in ensuring that meaning is conveyed accurately, particularly in writing, where clarity is essential. This finding aligns with our study, where the mastery of simple past tense and adverbs ensured that students' recount texts were not only clear but also easily understood. Starkey (2004) dan Ur (2009) also support the notion that the correct use of tense is a crucial part of writing, helping writers organize events chronologically.

The use of adverbs also proved to be crucial in enhancing students' writing abilities. Setiyadi (2006) explained that adverbs provide essential information about how, when, where, and to what extent actions take place, enriching the narrative. Biber et al. (2019) further supported this, stating that adverbs add meaning to sentences and clarify the information being communicated. Derewianka (1990) noted that mastery of tense and adverbs allows students to express their ideas and feelings more clearly and effectively. These two grammatical elements enable students to write texts that are not only grammatically correct but also rich in context and expression. Lee et al., (2019) reinforced this by asserting that adverbs enhance the linguistic richness of texts, further improving students' writing quality.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This research aimed to examine how the mastery of simple past tense and adverbs affects the writing skills of Vocational High School students in Bogor Regency, specifically in the context of writing recount texts. The study found that both simple past tense (X1) and adverb mastery (X2) significantly enhance students' writing abilities. The statistical analysis revealed that simple past tense mastery accounted for 17.86% of the improvement in writing skills, while adverb mastery contributed 27.19%. Together, both variables explained 45.1% of the variance in students' writing performance, demonstrating a substantial combined effect. These findings emphasize the critical role of simple past tense and adverb usage in crafting clear, coherent, and grammatically correct recount texts. Mastery of these grammatical elements helps students organize events chronologically and enhance their descriptions with precise adverbs, making their writing more engaging and accurate. The implications of these results are significant for teaching practices in Vocational High Schools. Educators should place greater emphasis on teaching the use of simple past tense and adverbs as part of writing instruction, as these elements are essential for improving students' ability to express past events effectively in written form. By focusing on these grammar components, teachers can better equip students to produce high-quality recount texts, thus enhancing their overall writing proficiency.

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